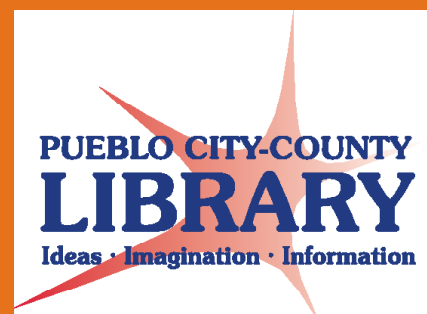


Pueblo City-County Library District

# 29<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL SCARY STORY CONTEST



## WINNING STORIES 2021





# Pueblo City-County Library District

# 2021 Scary Story Contest

Pueblo City-County Library District, in cooperation with the Friends of the Library, is pleased to announce the winners of the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Scary Story Contest. Budding writers, from second grade to adult, were invited to enter the creative writing contest. Mysterious, suspenseful or humorous scary tales of a non-violent nature were judged by the Friends of the Library. Entries were judged for characterization, plot, description, dialog, setting, theme and originality. Winners received a certificate of achievement, a booklet with all of the winning stories, and a \$10 gift certificate to Books Again, the Friends of the Library's used book store. All participants received a certificate of recognition.

The judges were Friends of the Library board members Jean Eskra, Chrissy Holliday, Sofia Madeen, Ronda Rein, Erik Segall, and Sherry Wingo. There were 611 entries this year. The library wishes to thank the many teachers who supported the creative writing experience by having their students enter the contest. We look forward to receiving your work again next year!

# WINNERS

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

Dion Johnson

Ilan Murad

Jenaveve Lucero

Columbian Elementary School – Ms. Navarro

McClelland School - Ms. Melchi

Goodnight School - Mrs. Hillebrand

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

Jayce Rios

Zaiden Sanchez

Goodnight School - Ms Waller

St. John Neumann Catholic School - Mrs. Baker

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

J.T. Daniel

Matteo Picicci

Samantha Saint Cuppy

St. John Neumann Catholic School - Mrs. Meier

McClelland School - Mrs. King

Sunset Park Elementary School - Mr. Tapia

## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Grayson Garcia

Isabella Lopez

Heather Saldana

St. John Neumann Catholic School - Mr. Zschokke

Villa Bella Expeditionary School - Mr. McNierney

Park View Elementary School - Ms. Ribal

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Sarah Baros

Xavier Gonzalez

Kean Inocencio

Goodnight School - Mr. Moore

Goodnight School - Mrs. Sandstrom

Sky View Middle School - Mrs. Clark

# WINNERS

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

Jenessa Dwight

Simona Rowell

Mauricio Valenzuela

Pueblo Academy of Arts - Ms. Wyatt

Homeschool - Mrs. Rowell

Connect Charter School - Mr. Preston

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Breckin Weatherford

Joseph Welte

Joanna Wietzke

Connect Charter School - Mr. Preston

St. John Neumann Catholic School - Mrs. See

Homeschool - Ms. Wietzke

## High School

Rosemaree Coughlin

Jenna Lewis

Carter Madrid

Pueblo County High School - Mrs. Baker

Centennial High School - Mrs. Blackmore

East High School - Mr. Gradisar

## Adult

Marka Rapenchuk



# Untitled

## Dion Johnson

First, one foggy morning, I was walking to school and saw a creepy looking man. Next, he had big bulging eyes, a hairy nose and rats coming out of his hair. Then I noticed that he followed me to school. I was scared! After that, I kept hearing him whisper my name. He was lurking in the window. Finally, I was just about ready to scream and then, I woke up!

# The Secrets of the Pumpkin Patch

## Ilan Murad

Once there were three boys; Red, Gabe and Ace. Red was 10, Gabe was nine and Ace was seven. They had been on a lot of cool quests but this one was going to be nothing like the others. This one they will stay the night at a pumpkin patch but it was abandoned. They got in the car. “Where are we going?” asked Ace. “We are going to an abandoned pumpkin patch,” said Red. “We’re here!” said Gabe. They went in. They were already hearing something. The boys went to the corn maze where they heard it. Suddenly things started to pop. They were goblins. The boys ran for their lives. Then a clown and scarecrow came out. They ran as fast as they could. They stopped and Red got a pick axe, Gabe got a shovel. They fought and at the end, the boys won.



# Untitled

## Jenaveve Lucero

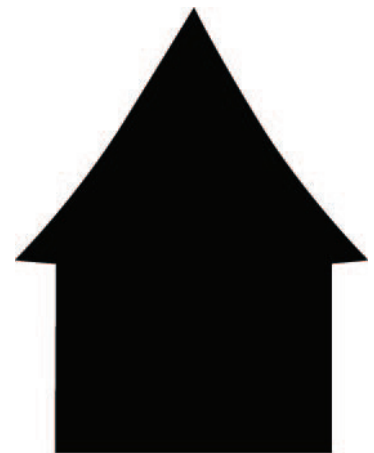
One weird Halloween, a spooky ghost was seen floating around my scary neighborhood. I decided I was going to catch it! I jumped out the door. The thing was hiding by a big hotel when I found it. "Stop!" I yelled. It threw a chair at me and booed. I jumped on my white horse and chased it as far as I could but fell on a smashed pumpkin and hurt my chest. I closed my eyes from the gross pain. When I opened them, I was lying in a pile of pieces of pumpkin. It was the scariest Halloween ever!

# The Killer Clowns

## Jayce Rios

Once upon a time Charlie and I went to the circus. We went into a tent. There were many people but there were creepy, menacing clowns. We drove home and I went straight to sleep. To my amazement I woke up in a forest. I heard a chuckle. All of a sudden a clown started running after me so I started running fast. I was backed up into a tree surrounded by killer clowns. I was panicking, the clowns were getting closer and closer, with each step my heart was pounding out of my chest. To my surprise I saw a blue door. I bolted towards the door but it was locked. I texted Charlie "where are you?" Charlie texted back and said "I see you." I was replying back but with every press of the keyboard I heard a honk. Looking down at my cell phone I watched it transform into a big cherry red rubber clown nose. I closed my eyes tight and I said "this can't be real!"

This has to be a dream!" IT'S A DREAM IT'S A DREAM IT'S A DREAM. Then I jolted up and I opened my eyes and looked around. Then I realized I am in my room, in my bed. Then with a big sigh of relief I say "it was just a dream, a NIGHTMARE!" I laid down on my soft pillow to look out the window into the cool night sky. My eyes slowly close while my body relaxes to the soothing sounds of crickets chirping. When I was on the verge of a deep sleep, outside my window comes a HONK HONK .





# The Creepy Slide

## Zaiden Sanchez

Once upon a time a boy was playing on the playground and it felt very unsteady and then later that same day he went outside to play again and after it started to smell like candy. Then when he was about to go down the slide a board collapsed on him and many hours later he woke up to be stuck in the playground. He was trying to find a shelter for the night but he found a supply closet and he slept in the chair for the night. The next morning was Saturday so no one was at St. John Neumann Catholic School so he tried to find a way to escape but he would rather have food and a shelter but he only found 4 logs and an old cracker and he just fell asleep in a chair. Then he decided to build a shelter out of the materials from the playground equipment.

Now there was a search party looking for the boy. They yelled his name frantically, "Adam!" Adam was sitting right in front of the search party but, somehow, they could not see him or hear him with the playground equipment around him. Each time the search party called out Adam's name, the playground equipment roared and glowed. Adam felt afraid and panicked. Adam began to think of his home and if he would ever get back there again. Adam suddenly began to cry and he fell asleep.

Bang! The loud noise startled Adam awake. Adam immediately noticed something different about the playground equipment. There was a flickering light on top of the monkey bars. Adam became curious about the light and stood up and walked toward it. He felt scared but he was determined to get home and he knew the light might be a way back home. Adam gathered his courage as he stepped into the light and disappeared. Adam fell and fell and fell and fell until he hit the ground with a crash! He could smell some burning firewood and he could hear cackling. Adam saw a piece of paper on the ground. Adam picked up the paper and it was a shopping list: stinky cheese, blood punch, witch jam, dirt cookies, eyeball soup, goblin lollipop. "Yuck! What kind of shopping list is this?!" said Adam. Adam could see that he was in a cave. He walked a short distance before he could hear gurgling. Adam slowly peeked around the corner and saw a witch! Adam could see the witch clearly as she stepped up to her cauldron. The witch had a black, pointy hat and her face was covered with warts. Her skin glowed green. Adam also saw that the witch had a big, long broom in the corner. The witch turned and walked away down a tunnel. Cautiously, Adam moved closer to the cauldron to find out what the witch was cooking. He saw a recipe book next to the cauldron. The book was open to a recipe called Goopy Zombie Cake. The ingredients were: spider eggs, jellyfish, and eyeballs. Adam was so horrified by the recipe that he didn't notice the witch creep up behind him. In a voice that sounded like a croaking frog, the witch yelled at Adam, "You are trying to steal my spells!" Adam was so startled he shrieked and dropped the recipe book into the cauldron. The witch squealed and screamed, "My recipes!" The cauldron rumbled and gurgled and exploded with a kaboom!

