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Slenderman, European Myth Turned Game

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Dane Denison

My living room, Logan, Utah

November 9, 2017

“Slenderman, European Myth Turned Game”

Folk Belief

Informant:

Dane is my former roommate and good friend. He is 27 years old and a civil engineering major at Utah State University. He is an outgoing, fun loving guy, and likes a good scare from time to time. He is from Herriman, Utah, but has been up at Logan for quite a while now. He enjoys a good video game, has previously done some pretty adventurous outdoor work, and is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Context:

I initially asked Dane if he knew anything about Slenderman via text, and he proceeded to blow up my phone with info. I asked him if I could record him in person, and he came over around six in the evening, claiming he didn't know too much, and that he had discovered Slenderman initially and mainly through the video game, which his friends had showed him. He had done a bit of research back when he had played the games, so he actually had a ton of information.

Text:

It was just simply, a game where you find eight pages, and then, you find out the creepy way that once you find the eighth page, you still die. [I laugh] So, [he laughs] not fun. And I was like what's up with these random pages, what does this have to do with anything, who is this guy? Big, tall, slender, like, a white fabric, mask. or they say he had no face. So there's that. Um, we kept on playing more of the games as time kept on going, so for like two years I had no idea who he really was, I just, had fun playing the games with friends here and there. And then, I--, we finally started --, uh they made more games, and they made them more intricate. Um, I finally started, I started finally googling, who the heck he was. And -- so everything I know just comes from, like, Wikipedia. What, what I remember reading and looking into was that he's mostly just

like a myth, or a legend, you might say. Um, I first remember reading that it was --it had taken -- he was known throughout Norway, then I found out he was known in Germany, he was known in, uh, Denmark, so I honestly, it sounds like you got different names, and it's always the same kind of creature. The fact that, it's happening in different countries is, kind of creepy [I laugh], even if he's got a different name, he's mostly known, all the names kind of amounts to the same thing. A tall, slender, man in a black suit. No face. Um, other stories, what he's been known-the mos--what I've know, mainly know him as, is from the video games, the video games base it off of these myths as well, so it's kind of somewhat accurate, and the creepy part about it is that, as, he, tries to kidnap children, that's the main thing, in the video game you're just a grown man, but, in the myths, you know, he's always been seen in pictures by parks, or staring through a creepy window at the children he intends to kidnap, and any time, the children claim to see him through the window, or any time people claim to see him in their pictures, and there are apparently lots of pictures out there, you can find them all over google, of seeing this tall, creepy man off in the background, or in the shade, next, behind a tree or something, you know, a shady spot or whatever. Pun intended [we both laugh], but uh, [laughter], but he's literally like, when he's seen in those pictures, those children or that child, seems to disappear quick, afterwards. And they never know what he does with them, or where they end up, they just kind of--that's the kind of creepy part. Um, the creepy part, was in the myths though, that they displayed very well in the video games, and this is where a lot people get freaked out is, he's know to have, um, four, or sometimes even up to eight, like tentacles, that come out from his back, and then even at other times, as he get even closer and closer even his fingers start to extend, and more and more, and just basically look like this giant web coming around you, and some people say like, it's like

hypnotic, and like, it stuns them as it gets closer, um, or paralyzes them so they can't move, and so the game, basically, when you're playing it, if you see him, it kind of like, pauses you for a second, like you get--like you got to get--like screen jerks around, and gets fuzzy, and stuff, and the more you see him, the closer he can get to you. Um, the newest game of Slenderman does have its own story to it, it's very kind of, vague, the story, and I don't think any of has it to do with the actual Slenderman myth. [he chuckles] But, that's the gist of everything I know, so.

Texture:

Dane tried hard to be a helpful informant, but was clearly making sure that I knew all the information was secondhand, and internet based, but careful to be complete in his details. He didn't seem overly worried about the veracity of Slenderman during this part of the interview, emphasizing that the games were based on the European myths, and was casual, cracking the occasional joke. He broke off in the middle talking about the Slenderman film, but told me it had nothing to do with the myths, so it is not included here.

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