

Hello, reader.

I spend a lot of time thinking about what makes something scary. I think that there's a lot to be said for danger, for the unknown, for hostility to life. Crocodiles are scary because they want to eat you. The dark is scary because it wants to hide things from you. Outer space is scary because it wants nothing from you at all, it is not even aware of you, and yet it can take everything from you with less conscious effort than you and I spend on a heartbeat.

But the scariest thing, I think, is not a thing but a place; that place isn't really a place so much as a relationship.

The scariest thing is the space under your bed.

That is a place you can't see without coming within kissing distance of it. It's a place that is the home to your most intimate, personal, vulnerable moments. The space under the bed has heard you breathe deeply as you sleep, has heard your voice catch when you cry, has heard you gasp your way awake from a cold sweat nightmare. The space under the bed has felt the weight of your body turning on the mattress above. The space under the bed knows when you're asleep, when you're awake, when you're dreaming, when you're blushing.

The space under the bed knows you in ways you don't even know yourself.

In writing *Just Like Home*, I wanted to explore the space under the bed. I also wanted to explore the monsters we love—the ones we recognize, the ones we embrace, the ones we trust...and the ones we don't. As you read this book, I hope that you'll feel just how frightening it can be to have to choose, when the time comes, which monster to turn to.

And perhaps, after you've finished the book, as you lie in your bed at night—as you're closing your eyes and slowing your breathing and letting your limbs grow heavy—perhaps you'll pause on the cusp of sleep. Perhaps you'll hold your breath for a moment, making yourself as quiet as you possibly can.

Perhaps you'll find yourself listening for the sound of a monster in your home.

Perhaps you'll find yourself wondering if they're listening for you, too.

Cheers,



Sarah Gailey



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