

# STAY SAFE



Unique Solutions for  
Women Who Live Alone



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## Chapter 1.

# Fear of Intruders at Night

## (You're not the only one afraid of the dark)

"Don't be afraid of being scared... Only complete idiots are not afraid of anything."  
— Carlos Ruiz Zafón, *The Angel's Game*

At three o'clock in the morning, I woke to the noise of a tremendous bang, and then to the sound of breaking glass! I lay still, straining to hear footsteps, but could hear nothing above the sound of my heart doing a drum-roll on my ribs. I visualized being beaten, robbed, or killed. I reminded myself that all the solid-core exterior doors were securely bolted and that no one could enter my home without setting off a series of alarms loud enough to wake the dead. No alarm had gone off.

Finally, I slipped out of bed. It was cold. I donned a sweater-coat, tiptoed to the bedroom door, and reached out to switch on the living room light. Nothing looked amiss. I went through my entire home, turning on the lights as I went. I checked the front door, the door that leads into the garage, and all the windows, one by one. Nothing.

Had I been dreaming? No, that sound had been *real!* I poured myself a glass of dry red wine, gulped it down, and returned to the bedroom. I bolted the door and crawled back into bed.

The next morning, I checked the doors and windows again but found nothing that could account for the noise in the night. (However, the mystery was later solved, which you will see as you read on.) I ground some Dunkin' Donuts coffee beans, got my Mr. Coffee machine ready to go, and sat down to wait for my morning coffee to brew. There was time to do some thinking...

If I, a man who lives in a home that is more secure than any other in the Pacific Northwest, can be so frightened of a loud noise in the night, what must it be like for a young woman living alone in a rental apartment on a low floor with flimsy locks, hollow-core doors, and no alarm system?

I poured myself a cup of steaming coffee and headed upstairs to my office to do a little internet research. I used phrases that included words like "fear," "woman," "alone," "rape," and "break-in." Here are three responses that I got from a single website called the health forum:

"I usually don't fall asleep until 3 or 4 in the morning if at all due to my obsessive fears that someone is going to break into my house, rape me and kill me. Maybe I watch too many crime shows or something, but this is the worst feeling in the world... I can't relax anymore...I am constantly scared to death. I keep pepper spray and kitchen knives near my bed at times to make myself feel protected... this cannot be normal. I don't know what to do."

"I am so scared all the time, so terrified at night that I cannot relax enough to sleep even when I am exhausted beyond belief. I live alone, which I'm sure is part of the problem, and I've had this overwhelming fear of someone breaking in and raping and murdering me. Every little noise makes me jump, and I get up ten thousand times a night to check all the windows and doors and peek into every closet and room of the apartment. I can't stand it anymore!"

"For the past year, I have been sharing the same bed with my best friend/roommate. When I sleep alone, I become panicky. My biggest fear is someone breaking in and raping her or me. I have always had this problem, but now it is almost unbearable. I also have horrible dreams that are centered around rape and break-ins. I have slept either in the same bed with her or in the same room for the past year. When I try sleeping alone, my body just melts. I can't breathe, I cry uncontrollably, and my mind races. I try to think of positive things, but the negative part takes over and changes any scenario into a sexually abusive one. My roommate has left this weekend and will not be back for a few days. I do not know how I will get through the night."

The primary audience for this book is women who live in fear that a burglar, rapist, or murderer will break into her apartment. Still, the advice also applies to single women with children, as well as married women whose husbands often travel and leave them home alone.

Others for whom this book is important are the parents of young women heading off to college. You parents have good reason to be concerned about your daughter who lives far away, perhaps alone, and in an environment where rapes frequently occur but are often unreported. (*Note:* Even if reported, rape is hard to prove. Therefore, when reported, nothing is usually done.) It is essential, therefore, that you take steps to have her fortify her room.

### ***Mystery Solved***

Are you still wondering what made that noise in the middle of the night? I finally noticed that a large picture that normally hangs above the piano was missing! It had come loose—perhaps from a tiny earth tremor—

and dropped behind the piano. The glass it was framed in had broken when the picture struck the hardwood floor.

## Chapter 2.

# Making Your Door More Secure

"Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than outright exposure.  
The fearful are caught as often as the bold."  
--Helen Keller

Here is what you should do first: Have a locksmith change the lock on the door. Why? Because there's no telling who might have a copy of your keys. It is not an expensive proposition, and it is your absolute best first step for keeping your apartment secure. The next step is to get a door-jammer such as the Buddybar, sold by Amazon. It is much stronger than the cheapie imitations sold in many hardware stores. Order two of these Buddybars. The first for your entrance door and the second for the door that leads into your bedroom.



One of the stories featured on a local Seattle TV news station was about a young woman who lived alone in an apartment just north of the city. The incident was reported to have begun the previous afternoon when the victim suddenly heard loud bangs on her door. One or more people were trying to kick it in. Fortunately, this woman always kept the entrance door barred with a door jammer. She raced to her bedroom, grabbed her cell phone, and called 911. By good fortune, a police car happened to be in the neighborhood, responded at once, and caught not one but *three* young men attempting to break down the door. (Apparently, none of the

neighbors were home at the time.) Had her apartment door not been barred; how different do you think the outcome might have been?

But what if you wake up and hear a crowbar on a door or window, or the noise of breaking glass? The next step must be to make the attacker turn away and run. You will learn how to do just that in the next chapter.

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