Sometime later Adam woke up with a very angry witch staring at him. Adam could feel that he was covered in sticky, slimy ooze. The witch shouted at Adam, "Why are you here?!" Adam panicked and jumped to his feet and ran and ran until he was out of breath. Adam was so terrified that all he could get out was, "Please don't hurt me." The witch bellowed back, "I've never hurt anyone in my life! But you hurt me because you destroyed my book." Adam whispered, "I'm sorry. I just want to go home." The witch asked Adam how he had gotten here. Adam told the witch the whole story about the playground and the mysterious light. The witch sighed and asked Adam where he wanted to go back to. Adam answered, "St. John Neumann Catholic School on October 31, 1927." The witch moaned and said with a smirk, "Gee, I thought you were going to ask for something much harder than that." Adam giggled and felt hopeful at last. The witch whistled loudly and the broom appeared. The witch said to Adam, "Hop on!" Adam took a step toward the broom and then stopped and asked the witch, "Why do you believe me?" The witch cackled, "This same thing happens to some kid about every 94 years on October 31." Adam jumped on the broom and the witch whistled again and the broom flew out of the cave and high up into the sky when they were over St. John Neumann Catholic School, the witch pushed Adam off the broom. Adam screamed as he fell with his eyes closed tight.

Adam was still screaming when he felt a tap on his shoulder. It was his friend from school. "What are you screaming about," said his friend. "Tag, your it!" Adam was back on the school playground. And as he began to run after his friend, he heard way up in the sky a voice says with a cackle, "I'll be seeing the next kid in 94 years!" "Wow," thought Adam, that won't be for a very long time; October 31, 2021 to be exact

# J.T. Daniel

## The Appalachian Escape

I will never forget that day. It was September 9, 1908. We woke up that foggy morning and hopped in the truck with all the gear. Dad, Jackie, and I were going camping in the Appalachian Mountains. We arrived three hours later and set up camp. As I unrolled my tent, hundreds of crickets hopped out. I was disgusted! I decided I would share a tent with my dad that night. We wanted to have a fire to help keep us warm, so Jackie and I set out to gather wood. We found an area where there were a bunch of dried out sticks. As we gathered the firewood, we noticed the fog rolling in thicker. Pretty soon it was so thick that we couldn't see camp in the distance anymore.

As we made our way back from the direction we thought we came, Jackie and I got separated. I yelled her name and waited, but there was no answer. My heart was racing really fast and I grabbed my phone out of my pocket to call Dad. There was no service so I decided to yell out for Dad. I screamed for him loudly but there was no answer. I was stranded in the forest all alone. Suddenly I heard a high pitched "SCREEEEEEEECH !!!!!" from behind the tree to my right. I could barely see, but a tall white figure popped out and I took off through the forest. It chased after me. I could hear the footsteps close behind me! I hit the ground and the pine needles scratched my arms as I was tackled to the ground. I hit the figure repeatedly and barely got away.

I saw a fire off in the distance and I raced back to camp. Dad and Jackie were sitting by the fire and looked surprised to see me. I told them we must hop in the truck and leave immediately. I told them a scary creature had tried to take me. On the ride home I explained how I escaped by the skin of my teeth. I will never know what chased me through the woods but I am never stepping foot in that forest again!

# Halloween Movie Theater Madness

## Matteo Picicci

One Halloween night, Matteo was with his friends in the kitchen. They were getting some snacks when Matteo's phone started buzzing loudly. Matteo clicked on his phone and a video alert from the police started playing. Matteo and his friends watched the video and suddenly froze. The news showed a bald person wrapped in cloth strips who escaped from a mental asylum. He believed he was a mummy like the one Matteo saw at the Rosemount Museum. He was yelling about how the cloth was covered with a sticky substance and he couldn't get it off without dying. 10 minutes later they were watching TV when a movie ad popped up for a scary 3D movie. At the same time they all said "Let's go watch that!" So they all went to the movies in their cars. When they got there Alessia's phone started buzzing with an alert. It said the mummy was in the area. They didn't really care, though, and they went into the theater anyway. Ashlyn, Irah, Alessia and Jenna all silenced their phones, and bought popcorn, snacks and soda with their tickets. When they got into the movie room, they put on the 3D glasses and "The Curse of Egypt" came on the screen. 20 minutes later, they were watching the movie when suddenly there was a super scary part. They all said "that is so realistic!" The mummy looked like he was popping right out of the screen. Then, he started to approach them. They all took off their 3D glasses and right in front of them was...

### Part 2:

...the actual mummy that had escaped from the asylum. They all jumped up and popcorn flew in the air. Matteo and his friends sprinted like cheetahs. They ran so fast you almost couldn't see them moving. They saw a dark hallway in the building so they ran in to hide from the horrendous mummy. They couldn't see anything because it was as dark as ash. Suddenly, Ashlyn's corgi disappeared and they all became scared. They didn't know where Ashlyn's corgi was.

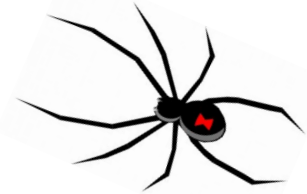
Then they heard a faint groaning. They heard a loud thump. They went to check it out and saw the mummy on the floor. The cloth and glue had come off because he got caught on a loose screw and unraveled. Instead of speaking mummy talk, he moaned "Ooooh, what happened?!" The kids saw that he had turned back into a regular boy. The next week, he started attending their school. THE END OR IS IT... ?

# The Creepy Doll

## Samantha Saint Cuppy

There were two friends, Emily and Sarah, and they were going on a camping trip. They found a spot and decided to set up camp. After they put up the tent Sarah heard a sound. Sara asked Emily, "Did you hear something?" Emily responded, "Hear what?" Then came the sound again. "La la la la la." "What was that?" Emily asked. They looked around trying to find where the sound was coming from. Suddenly, a loud crack came from the woods, Both Emily and Sarah screamed and hid in their tents. After waiting a couple minutes, they came out of their tents and standing just out in the distance was a tall shadow. "What is that?" asked Sarah. "I don't know," whispered Emily, afraid. The shadow then just disappeared into thin air, curious Sarah walked over to where the shadow was standing. What are you doing!?" yelled Emily. "Don't you want to know what that thing was?" asked Sarah. "No I don't, I just want to get out of here." "Oh come on Emily, it could be fun."

Sarah started to walk towards the spot where the shadow was, and Emily sprinted towards her saying, "Don't leave me alone." Then the sound again, "La la la la la. The sound was coming from the tree where the shadow was. They reached the tree only to find an old doll sitting there. "It's just an old doll," said Sarah. "Then what was that thing?" asked Emily. "I don't know, it was probably just our imagination." Thinking that everything was okay they headed back to their camp site and went to bed. The morning finally came, there was no sign of the shadow and the doll was gone. "Maybe whoever it belonged to finally came and got it," said Sarah. "Yeah maybe," said Emily. They packed up camp and started on their way home. While driving Emily looked out the window and saw the shadow standing on the side of the road waving at them. "Did you see that?" asked Emily. "See what, there's nothing," said Sarah driving. "It was the shadow from last night," trembled Emily. "No there's no..." Sarah suddenly stopped. "What is it?" asked Emily, now terrified. "Look in the back," whispered Sarah. Emily slowly turned around only to see the doll sitting in the backseat of their car singing, "La la la la la."



# The Robber

## Grayson Garcia

We were watching TV in the living room. The room was dark, and we were watching Big City Greens. Our parents were at work, all us four kids were left home alone. We were very happy. The house was silent except for the TV blaring. We were sitting and glaring into the TV screen. Occasionally we would break the silence by starting to crack up when Elias farted out of nowhere. This went on for hours. It was so funny. Until it happened. The room went dead silent.....

We sat in dead silence when the doorbell rang loudly. We were terrified. We paused the TV and shut off all the lights. Elias stopped farting. The loud DDIINNGG-DONG was followed by a loud knock on the wooden door. We were frozen with shock. We did not know what to do. One part of us said, "Listen to your parents and don't answer it." But the other half of us said, "Do it! Do it! Do it!!" The tension got the best of Christian. Of course, it had to be Christian. He got up. He crept slowly, and out of sight. He looked up and out of the window only to see.....

He looked up and saw with his two eyes, a tall man with blond hair, and dark sunglasses. Christian was almost seen by the blond haired, dark sun glassed man. Christian got back up, and looked through the window one more time. The tall man was holding a toolbox full of sharp-edged supplies. He went to his truck and got a ladder! Christian nearly passed out. He got up and ran back to the living room. He told us about what he had seen. We were all in shock. We got down under the couch on our stomachs, and layed there for at least ten whole minutes. Right when we were about to get out, we heard his large heavy boots pounding on the roof. Stomp, stomp, stomp, stomp. It seemed as if he were trying to find a way in. When it sounded like he was right above us, we moved to a different room. It felt like he was going to fall right

through the roof right on top of us, so we moved to the basement. My sister and I started getting bored, so she played with her Barbies and I played Legos.

