

What  
Lurks  
Ahead

Sci-Fi/Horror

# UNKNOWN ALONE

MMP Publishing (Short-Story)

"Unknown Alone"  
by Mary Margaret Park  
(An adaptation of id Software's  
"DooM" series)

**"Unknown Alone" by Mary Margaret Park**

**MMP Publishing**

It's cold -- The power went out three days ago. There's a spot of light at least, that's something. The security monitors are still working, but I'm not really surprised. They wouldn't want to jeopardize their operation over something as simple as a power outage. Yesterday, I looked for a coat, a real one, with down and a hood. I found several lab coats; that's all, and the material is thin.

*It's cold.*

I tried putting all four of them on but the material got bound up, so I've settled for wearing two. The backup lights are on timers, they shut off during sleeping hours. I've gotten in the habit of taking my shoes off. The soles echo along the floor and after a while, you get mistrustful. It's probably safer anyway.

My boss, Dr. Evan's, he left to look for survivors; said he thought the physics lab was a good bet. I told him he shouldn't go alone. His eyes lost their usual twinkle. I could tell he was scared; he said, "Jim, its better this way, besides, I'll be back in a few hours".

That was four days ago.

I've been trying to convince myself that he's okay and that I don't need to go after him. I've got my St. Michael's medallion. Mom gave it to me, said it'd protect me and all that. I've got a tranquilizer gun from the animal-lab but really long for a Plasma Rifle. I'm leaving to go look for Dr. Evans. I sure hope my Mother was right...

With a loud whoosh the lab door opens. Jim steps into the deserted hallway. It's darker than usual; only one out of every three lights is working. It's all the generators will support. The hallway is wide; the walls are sterile stainless steel, slick as glass. The echoes of his footfalls flee before him, jarring and unpleasant, he wishes for soft soled shoes.

He's got the tranquilizer gun slung over his shoulder; he reaches to the side and adjusts it, passing his fingertips over his medallion.

The physics-lab is located on the other side of the compound; there's a T-junction up ahead with signs indicating to take the right corridor. The lights are barely adequate; their pulsing glows sinister and cold. He reaches the junction, presses firmly against the wall, and glances down the corridor that leads to the lab.

The hall is deserted, and the buzzing lights seem to stretch on forever. The air is thick with the smell of disinfectant, like a hospital, but there is a faint smell of decay beneath. Up ahead, the floor is bathed in transparent red light, it cycles and flashes, throwing bizarre rubies against the steel walls. The display harkens images of a fun house; the distortions, ill omens; Jim grows more cautious. He moves slowly down the hall, the macabre haze momentarily swallowing him.

Light pours from a doorway on his right, the rooms ceiling is framed by cycling ruby lights, and there is a large computer screen on the wall; its screen a dull onyx in the red haze. A cluster of large steel drums anchor one corner. He steps carefully towards them; the smell of decay is stronger there. The narrow space between the wall and the drums is bathed in red, the wall and floor sticky with blood, the coagulated pools dotted with tufts of hair and flesh. The illustration of death slams into him physically, knocking him off balance. He sways and turns to exit, pausing at the computer screen; he pushes several buttons, but the screen only shows the faint suggestion of his silhouette, nothing more. A crash echoes along the hall, followed by a shuffling sound. He

darts into the tomb behind the steel drums, the coppery smell of blood sharp in his nostrils. He waits with his gun thrusting before him. The shuffling sound grows closer, pausing at the room's entrance. The doorway frames a huge creature in red silhouette; it lingers only a moment, then goes back the way it came. He can hear the clicks of its echoing exit along the hall. He stays huddled behind the drums, rubbing his St. Michael medallion for what seems like an eternity, then rises up and carefully approaches the doorway. He glances both ways down the hall; the creature is gone. Bloody footprints the only evidence of its passage. He takes a deep breath and steps out into the hallway.

An open air courtyard is located about halfway down the hall. Jim steps outside, the bold dark of the heavens is studded with the brightest of stars; he lingers in the deserted courtyard, remembering the unusual circumstances that brought him to the moon-base. It all started with the colonel's daughter, 'he couldn't very well disappoint the man now could he'? So he'd done as the colonel bid and three months ago, ended up here. His thoughts are interrupted by howling; something darts into the courtyard running straight for him. He jumps behind a concrete fountain. He can hear the beast huffing and scrambling wildly about. On his hands and knees he eases into an alcove, sights the tranquilizer gun, and pulls the trigger. The gun's hydraulic swoosh is satisfying but the aim is not; the flagged dart bounces on the concrete. The fiend stutters, diving away from the sound. Jim escapes into the hallway, slamming the heavy stone door behind him. The apparition screams and bludgeons the door; pieces of silt rain onto the floor. Knees weak, Jim steadies himself against the wall.

*My God, what the hell is it?*

He resumes his determined march towards the physics-lab, his thoughts sick and weary with the wrongness of what he's just witnessed.

The hall thrums with an unpleasant humming; Jim can feel it in his bones & teeth. It grows louder as he nears the lab, searing into his brain. He grabs his temples in a warding off gesture and his hands become tacky with sweat; his shirt is pretty well soaked and clings uncomfortably to his back. The reprieve from the cold ends with a bone grinding chill; he shudders and pulls the lab coats more tightly about his shoulders.

The thrumming has grown so loud that he wonders if he's gone mad. He looks down and adjusts his gun, noting that he has only one tranquilizer dart remaining. When he reaches the doorway to the physics-lab, his mind tells him what his heart already knew.

Dr. Evan's is dead.

The once orderly lab is strewn with broken glass. Streaks of blood dot the floors and the lab stations. It's not until he reaches the labs hub that he discovers his first dead body. Something has torn it to pieces; it litters the floor along with the rest of the wreckage. "Voltaic field, use protective gear" is written on a sign above the central island. Jim squats down; using the sides of the center island to steady himself, he carefully works his way towards the field. The humming sound is now piercing, its maddening thrum drives all thought from his mind. He steadies his emotions and leans from behind the counter, spying the center of the vortex; it throbs and pulses with a strange red light; he wonders at what his co-workers were developing. The thrum cuts into his bones, driving the cold deeper and deeper. The smell of decay is overpowering here, the bodies of his co-workers litter the area. He spots a tuft of blond hair and wonders if it's Dr. Evans, then decides it doesn't matter. Stunned, he sits on the floor, trying to decide on his next move.

A being appears from the glowing region. Jim picks up his gun and carefully aims, this time his aim is true. The monster stumbles and falls to the floor. He backs up and wedges himself into a small space near the center island; another monstrosity appears, this time it shuffles aimlessly past him.

He watches a relentless march of creature after creature appearing from the field. It appears he is safe and yet he knows he can't stay hiding forever. For now, all he can do is wait.

*It's cold, so cold.*

I've learned that the demons come in spurts, whole armies of them, and then they just stop. I don't think they come in any pattern, they just come, hell bent on destruction. I've found a better hiding place in one of the hangars, but I'm thirsty.....and cold. I don't know how much longer I can stay here. The demons have grown more savage, hungrier; it's just a matter of time until they discover my new hiding place.

God, it's cold -- *So cold.*

admin@mmp-publishing.com

Copyright © 2008 MMP Publishing (Mary Margaret Park) – All rights reserved.