

DEVIL'S PROMENADE EXCERPT:

Once in my room, I settled into the alcove and wrote late into the night. The legends surrounding the spook light were so numerous, I barely made a dent.

When I could hold my eyes open no longer, I changed into an old, tattered black sleep shirt proclaiming "I Need Coffee" and settled into the massive bed. I sighed with delight. The mattress was so comfortable, I felt as though I'd landed in a vat of marshmallows.

Lying back on the oversized feather pillows, I opened a King book I'd been reading during my travels, wishing I'd snatched one of the classics from the library.

I was semi-engrossed in the story when a rattling sound made me jump. The wind had risen so fiercely, the window vibrated. Beneath that sound was another...the yowling of coyotes? I should have asked Loretta about the identity of the animals I'd heard. Not that it would make much of a difference, except, if it were coyotes instead of dogs, I would limit my outside wanderings to the immediate area around the house.

Another sound—almost like that of a human moan—rose. I yelped and slammed the book closed. Tossing it on the nightstand, I threw back the covers and climbed from the bed. Although not sure I wanted to identify the sound, I hurried to the window, the hardwood floor cold against my bare feet.

I rubbed my arms against the chill, then drew the curtain back and looked outside. Darkness pushed against the glass like a physical being. Snow and a sprinkling of stars made the night only slightly less black. What had I heard? Snow falling? No, that was ice pelting the window. I hadn't been around snow often, but I knew it didn't make that kind of sound.

A flash of something bright caught my attention. I pushed closer to the window, my nose practically touching the pane. There, in the corner of the yard next to a bare-branched shrub. A wisp of something...

I grabbed my cell phone and zoomed in. My heart beat in triple time as I looked through the phone camera. A ghostly figure...no other way to describe it. The gauzy essence was in the shape of a person, undefined, yet unmistakable. A woman, it seemed—long hair flowing behind her, the skirt of a dress billowing around her legs.

She seemed to be staring up at the window...

She, ha, it was nothing, no 'she,' no ghost, just my imagination. That's what I got for reading

Stephen King in a peculiar, spooky house in a strange place. Plus, I was just overtired from my trip. But, still, I was seeing it. Wasn't I? I squinted at the enlarged image through my cell. Yes, it was right there...

I started video recording on my phone. I would study it further. Figure out if I was seeing what I thought I was seeing. And if I was, I could show others, so I would know I wasn't crazy.

I'd only been recording for a few seconds when the image just...floated away, dissipated somehow. Chills brushed over my flesh. I dropped my arm holding the phone and stared stupidly out the window. Frowning, I touched Play on the video. The screen filled with the view out my window, but the apparition was not there. What the...?

The shrub was in place, in the recording. Just where I'd seen the...thing, whatever it had been. But now, there was nothing.

I took a deep breath. I wasn't sure whether to be relieved or concerned. Whether I was seeing things, or if there really was a *thing*. Perhaps I truly was going crazy.

No...just overly tired, an overactive imagination and the masterful conjurings of Stephen King.

I slipped back in bed and tossed the book into the nightstand drawer, then shut it safely inside. I reached for the bedside lamp but paused before switching it off. Maybe it wouldn't hurt to leave a light burning. After all, I was in an unfamiliar place, and the bathroom was down the hall. If I needed to get up during the night, I'd have to be able to see.

Satisfied I was being practical, rather than frightened, I snuggled into the covers. But it was a long while before I fell asleep. My ears and eyes were trained on the window...my mind brimming with the strangeness of my experiences at the Spook Light Bed and Breakfast. And I'd yet to be here for twelve hours.