My two older brothers, Christian and Elias were wide eyed watching and listening for the tall man, and keeping track of where he was. They didn't take their eyes off the basement door. When Andi and I started getting too loud they would quietly yell, "Stop it!" and we would quiet down for a couple of minutes before crashing and bashing our toys again. We were in the basement for an hour before we decided to go back upstairs. We got upstairs and headed to the couch to see the TV showing images of forests and oceans. It is like what a computer would do if was on and not being used, it would fall asleep. We did not hear stomping for the next few minutes and then it started again. By that time, we were all scared out of our wits. We had no... idea... what... to... do.

Christian forgot everything our parents told him to do if there was a burglar while we were home alone. But of course, Elias, A.K.A, the "Perfect Angel Child," had remembered what to do. Our parents said if we ever run into this situation, we need to go outside, climb into our tree house, jump the fence to Miss Linda and neighbor Bill's backyard and knock on their door like a child running from a blood vicious tiger. So, that's exactly what we did.

We sprinted to the back door, unlocked it and ran onto the deck. We ran for the tree house, but of course Christian got into the shed and grabbed the shovel. At that point I was ready to give myself up to the burglar. Christian was shouting, "Go guys, I'll hold him off!!" I nearly climbed up the ladder, to deliver myself to the burglar. As we were climbing the tree house and about to jump the fence, Christian still on the ground with his shovel waiting for the burglar, the strangest thing happened. Our friend's dad looked over the roof and said, "Hi Garcia kids! Your dad asked me to look at the roof and check for hail damage." Oops!

# Story Time

## Isabella Lopez



Once upon a Halloween night, there was a little boy named Willy and his sister Lily. They lived in a neighborhood, it was a sweet town until? There was a saying that the house they lived next to was was

.....Haunted! They say there was a lady that had lived there she went missing three years ago at 3 a.m. she heard something kinda like a scream from the woods. She got closer then boom! She was missing the next day. Now the house was abandoned and broken down. Of course Willy did not believe that, he just thought the house was too old. He came up with a plan, he was going to go around the house with a camera and see if this house was really haunted. So one night he snuck out and slowly went into the house. The floor was so creaky. He was heading up the stairs. Just then he heard something, outside like a scream. He went outside and looked in the bushes.....and Aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa. The next day he disappeared and never returned. The end.

### The Story Teller

Oh! Hello I didn't see you there do you want to hear a story. Yes, OK have a seat it might get scary so let me think oh yes our story begins in a house on fire street our hero Barbra was home alone on the couch eating pickles her parents went to the movie theatre to watch Free Guy and what she didn't know was she was being watched oh hold on commercial break.

### *BUY MR. CLEAN*

Sorry I have to make money somehow now where were we oh yes suddenly she saw a face through the window BUM BUM BUM! Anyway bla bla bla she gets chased around and it was just her friend NOW the exciting part her friend went home and Barbra went back to the couch and ate more pickles and she lived happily ever after ha ha ha I'm just kidding it's not that type of story her friend heard SCREAMING from Barbara's house and she hid she heard police sirens and ambulances and all she could think was NOOOOOOOO now I have to find a new friend that one took so long dang it. Well I didn't tell you it would be that scary oh I did well no refunds RUN. OK fine, I guess you paid for a good story now once there was was a kid named \_\_\_\_\_ and he look in the mirror ohhhhhh burn.

Fine I'll tell you a real one you're so needy. Anyway it was a dark and stormy night ugh I know its cliché but someone kicked the bucket the end wooo OK I'm kidding man some people can't take a joke now it was a dark and stormy night and a little kid named Arnold was wandering up and down the streets on Halloween night and suddenly a clown comes out of the sewers and grabs him what no I didn't steal that from "It" how dare you say that now if you'll excuse me I'm going to continue OK so he gets pulled in and the clown ate dinner with him muwa ha ha ha what it is scary ohhh I worded it wrong little Arnold was the dinner what ok fine if you don't want it to be short the clown let's call him Quarterwise or no Quarterwise said I'm a gonna eat ya and Arnold ran as fast as he could and suddenly flew into the sky and said ha ha Quarterwise I actually have powers and flew away and never returned a few years later Quarterwise was watching the news and a new hero spectacular man had saved the day once again Quarterwise looked up spectacular man and it said he could fly and had laser vision and had a square shaped bit in his hair Quarterwise dropped his soup and said "LITTLE ARNOLD" and spectacular man came and took Quarterwise out. What that was great OK well I've told you so many story's thanks for the grand oh you didn't know I took all this from you that was the real terrifying part you can't do your taxws IDIOT, WHAT A NERD NO MORE MR. CLEAN SPONSORSHIPS WOOOOO ugh fine you can have it back NOT RUN gotta go FAST.

# The Chuck E Cheese Incident

## Heather Saldana

One day a family was wondering what to eat for the night. They thought of a restaurant to eat at. Since they were gonna go get Chuck E Cheese. They thought for a moment and they changed their minds and we went to McDonalds instead. The little girl was so excited she didn't see the warning on the TV. A few hours later after they got back they turned on the news and the daughter was shocked by what she saw. It was the same exact Chuck E Cheese that they were going to eat at. Apparently, there was a child missing and two other ones were murdered in the ladies bathroom. Even though the family barely goes there anymore, she was terrified of what happened there. She told her parents that she's scared and doesn't want to go to bed. Her parents said, "oh don't worry its just a coincidence this neighborhood is like that anyway." She said "okay" then she went to bed and she told her parents good night and slept.

Then she heard a weird screech and she hid under her blankets. She heard the floor was creaking very loudly and someone was banging on the bedroom door. She screamed and woke up. It was just a dream! She told her parents but they said, "you will be okay". A few days later when the little girl and her family were watching TV. The news came on and said "Lock down. We repeat lock down. Hide your family and protect your friends. There's a dangerous killer on the loose!"

The parents told the little girl to hide in the basement, get the dog, and snacks. She ran downstairs and cried herself to sleep. She heard a noise again. She awoke and saw a tall, mouse figure in the doorway. Apparently that killer was a man dressed in a Chuck E Cheese outfit who lured children and put them in a secret basement under the Chuck E Cheese stage. He lets them rot there. Legends say that you can smell the rotten kids under the stage. The man was soon caught, but the parents didn't make it. The girl was soon placed in an orphanage with her dog, Buddy. This is why you must be careful about who you choose to go with. Even if that person might be nice and give treats, that person could really be a killer in disguise.

# The Evil Thing

## Sarah Baros

It was October 30, a stormy day, a girl named Mazzy was on her way to the bookstore. As she walked to the bookstore she passed a store that was down a long alley, it said "Halloween Store" Mazzy loved Halloween and decided to go in. As she walked in she saw a lot of scary Halloween masks and props. She looked around the store some more and saw a piano with fake spiders on it. She went to touch one but then it moved because it was actually real. Then the owner of the shop appeared out of nowhere and startled her. The owner of the shop said "Looking for anything in particular?" in a deep and dark voice. Mazzy then said "Got any books?" The owner said "Yes" and told her to follow him. As Mazzy got to the book section there was only one book on the shelf. She said "That's it?" the owner said "Yes that's it." She grabbed the book, it was called "The Evil Thing". She tried to open it but it was locked. The owner of the shop said "Buy it and you get the key" Mazzy then said "OK, how much?" the owner said "What's your offer?" she said "Five bucks?" "Sold" said the owner. The owner gave her the key then rushed Mazzy out of the store. Mazzy walked out of the store and out of the alley. She got the key and opened the book. When she opened the book a huge gust of wind blew the fall leaves everywhere. While the wind was blowing she read the first page, it said "Do not read aloud" then she closed the book and decided to go home. When she got home she went up to her room and decided that she would take a nap. Later, she woke up and it was getting dark outside. Her mom came into her room and asked her if she could baby sit her little brother and take him trick or treating tomorrow night which was Halloween night. Mazzy said "Why?" "Because I have to work a night shift at work" said her Mom. "OK, fine" said Mazzy. The next day, It was the morning of Halloween, Mazzy woke up and she wasn't really looking forward to baby sitting her little brother. She got up and got ready for the day. When she was done getting ready she grabbed the book "The Evil Thing" that she bought yesterday. She flipped through the pages just to see if it was scary and it was so she decided to read to her little brother later that night just to scare him because he gets scared easily. For the rest of the day Mazzy helped clean the house and chilled in her room. Later, their mom got home very early in the morning and she went to the living room and saw something in the fireplace, it was the book, it never burned. She then read it aloud and a big shake shook the house...



