

Plano author Eddie Gresham spooks readers this Halloween in *Footfalls*

CHICAGO'S SMALL SUBURB OF NEW OBERLIN is icy cold and deathly quiet...except for the footfalls of a soul-snatching Saafsemat. Garbed in black boots and a black cloak, the ghost is snatching every neighborhood pet and bystander in its way. But only Jimmy Culver can hear its footfalls crunching in the snow. Whush...whush...whush....

Footfalls, by Plano author **Eddie Gresham**, is a 402-page suspense thriller that promises cliffhangers, romance, humor, and a chill to the bone. The book opens in 2007, when Jimmy, a computer technician in his mid-thirties, moves back to his hometown to start a new life. Sleepless nights, however, result from the sound of footfalls inching their way closer.

The sound is hauntingly familiar, and readers find out why in Book II. The author jumps back to 1977, when Jimmy is a child and witnesses the Saafsemat for the first time. Book III fast-forwards thirty years, when Jimmy finally stops the Saafsemat in his tracks...or at least tries to.

Footfalls is Eddie's first novel and loosely based on personal experiences. "As a kid I remember going to bed and hearing the whush, whush, whush," he said. "It sounded like footsteps, and I could picture someone outside walking in the snow. I would tell myself, Fall asleep before the steps get here."

At the time, Eddie didn't know the sound was his heartbeat echoing through the pillow. Being a fan of horror movies and TV shows like *The Twilight Zone*, *Amazing Stories* and *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* only amplified the suspense. "I had a vivid imagination growing up, so I definitely believed in ghosts. Each night, I'd check under the bed," the author said.

Eddie grew up in Springfield, Illinois, on the street that is described as Jimmy's neighborhood in *Footfalls*. So just how much does Jimmy's character in the book reflect Eddie? "A lot. Like me, Jimmy's interests lie in IT, sports, and animals. The character's best friend is Tobey, written around my best friend Rob Fix. Tobey's wife in the book, Ruby, is written around Rob's wife Renee."

Eddie and his own wife, Stacy, are celebrating their 17-year anniversary. They moved from Illinois to Nebraska so that Eddie could work for IBM. When he lost his job, as Jimmy does in the book, Eddie joined his friend Rob back in Illinois to do network consulting. Money was tight so Stacy stayed in Nebraska to pursue the mortgage business.

The couple was apart five years holding jobs in different states. Eddie drove seven hours each way to see Stacy on the weekends. "It was tough, but it was like dating again. Everybody always joked that's how we kept our marriage going," he laughed.

Toward the end of 2003, Stacy was asked to come to Plano to work at Countrywide Financial. "We decided we had been apart long enough," said Eddie, and the couple moved south with their eight cats and three dogs.

Today, Eddie works at Realpage, Inc., but before he landed the job, ample free time opened the door for his writing career. "When I was consulting and driving a lot in between cities, ideas would pop into my head and I thought, Someday it would be nice to put that down in a book. After we moved to Plano, I finally sat down one night and wrote the prologue to *Footfalls*."

Profile photo



Author **Eddie Gresham** based *Footfalls* on his own experiences—and what he perceived as footsteps outside his window every night as a child.

The author spent over an hour on the two-page prologue making sure every word was perfect. Then, after a week of keeping his novel idea a secret, Eddie approached Stacy. "When I finally got the nerve to tell her, she read the first three pages and said, 'You need to keep going. This is good.' So that motivated me to finish it."

The computer-science major from St. Louis University admitted, "I didn't know what I was doing, I've always been an avid reader, but I didn't grow up dreaming to be a writer."

Eddie dreamt of being a professional baseball player. When he wasn't up to bat, he was sitting down with Stephen King, Michael Crichton, or John Grisham. "I would read a few pages every night... it's nice to leave your worries behind and lose yourself in a book."

Some readers compare *Footfalls* to Stephen King's books without the gore, according to the author. The upside? Teenagers enjoy it. In fact, on the same day that *BookList* reviewed *Footfalls* for Young Adults, the book was nominated for an Alex Award, given by the Young Adult Library Services Association for books that have special appeal to teenagers.

Said Eddie, "I didn't want to get pigeonholed as a teen writer, but readers are readers so it doesn't matter. I didn't write *Footfalls* to get rich and famous. I felt great to just write it."

Order *Footfalls* at Barnes & Noble or at amazon.com. Or, purchase the book at eddiegrisham.com/purchase.html. Use the 'PETS' discount code, and \$5 will be donated to Operation Kindness, a no-kill animal shelter. Copies ordered from the author's Web site will be autographed. — **BRITNEY PORTER**

excerpt

From *Footfalls*, Book 2, Chapter 17

Jimmy felt the hair on his neck standing up as he stared at the figure. He wanted to tear his eyes away from the image, but couldn't. He scanned up from the boot tip and cloak bottom, looking for any other shapes or distinguishing features, but was met only with darkness....



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