

The Allure Of An Empty Hallway

By: Maxine L. Garcia

I don't often find myself staring into the darkness of rooms at night. As a child, as I'm sure you did as well, I would flick the light switch and run to safety. Something about a room with no light is terrifying, isn't it? Personally I wasn't so scared of the empty space. The room as a whole wasn't so dark once your eyes adjusted. No, it wasn't the room that scared me. It was the fact that there were places you couldn't see for real. The areas that truly became pitch black. Under the bed and behind the curtain, worse when the window was left open a crack and the wind could blow just slightly so you didn't know for sure if something was there or not. And the vanity. What a spooky object. A mirror, I thought, was terrible for the dark. You could still see yourself but was it you? It was too hard to tell, which of course made it scarier.

Then there was the hallway. A room was a dead end, but the hallway, that was a passage. Something about the hallway made it feel safe. Like if you could just make it through this narrow space you'd be fine. After all, you could see the other side. Even if it was dark, running through to the next room was no problem. All you had to do was brace yourself and close your eyes. In a second it would be over and you'd find yourself exactly where you needed to go. And unlike rooms, we have no issue with a dark hallway. Isn't that strange? We'd rather light up some area we don't necessarily need to use than have it left dark. As you know a hallway never changes, it is simply a long empty space between destinations. It's not like a staircase. Aren't those a little frightening too? What if something is there at the top, or at the bottom, or behind you?

As for the question on why we are scared of dark rooms. Since it isn't simply a fear that comes on when you are in the room. Do you think perhaps that the doors have something to do with it too? Could it be that you and I are just afraid of not knowing what's on the other side? A room with a closed door is no problem as long as the light is on. When it isn't, aren't you hesitant to open it... Just in case?