# Dead Space

## Xaiver Gonzalez

### Log 1

This is General Meyers, I got word that the colony ship is going off course and has stopped moving. I am sending ten engineers on this mission to assist. This is a rescue mission to retrieve all human life on board. I am not certain why the colony ship has gone off course because we have lost all communication.

### Log 2

This is General Meyers, our ten engineers have reached the colony ship and the life support seems to be down. At least our engineers have their own oxygen packs and will be able to have enough oxygen to get them through the repairs. They are searching for backup oxygen suits that should be on board.

### Log 3

This is General Meyers and I received this message. This is Private Woods, there were sounds in the vent all around us. I got lost from the rest of my rescue party. I went down a hall and saw strange writing on the walls. It said, "MAKE US WHOLE." I don't know what this means. I am unable to locate the rest of my party and I have not seen any colonists. I am headed to the nursery next to check on the cryo chamber.

I will keep you updated, Private Woods out.

### Log 4

This is Private Woods, I made it to the cryo chamber and something is not right with the unborn colonists. They, they, well, they look strange I mutated, not right, I am still alone, can you hear me? General Meyers, are you there? Is anyone there?

### Log 5

This is Private Woods, can anyone hear me? The power has gone out and the backup generator is not kicking on. I only have lights on my visor to see with. I am trying to get to the bridge ASAP. I am still alone with no signs of anyone else. Please come in if you can hear me.

### Log 6

This is Private Woods. I have reached the bridge, there is banging coming from the vents in the walls all around me. I don't understand what is going on. Oh, wait is that you, Sergeant Adams? No, no wait, I need to get out of here...Sergeant Adams is, he's, the eyes. Red glowing eyes, Sergeant Adams is a zombie.

Private Woods ran for his life as more and more of his crew members came after him. They were screaming, "Make Us Whole." Private Woods gasped as he turned the corner and saw several of the colonists twisted, with flesh falling off of their bones, also screaming, "Make Us Whole." He ran, and ran but no matter what direction he went there were colonists surrounding him. He found a plasma cutter in the equipment that they brought on board. He powers it on and start defending himself against the zombies that are coming at him 10 fold now. He rushed back to the hanger and boards his ship barely escaping the angry mob. He starts the ship and returns to base where he finds General Meyers sitting in his chambers.

Sir, it was horrible, the colony and crew are lost, exclaims Private Woods. General Meyers turns and says with a smile, I know, there should have been no survivors. Space is not alive, it is a Dead Space!

In space no one can truly hear you scream. Right private?.

# House of Horrors

## Kean Inocencio

Yasmina and her friend, Alice, were walking home from after school studying. They passed a rusty bridge that led to the Housington Mansion. Alice stopped at the foot of the bridge and said, “Hey, let’s check out the Housington Mansion!”

“Are you out of your mind?! That place is haunted by the twins that got killed there!” Yasmina said.

“That’s why I want to go there! Come on Yas! Live a little! Or are you just too scared to go see?” Alice said. “No, I’m not scared. I just know what happened there.” Yasmina said, shaking Alice. “Well, if you’re going to be a chicken, fine! I’m going.” Alice stepped on the wobbly bridge and disappeared into the damp fog. “Alice, wait!” Yasmina chased after her friend with hesitation. “Come closer” Yasmina stopped with a shiver going up and down her spine. “W-who’s there?!” Yasmina stuttered. She heard a noise in the form of a little girl’s laugh. “I’ll ask a-again! Who’s there?! Alice, you better not be pranking me right now!” She really hoped it was Alice. Then she heard humming and footsteps coming behind her. Yasmina turned around and nothing was there. “Hello, why are you here?” She heard two distorted voices coming from behind. Again no one was there. Yasmina continued to cross the bridge slowly.

“It’s fine! Totally fine! You’re just getting your friend! Yeah!” Yasmina thought she was walking on a bridge that had no end, the bridge was longer than it should’ve been. “Yassie!” She heard someone calling her name in a scared manner.

Alice, she thought. She chased after the voice, that she didn’t notice that the fog had lifted, that she didn’t notice the bridge was going over a bridge that covered a 50 foot river. “Oh, Yasmina!” She heard the voice again. She didn’t stop running, she didn’t stop until she reached the end. Then she saw it. At the foot of the bridge, there was a pair of non-identical twins, standing there, staring at her. They had pale skin and purple lips and white dresses full of red stains. Yasmina took a step back. She knew she had to go to her friend at the porch of the old, creaky house, but she couldn’t pass through because of the fear she was producing. The little girls stayed silent, still staring at Yasmina, sensing her fear.

They seemed familiar to Yasmina. “Ooh! I know who you two are! You’re Margaret and Marjorie Housington, the two who were choked to d-death.” Yasmina said, quaking in her boots. “You know who we are?” The twins said simultaneously.

“Yehh, you guys died 135 years ago, in 1886.” Yasmina said, still shaking. “Dead?” They said, still simultaneous.

“Y-yeah.” Yasmina said, “You didn’t know?”

“No. We thought you and your friend wanted to play with us.” The twins said, pointing at Alice. Alice was still, eyes almost blank, and tied to a chair surrounded with old stuffed dolls that were in pieces. “What are you doing to Alice?” Yasmina asked, trying to sound calm but failed. “We are playing a game called Friend. We sing and skip around the chair. We throw things at her, that is why it is called Friend. We are playing with our Friend.”

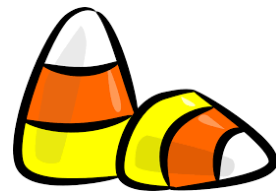
Yasmina stood there, staring at Alice. She isn’t moving, Yasmina thought, terrified at the idea that she was dead. She was so focused on Alice, that she didn’t notice that the ghosts had moved behind her. “Are you here to play with us too?” The ghosts said in a distorted voice. Yasmina jumped, startled. They stepped forward, making Yasmina step back. This is my chance, Yasmina thought. She ran to Alice, still tied up to the chair. She started untying Alice, trying to be quick. “WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!” the twins said, distorted, loud, and simultaneous. Yasmina jumped at the booming shriek, while Alice was still unconscious on her back. She opened the door, and slammed it shut. She grabbed two dusty chairs and put them under the door knobs to keep the ghosts from coming in, for a time at least. Margaret and Marjorie started screaming and banging on the door. Yasmina panicked. She looked for a hiding spot. She spotted a small spandrel that would hold them both. The twins still shrieking and banging their fists on the door. Yasmina wasted no time jumping in the spandrel and locking the closet door with an old scarf she had found in a pile of musty rugs. She heard the door be kicked down. “YASMINA!” She heard the ghost twins shrieking from the small compartment. She saw Marjorie pass the cabinet in the door crack, she also saw her feet shadow under the door since it was under the stairs. Alice started waking up, and with a groan, she said, “Where are we?” Yasmina quickly covered Alice’s mouth with her hand. Marjorie and Margaret started trying to kick the door down. Alice and Yasmina panicked, they covered themselves in old clothes and jackets that smelled of moth. “I think we’re safe,” Alice said, speaking too soon. “Boo.” Marjorie said, kicking the spandrel door down and dragging Alice out by the feet. “Alice!” Yasmina said, grabbing Alice’s hands. Yasmina and Marjorie were fighting over Alice, Marjorie by the feet, and Yasmina by the hands. Out of nowhere, Margaret jumped from the ceiling to the floor, scaring Yasmina, making her let go of Alice. Alice screamed, as she was dragged to the basement, never to be seen again. Yasmina cried as she ran out the door, and crossed the bridge.

A month had passed since Alice had been missing, thought dead. They held a funeral for 11 year old Alice. Yasmina’s guilt of leaving Alice in that awful place left her cold hearted. This event hit no one as hard as it did on Yasmina. “Someday, I will go back to that place, and end them...” Yasmina angrily said.



# Untitled

## Jennessa Dwight



Something has trapped JJ Cole's spirit and it is locked away in an attic. The terror began when a young girl released the spirit. Now Cole's spirit makes her life a living nightmare.

This is a story about JJ Cole. He died in 1943 in his house but before he died he had transferred his spirit into a lamp. Fifteen years later a girl named Emily and her mom and dad moved into the house. She was exploring all the rooms, her parents were downstairs and didn't care. They were too busy working, Emily was walking with a flashlight because there were no light bulbs. Stopping in her tracks, a string flew across her face. She was very confused but pulled it away. The door opened and a ladder came down. "Dad, did you know we had an attic?" Emily yelled. Dead silence, all you could hear was the clicking of the keyboard. Emily rolled her eyes and went upstairs. And her flashlight went out. She threw it down and kept walking, eventually she felt something hit her face. "Ahhhhhhh!" Emily murmured and grabbed it. "Oh it's just a light, she pulled it. "Finally light." She started exploring the attic. "Wow, there must be a lot of expensive things, maybe even worth millions maybe." It was full of gold and silver coins, a mirror, goblets and more. "Hmmm I wonder if we can get rich off this stuff," she thought. She walked deeper into the room to see what there was and saw a lamp. "Ohh I hope it's like those fairy tales were a genie comes out, it could be. But probably not."

So she picked it up and rubbed it. "Woow." She started floating and glowing, lights were flickering on and off. "Ahhhh," she screams as JJ Cole's spirit comes out. "Boo," JJ Cole shrieked. She snapped out of her paralyzation. She screamed and ran downstairs. "Mom, mom, dad," she screamed. "Something in the attic is losing it's mind." "Stop bothering us you know how important our jobs are," her parents yelled. "Bbb-ut," Emily stutters. "Stop it, go to your room!" her parents yelled. "You never have time for me, I wish you weren't even alive!" she yelled back while going upstairs with tears running down her face. "No one ever listens to be." "Ahhhh!" she screamed into her pillow." All of a sudden she started floating." What the?" Emily says, "What do you want?" she screams. "I want to do what you wished for," JJ's streaks. "What did I wish for?" she stuttered. "Well your parents are dead of course!" JJ says. "Wait, what I didn't mean that literally. It was just something to threaten them!" Emily screamed. "Oh well it is too late. You see I'm like your genie but evil anything bad you wish whether it's out loud or in your head, I will make it come true. No one truly knows the way to get me gone, they usually kill themselves before they figure out a way to get me gone. If you somehow defeat me everything goes back to normal, anything bad that you ever caused will not have happened."

"Can't I just wish you were gone and out of my life?" Emily screamed. "That's not how it works," JJ shrieked. "No don't go, I still have questions!" Emily yelled! Wait, did he say my parents are dead? Please don't be dead please don't be dead! She repeats as she goes down the stairs. As she turns to her parents on the couch blood splattered over the living room she laid on the ground crying for like an hour criticizing herself saying this is all my fault if only I had not wished this. Wait, I know I'll get him to say he wants to go. I will do it, and Emily yelled with a bold attitude. "JJ, I want you," Emily says. "What evil can I grant you?" JJ asks. "I want all the ghosts in the world gone so I can take over the whole world." "What? No that means I go," JJ shrieked. "Well I wished for it and you have to do it," Emily says. "I'm sorry but no," JJ said. "Are you saying you don't want to be my genie anymore?" Emily said. "Yes I don't want to be your genie" JJ said with a frustrated look on his face that quickly went to a scared look within the first five seconds. "Wait no no no! I didn't mean to say that!" he said. His voice quickly fades away as he goes back into the lamp. Next thing she knows is being woken up with the sound of her parents knocking on the door. She starts thinking this was all a dream but she looks down and quickly turns into shock. There is a lamp lying on the foot of her bed. I guess it wasn't a dream, she says with the nervous tone in her voice. All of a sudden her door swung open and she quickly grabbed the lamp to hold it. "What do you have a peach?" her dad says as he tries to grab it. "Stop, no one's allowed to touch this thing for a long time." "Sorry. We just wanted to say we are sorry for ignoring you." "It's okay but I had a rough day. I think I'm going to go to bed. Goodnight, love you guys," Emily said, acting tired. "We love you too," they said as they were shutting off the lights. "My back feels like it got stabbed a bunch of times," the dad exclaimed as he rubbed his back. As soon as she hears her parents shut the door she gets up and turns on the lights. You're going away for a long time, looking at the lamp in her hand. "No matter what you do you will never get rid of me," JJ said, muffled inside the lamp. Emily walks out to the garage to get a shovel. Once she grabs it she goes to the backyard to dig a hole and put the lamp inside it and starts burying it. Finally she feels free once again. Sunday when the gardener comes to plant a tree in the exact same spot. "Stop! No no no no no no!" Emily shouts.

# Oak Street

## Simona Rowell

Claudia lived on a place called Oak Street. Almost every thing about Oak Street was perfect.

Almost. The one thing that Claudia really hated was the old spooky abandoned mansion at the end of her street. It had spiders and cobwebs, dead grass and blackened walls as if it had been in a fire. It gave Claudia the creeps.

Claudia was a very awkward kid. She had only lived on Oak Street for several months and she was just getting used to things. She only really wanted to fit in. Her older brother Cal was good at talking to people, making friends and all those things. Her obsession to fit in was tested when a boy named Rudy teased her for being afraid of that old mansion at the end of the street. He even dared her to go in it. Claudia was so embarrassed that not only did she tell Rudy she would go in, but said she would go in the front door, walk through the whole house and come out the back door. As soon as the words were out of her mouth, she regretted them. All day at school she worried about keeping her stupid promise to Rudy. She walked with Cal on the way home.

“What’s got you all down,” asked Cal.

“Oh, well you know that kid Rudy from my class?” Cal nodded.

“Well, he teased me about that stupid mansion at the end of the street, and I kind of told him that I would go in it. All the way through the house and everything. I’m terrified of that place. I’m dead!”

Claudia looked up at Cal, who wore a mischievous smile before he burst out laughing.

“Haha, my sister going into that mansion... hahaha... ya sis that’s never gonna happen... hahahaha...”

“Well, you don’t know! I could do it!” Claudia shouted angrily.

“Ya, well you know there was once a kid who did go in once...” Cal said in a spooky voice, “He never came back out, though some people do say they can still hear his screams in the night. It’s his ghost, they say, stuck reliving the moment of his death over and over again... Well good luck with it sis.”

Cal walked along leaving a very fazed Claudia behind.

The next day Claudia looked up at the abandon mansion, Rudy and a couple of other kids were behind her. Fear swelled inside her as she recalled Cal’s words to her the day before. A cool October breeze brushed at her legs as Rudy called out, “We don’t have all day!”

She took a deep breath and stepped inside. It was everything an old “haunted” mansion might be. Old, dusty, filled with spiders and cobwebs. Claudia walked timidly around.

She heard a door slam, then some feet shuffling somewhere. She was horrified when at the top of the stairs she saw someone or something.

Dressed in a dark cloak was someone with a complete white mask or face with two little eyeholes. But inside were not eyes at all, just two lifeless black holes. It looked a little like an old hockey mask, but Claudia didn’t notice she was too busy running for the door. Once she got there it was jammed. She was trapped!

The figure was breathing deeply and slowly and spookily. It pointed at Claudia and started coming down the stairs. Claudia screamed and started running, desperately trying to reach the back door of the house, her only escape.

Her heart was pounding against the walls of her chest. The back door was in her sight. She was running so hard... Almost there....

Her fingertips were practically touching the handle when the thing grabbed her arm and pulled her around. For just a second, she looked into those lifeless eyes before she collapsed to the ground and held her hands over her face.

“Please! Please don’t hurt me!” she shouted. She was shaking and closing her eyes tight. The next thing she heard was laughing. Not in a million years would she have guessed she would hear laughing.

The figure pulled off his mask and under it was Cal! “Cal!” Claudia shouted stunned.

“Gotcha!” Cal shouted back.



# The Fourth Man in the House

## Mauricio Valenzuela

In a small town near Mexico City, four of the most prominent citizens of Tapalucan, would gather to play chess. Joaquin, Ernesto, Amado, and Pablo had been best friends for a long time and enjoyed meeting at Pablo's house every Saturday night. Pablo had inherited a big fortune and was the wealthiest man in the city. He had the most expensive wines of the region, the best meats and cheeses, and fresh fruit delivered daily. Nonetheless, when his friends visited, he would offer them the cheapest wine and the nearly expired food. His stinginess didn't pass unnoticed; however, his friends just wanted his company and friendship. One of those entertaining nights, in May of 1833, Tapalucan's wagoner delivered bad news. A strong cholera outbreak hit their town, bringing catastrophe and death. A strict quarantine order had been instructed, and no one was to leave their house. Pablo offered his friends to stay with him during the quarantine. He had enough wine and food to last for weeks. Moreover, they could continue playing chess and enjoy each other's company. Since no one had a family of their own, they all agreed this was for the best and decided to stay.

The first night they spent together, they played a chess tournament almost all night long. As usual, Pablo offered his guests his cheapest wine and nearly expired food. The first one to lose was Amado, falling asleep right after his loss. Then, it was Joaquin's turn. He didn't finish the tournament because he drank too much wine and fell asleep on the couch. Ernesto and Pablo didn't sleep until right before the sun rose, reminiscing about their youth, joyful moments, and the importance of chess. Pablo couldn't help but bring up that their relationship was based on the benefits they received from his wealth. Ernesto, not surprised, explained that they enjoyed his company and appreciated his friendship, no matter his financial situation. Pablo left for bed giving thought to Ernesto's astonishing revelation. Next morning, when the group of friends woke up, they realized that Joaquin was dead. No pulse, no breath. Cholera had arrived at Pablo's house, killing Joaquin. It was only fair to assume that now all of them were infected and would meet Joaquin's fate soon.

Sometime in the early evening, the wagoner traveled the streets of Tapalucan to recover the bodies of the deceased. After he took Joaquin, the remaining friends toasted in honor of their departed friend, and continued the chess tournament. As the day passed and the stars could be seen, Pablo reflected on his actions and pondered over his friend's words. He kept thinking that he never lived his life to the fullest, and how he was reluctant to share his riches with his friends, or the people who needed it. His heart knew his time was soon to end, and his wealth would no longer matter. Trying to enjoy the hours he had left, Pablo decided to carry more appealing refreshments over to the table. Ernesto and Amado exclaimed how wonderful the wine and goodies were; the best they've ever had. Once again, they celebrated their last nights together playing chess. Unfortunately, Amado's journey steadied to an end that same night. The wagoner made a stop at Pablo's house the next day. He collected Amado's corpse and announced the pandemic was no longer spreading; the quarantine would soon be over. Rejoicing at their good fortune, Ernesto and Pablo lived to see another day.

Pablo and Ernesto continued their chess tournament, drinking the best wines, eating the best meats and cheese, and enjoying each other's company knowing that one of them could die that night. From that point on, Pablo began to treat his guest as he should've all along. The sun started to shine and morning had set upon the town of Tapalucan. Ernesto slipped away quietly, leaving Pablo to agonize over his mistakes, regretting his selfishness. He was left alone with all his possessions, but no one to share them with. The wagoner announced his arrival and collected Ernesto's deceased body. A few hours after the wagoner left, Pablo heard knocking on the door. Confused, wondering who would visit him during the quarantine, he opened the door. A tall man with deep eyes, and a black cloak was at his door asking if he could be invited in.

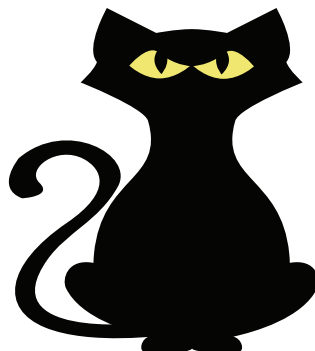
"I have been told that this is the best place to play chess," spoke the man. "Yes, it is true, welcome to the best chess player's house in all of Tapalucan," Pablo jokingly responded, intrigued by this mysterious figure. "I am at the right place, then. May I enter?" the man wondered.

"You are welcome to my house; I would love to have company to play chess," Pablo answered. Pablo and his guest played chess for hours. He shared his finest wines, and most delightful treats. They talked about Pablo's friends and how sorry he was for not being the person he could've been. The visitor told him that, believe it or not, he understood exactly what he was experiencing, as he had heard many people speak to him with repentance. At those words, the visitant confessed who he truly was; his name was Death. He explained his intentions; he had shown up to take the fourth person in the house. Pablo, without fear of dying, accepted his destiny. However, Death made him a proposal.

“Since I have enjoyed your company tonight, I’ll make you a deal. We’ll play another game of chess. If I win, I’ll take you with me, and if you win, you’ll be able to stay.” Pablo agreed, and played without the intention of winning, but rather to enjoy the company of his new friend. During the match, they tell many anecdotes, laugh, and drink more wine, but in the end, Pablo loses the game. Death raised from the table, shook hands with his opponent, and thanked him for the good time. However, since Pablo had lost the chess game, Death made the promise to return before dawn for the fourth person in that house.

Accepting his defeat, Pablo looked back on his achievements, and failures; his childhood and his adventures. His last night would be one to remember; he read his favorite book, had his last bottle of wine, and toasted in remembrance of Joaquin, Amado, and Ernesto. Another knock on the door was heard. Pablo, confused, answered the door and was stunned to find a masked thief who announced he’s here to take all his valuables. Bursting into laughter, Pablo let the thief in and declared, “Nothing in this house is of value to me anymore. Take it all, my friend; I hope it makes you happier than it did to me.”

The thief entered the house in a hurry, carrying a large sack, trying to fit as much as he could. Pablo kept enjoying his last hours of darkness as he dozed off with a bishop chess piece in his hand. The next morning, Pablo woke up with the sunlight shining through the window, and reflecting off his face. He realized he had slept through the night; he stood up and sprinted towards the door, only to find the thief lying on the ground next to the sack with all of his riches inside. As promised, Death had arrived for the fourth person in that house. At that moment, Pablo realized that he took pity on him, and gave him a new opportunity. The wagoner passed through his street announcing that the quarantine was over. Without thinking twice, Pablo picked up the thief’s bag, and hurriedly walked out of his house, ready to share everything he had with the people of Tapalucan. But as his door creaked open, the only thing awaiting was a lava pit with all of the people closest to him. In absolute shock, Pablo turned back wishing he was dreaming. But his house had disappeared with no trace. He was simply standing on his door frame with only a silhouette hovering over him. And the figure, dressed in a black cloak with those same deep, dark eyes flicked Pablo, effortlessly. With his death inching ahead, the last image he could picture was the shadowy figure cackling at him. He truly was haunted by this seeming nightmare because for the rest of eternity, he would spend his days in death’s chamber.



# Bone Chiller

## Breckin Weatherford

As I rode my bike down 5th street, a ghostly figure crossed before me in a 1920's dress and small black high heels. I suddenly had a very cold, eerie feeling to follow her. She moved swiftly through the alleyways and streets, very sure of where she was heading, that dark, cold night . We moved through the train yard. Finally, we stopped near the back by train car number 103. Suddenly the pale woman kneeled down and began sobbing, "My poor baby!" "My poor poor baby girl!" As I stood there paralyzed, feeling as if I needed to help her calm herself down. "Mame are you OK?"

"NO!" she screamed at me. "I am not OK ..... Who are you anyway?" " "Oh, I am Charlotte, Charlotte Dadin ."

"Oh, hi Hunny. I am Unnis, Unnis Wayley." Unnis was a beautiful woman with piercing blue eyes and dark brown hair. She asked me to sit down with her and stay awhile. I was very hesitant as I had just met her and after all... she was a ghost! Finally I decided to sit down with her. She began talking about the night of June 3rd, 1921.

"That terrible flood killed my baby girl. My poor baby girl was with me coming from California trying to get a better life since my husband left us right after she was born. We decided to move to Pueblo as we learned it was an amazing place to live. We had just arrived in Pueblo when it began to pour buckets of rain. "Oh ..... I am so sorry I can't believe you meant through that. That is just terrible!" I said to her with sadness in my eyes.

"Well you don't have to be sorry."

"Suddenly the train began to rock back and forth and just fell over. We looked out of the window and the whole yard was flooded. We were trying to keep our heads above water when a man named Mark saved us from the toppled train car. While carrying us to safety, he tripped over a log and my baby girl fell . She was in the water and was crying. As I tried to save her, a large, roaring wave drugged her into the harsh, cold, water and she was no longer visible. I began to kick and hit the man, blaming him for tripping. I finally calmed down and just hugged him as I realized she was gone. She died in front of me and I realized I had to just let her go. My poor baby, she was only two months old and had so much life ahead of her." As I stared at the woman, her eyes seemed to glaze over as if she was a statue. All I could say to her was, "Wow." I couldn't imagine losing my child to something so horrible. Unnis began to talk again, "I lived the rest of my life here in Pueblo." It wasn't very long as I died from influenza and pneumonia in my lungs, two years later. I spent the rest of my life in my home on Elmwood circle and I died in my home. So, if you ever are walking or driving past or in the train yard at night, you might hear me crying for my baby girl and you may even see muddy footprints walking to the river." As she said that she disappeared into thin air, I have never seen or talked to Unnis again.

# Whispering Willows

## Joseph Welte

I button up my long coat as I walk out of my cottage into the frigid air to go play outside with my friends. We have a little fort down under the cobblestone bridge by the ferry boat. We will often meet there to go play pirates and look for buried treasure, or play with branches from fallen trees, or act like we are in the middle of a battle zone getting ready for war. Someone is always bound to be down there, friends or enemies. Today as I march to the fort, I am greeted by Mark, the town bully. I try to turn away, but I hear him shout out, "Hey bozo! Get over here!"

I pretended not to hear him, and started walking the other way but he continued to pursue me. I walked faster and faster until I got to the town square where there were a lot more people and I could not get beat up on or hung by my britches and laughed at while kids walked past. I then found Jack and stood as close as I could, afraid to abandon his side. We circled around a couple times and decided to go back to the fort. Once we got there, we jumped on our secret raft and floated down stream looking for loot. We always turned right at the same fork in the road, because we had been warned never to turn left. This time though, the tide would not let us turn right and the raft lurched as it went left. We

both panicked and tried stopping the raft, but it just kept plowing through the water. Farther and farther down the river we floated as we screamed at the top of our lungs trying to get somebody's attention.

Finally, we stopped on an embankment in front of a little rock formation. Unsure of the time, or where we were, we started searching for a place to build camp. Luckily, after all the times we were kicked out of our mothers' kitchens, or just having a good time trying to live in the wild with all the other animals, we learned how to make a home base; and make one fast. We started off by finding a groove in the rocks that would be sturdy enough to hold a log upright. Then we started grabbing everything, sharp rocks to cut the wood, small trees that had fallen over, big leaves that had fallen from the fall weather, bark off of rotten trees, and anything that would help us stay warm.

After having the new fort pretty much finished, we decided to explore a little, and found a little opening in the rock the base leaned against for support. After chipping away for a couple minutes, we could poke our heads through, but it was too dark to see anything, and we continued to carve into the rock. Finally, we could fit our shoulders through, and found a large opening. Jack tossed a rock in to find the bottom. We did not have to wait long to hear the rock hit the cold hard ground underneath. We thought it would only be a couple feet down, and we decided to drop in and explore ourselves. We slid down the side of the wall and searched blindly with our feet for the ground. On the bottom all that could be seen was what light shown through the opening, so we climbed back up and made make-shift torches. We then climbed back in, but instead of searching for the ground we jumped in knowing exactly how far the ground was. The problem was it had changed, and the cold hard earth crumpled at our weight and we fell down, down, down, for what seemed like days, until we started floating instead of falling. It was not so scary as the plummet, but there was still that uncertainty of what was going on.

We ended up piercing through the earth, but you could tell it was much hotter than before, and sweat broke from our faces within seconds. We searched around in terror, and tried digging our way back, but the ground was impenetrable. We sat down exhausted, and really got a look at what was around us. There were almost small faces in the walls, and the air had the smell of death written all over it. We both looked at each other in terror as we realized we were in the afterlife.

A voice boomed and said "There is only one way out, and if you find it, you will become immortal."

We both frantically started roaming trying to find the way out. We passed tall willow trees who began to whisper warnings. One seemed to say, "Don't go this way." I felt myself pulled in that direction. My head filled with thoughts that seemed so realistic of my family searching for me, but something was off. They looked soulless and lifeless.

The whispers continued, "Look what you have done," which made my head spin even faster. The thought of not telling them goodbye would not stop nagging at me. Through my fear, I kept pushing forward, using the whispering as ammo to keep going. I knew all I wanted was to see my family one more time. I soon learned to zone out the whispering voices and forged ahead into the unknown.

Finally, after what seemed like days, the booming voice spoke again, saying, "Congratulations. You are now deemed immortal." I screamed out in joy not realizing that Jack had not made it out with me. I spoke back to the voice and said, "Just give Jack and I a normal long-lived life. That's all I want!" Jack appeared at my side as we plummeted back to the earth and into the town square. Life seemed normal again, although none of the faces seemed familiar. We soon learned we had been missing for two hundred years.

# The Terrifying Trip

## Joanna Wietzke



"Yay!" Carolina shouted, "We're going camping!"

There were five friends in the friend group. Carolina, Al, Travis, Maddie, and Tabitha. They all loved camping with their families, but had never gone camping a night together. They met at Carolina's house, because Carolina was by far the most excited and she was the most experienced camper.

Tabitha was more laid back, and had hardly ever been camping before. She was nervous, but a little excited to have a fun night with her friends. Knowing she was going camping with Carolina was calming her nerves, however, Maddie was calming her nerves too.

Maddie's best friend was Tabitha. They knew each other like no other. Maddie could tell if she was nervous even when nobody else could, and she kept her cool all the time. Tabitha wanted to be like her so much. Maddie wanted to be like Tabitha so much.

Al and Travis had the same kind of relationship as Maddie and Tabitha, only a little more crazy. They were never calm or comforting to one another, but they could read each other's minds. They were clearly made for each other.

Four friends came to Carolina's house, to find that Carolina had already done all the packing, and was sitting in the car waiting for them to show up.

"Oh finally!" Carolina ran up to all her friends and gave them hugs. "I've been waiting for twenty minutes! Get in the car fast. The sooner we get there the more camping we get to do!"

When they arrived at the lake, Carolina's parents helped them unpack and drove off to a cabin just down the street. Together the five friends started unpacking and setting the tents up. The boys slept in one tent and the girls slept in another tent. Once the tents were set up, they ate lunch.

"I was nervous, but now I'm glad I came along." Tabitha said.

"Well, I wouldn't let anything happen to you. I'm so glad you came! Now let's go exploring!" Carolina shouted.

They agreed to meet up once it got dark to go on a nighttime hike. They all headed out to explore.

Carolina explored the woods. She looked for different plants, birds, trees, and other wildlife. Suddenly, she realized it was getting dark. She started walking back, and everything looked different than before. She didn't see anything familiar. She heard rustling in the bushes next to her. She took a step closer to look, and something jumped out of the bushes and grabbed her arm. Chills ran down her spine. It was completely dark now. She screamed as loud as she could, and yanked her arm away making it bleed. She tried to run away, but she fainted in the bushes after only a few steps.

Tabitha was out exploring. She wanted to see all of the hiking trails around the area. She loved looking at all of the nature. It got dark sooner than she thought it would, and she couldn't find her way back in the dark. She sat down next to a tree and waited for someone to come find her. And she waited and waited and cried. Nobody was coming to find her, and she was terrified. She knew there was something that wasn't right about this trip. She heard a scream and she got worried. She started running towards the scream. She was terrified, she could barely think. She ran to Carolina, and saw her fainted on the ground and screamed. Someone grabbed her arm and came out of the bushes. Maddie had gone camping in this place before and was more excited for the night hike. She decided to hide in the bushes and wait for someone to come along so she could scare them. When Maddie came out of the bushes to scare Tabitha, Maddie's face turned green and her hands were clammy. She grew a tail that was green and scaly. Tabitha screamed, "Maddie? What are you doing?"

Maddie didn't respond. Tabitha was terrified. She screamed as loud as she could for as long as she could.

"Shh!" Maddie exclaimed, shoving her into the bushes, "someone might hear you." her voice was cold and deadly. Tabitha was too scared to respond, she stayed in the bush with Maddie. Maddie jumped out of the bush and ran away, taking Tabitha with her.

"Where are we going?" Tabitha asked Maddie. Maddie just kept running. Eventually Tabitha saw what Maddie was running towards. Travis was walking through the bushes looking through his binoculars. Tabitha saw that he had headphones on. He must not have heard the screams. Tabitha tried to scream to him anyway, but it was hopeless. Maddie hid in the bushes next to Travis.

Al decided to go through his bags and find flashlights and lanterns for the night hike. He wasn't very far in exploring the forest before he heard a scream. He wasn't too worried, but he started walking over to the noise anyway. While he was walking he heard a longer, louder scream, and he started running and calling for someone. "Carolina! Tabitha! Maddie! Travis?" He doubted that the high-pitched scream was from Travis, but he called anyway, just to be sure. He saw Carolina on the ground, so he bent down and picked her up. He felt a pulse, phew! He brought her to Carolina's parent's cabin to get help.

Maddie and Tabitha were in the bushes next to Travis. He kept getting closer and closer to them. All the while Tabitha was screaming. Travis still couldn't hear her. He kept looking at the bushes suspiciously, and finally he bent down to see what was in the bush. Just as he was about to find them, Maddie jumped out and bit him right on the neck. He fainted. Tabitha ran to him screaming, then crying.

Then something strange happened. Three creatures just like Maddie jumped out of the bushes.

"Goodbye Tabitha." Maddie said, and walked off with the monsters.

# Off the Road

## Rosemaree Coughlin

I don't want to die. No one truly wants to die. But I think it would be better for everyone if I did. It's funny though, when I was eleven I almost died. I was on the table for ten hours. They kept saying I almost died. They pulled metal piece by piece out of my small body. Glass was embedded within my skull. Never go on a car ride with your father who's known for drinking at night. Never let him convince you not to put on a seat belt cause you were only going a little ways. When the semi hit us, I swear I heard him laugh. He was crushed immediately. Not even a chance to say goodbye. I don't know when the paramedics had gotten there but I was already half way dead when they found me. I was only halfway dead. I still dream about that night. My dad and the other drivers' screams ring in my ears, sometimes it's the only thing that keeps me calm. I'm seventeen years old, but you wouldn't guess that by looking at me. The moment you see the scars across my face, my cheek that looks like it's melting off my face, my shriveled up ear, you won't care about age, just avoiding me. Just avoiding me and my haunted look. That's what freaks people out the most, my left eye. Ghost white and lazy, it wanders, people sink back into themselves. Put it together with a bit of a hunch and brace on my leg, and you've got the school freak.

"HEY FREAK!" Speaking of freaks.

"What do you need Trent? I'm trying to get to class." Not even 8 a.m. yet and he had already decided I was his target for the day.

"Don't you mean class freak?"

"It's a speech impediment. My e's sound like g's. Though I thought you'd be used to speech problems by now since you seem to only be able to sprout crap from your mouth." I retorted trying to get around him. Why wouldn't he move?

"Oh so you're a smart mouth then? Well at least one part of you seems semi normal."

"That makes one of us." I turned away, not wanting to deal with pathetic bullies like him today. "What did you just say to me you little freak?!" He grabbed my backpack pulling me backwards, my crutch falling out from under me causing me to land on my bad leg. It took a second before I screamed. I cried out in pain as laughs sounded throughout the hall. Trent was laughing the hardest. He's sick smile made my blood boil. I wanted to do something. Anything. I wanted him to stop laughing and I wanted him to suffer. I wanted him to stop.

"Oh, would you just drop dead already?!" I yelled without thinking. Suddenly he wasn't laughing anymore, he was only making one sound, it was gurgling and rough. He was choking. Swallowing his own tongue. Screams erupted from the hall.

"WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?!"

"IT WAS THE FREAK SHE DID SOMETHING!"

I stayed frozen on the ground, not being able to move around all the running, my eyes locked on the dying boy in front of me.

"H-hel-help" He wheezed out, but no one was listening, they were too busy yelling. Too many people were yelling. People running and pushing each other, trying to get out of the school. Trying to get away. Trying to get away from me.

It was the next morning after everyone had been evacuated that we received news that he died. Trent Kenedy, a boy who had bullied me since middle school, was dead, because I told him to die. I told him to die and he did, right in front of me, he dropped dead.

"What is happening to me?" I muttered while lying on my back. School had been cancelled, for good reason. Couldn't have anyone else dying. No one else should die. "What kind of monster just kills someone in cold blood, at school." muttering was starting to become a habit of mine. "I prefer the word 'creative thinker' to monster thank you very much." I jumped out of my skin and into a defensive position at the sound of the foreign voice. It sounded like wet nails on chalk boards, its presence like a knife sliding down my spine.

"Who's there?!" Stupid question. "Me" Stupid answer.

A cold touch trailed across my shoulder. I flinched back, my foot almost slipping. "You wanted him to die. So why are you so bothered by it?"

"I didn't want him to die, I just, who are you?" I scanned my room, and I couldn't see anything. I was alone. Even though I knew I wasn't, I should have been alone. "Oh that's not important, the kid is dead. That's what's important." "You killed him." I whispered.

"Oh no sweetie, that's all on you, I only helped." I could tell it was smiling, I felt as if claws were tracing my cheeks. I started to cry. I cried because he was right. I wanted him dead. I'd always wanted him dead.



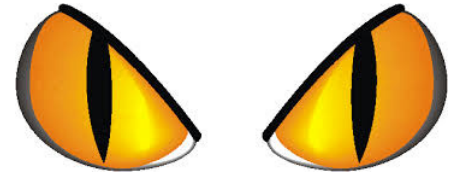
“Go away.” I sobbed, but it didn’t go away. It stayed, a shadow engulfing me in the dark.

“Oh but honey you’re broken, just like me.” the claws traced down to my neck. “You’re broken just like me.” a squeezing sensation burned at my neck. I tried to scream but nothing came out. I tried to cough but it didn’t work. I clawed at my throat, screams dying in my mouth before they could be heard. Dying. I was choking, just like Trent. I was dying just like Trent. Except I was alone. Just like I had always been.” Oh come on Ellie. Just drop dead already. Just drop dead.” It’s stupid to think I wasn’t alone.

I didn’t want to die. But it will be better for everyone when I do.

# Field of Horrors

## Jenna Lewis



It was late October so the air was crisp and cool. Kaity and her friends walked down a dimly lit dirt road. Far in the distance they could see a sign gleaming in the yellow haze of a streetlight reading “Field of Horrors”. The haunted trails were popular in Joplin, Missouri during Halloween and all the kids crowded the trails every year. Kaity and her friends had been there the year before and were not very impressed as it was a plain dirt trail encased in a corn field decorated with skeletons and jack o’ lanterns.

As the group approached the gate with low expectations a man in a white bloody mask, dirty ripped up jeans, a lab coat that was also coated in blood jumped out from behind the sign yelling and lunging and the group of friends. Before they could even let out a scream the man ran away disappearing into the darkness of the trail ahead.

“What a creep!” yelled Sarah, Kaity’s best friend.

“Come on Sarah! They really upped their game this year,” Bryce bantered back dragging her by the hand to buy their tickets at the front desk.

Matt grabbed Kaity around the waist tickling her causing her to squirm and jump. “What do you say, you want to go in or are you too scared?”

Kaity gave a nervous giggle and a half smile before Matt grabbed her hand and ran to catch up with Bryce and Sarah.

After paying for the tickets the receptionist explained the rules in a monotone voice and handed a flashlight to each of the couples. The group walked excitedly around the table into the trail. To their surprise it was the same as the year before; no hired actors or scary animatronics. Their disappointment set in as they started the trail walking past the same dusty old skeletons and jack o’ lanterns.

“This is lame” said Bryce

“I don’t even understand why they give us flashlights. There is nothing even scary in here.” agreed Sarah.

“We could make it scarier.” Bryce suggested as he glared at Sarah. Within seconds the two ran off chasing each other. They giggled and swerved in and out of people then disappeared into the tall corn. It was off the trail and against the rules but what’s the worst that could happen.

“They really are made for each other aren’t they?” Matt told Kaity. Kaity giggled and snuggled closer to Matt holding his hand. The two walked on kicking up dirt particles with every step. The dancing light from the jack o’ lanterns created a soft glow on their faces. Kaity’s eyes sparkled in the light. Matt had been with her for over a year but every time her looked at her he fell more in love.

“Where do you think Sarah went?” Kaity asked

“Who knows? Knowing them they probably go lost,” replied Matt. “I hope they are okay.”

“Kaity, they are fine, what can happen out here.”

“I guess you’re right,” she reluctantly agreed with with an uneasy feeling in her stomach.

“You want to play a game while we wait, it will cheer you up,” he taunted pulling away from her. His voiced echoed as he walked away, “Come find me... or are you too scared?” She complained and begged him not to go but he was already around the corner. She hated that he was always trying to scare her.

Now standing alone she started to feel uneasy again. She crept forward step by step whispering Matt’s name with fear and annoyance. As she turned the corner, Matt jumped out and screamed at her. Kaity’s heart skipped a beat as she let out a shriek. She scolded him and punched his biceps annoyed with his inconsideration. He laughed and kissed her forehead in an effort to apologize. Although she was still annoyed, she giggled and forgave him like she always did. She went in to hug him when the same man in the mask lunged out of the corn lining the sides of the trail, this time shoving Kaity causing her to stumble to the ground.

Matt immediately helped her back to her feet and brushed the dirt off of her jeans while yelling after the man but he was already gone and out of his sight.

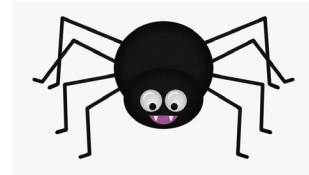
“What is his problem?” Kaity exasperated.

“He is probably some 20 year old that has no life. Are you okay?” She nodded and continued down the trail glancing over her shoulders. Where did he go and who was he she wondered? The uneasy feeling came back into her stomach and she reached for Matt’s hand, clenching it tighter than before.

Out of the corner of her eye, Kaity spotted something laying on the ground. She took a few steps forward squinting but it was too dark to make out the blurred object. She flipped on a flashlight revealing a pair of checkered vans and red Adidas connected to two bodies. Their bodies half on the trail and half in the field in darkness. A stream of blood ran down the trail. Kaity instantly knew it was Sarah and Bryce. She screamed and fell to the ground as tears fell from her eyes. Matt stood in shock unable to look away from his friends’ lifeless bodies.

# The Attic

## Carter Madrid



We moved into a new house last week; the wallpaper is peeling, it smells like rotten eggs. Most of the windows are broken and the floorboards creak when you walk on them. Mom said I could pick my room, so I chose the attic. Mostly because I like the isolation it brings, but also I like being up high. The attic is dusty and only has one window. The ceiling is high for an attic and it’s very spacious. Plus, it will be fun to fix it up and make it my own space.

I didn’t want to move here not because I had friends back in Boston, or I liked it there, but because when I saw the house listing on my mom’s laptop it gave me chills, it looks like something out of a horror movie. That creepy house in the middle of nowhere, thirty minutes away from the first town. It just threw me off, but I knew with my mom getting laid off from the hospital, our recent loss of income pushed us out to the boonies like this. I don’t blame her or anything. Times are tough and she’s doing the best she can so I’m not complaining. Mom said the last owners were some old folks but after they died and the house went to hell, no one wanted it so it was super cheap due to the condition.

Boxes of my things piled in the corner of the dusty old attic, my bed shoved by the singular window letting the daylight in. It’s quiet up here. I’m home alone. Mom went into town to get groceries. I asked her to get me some soda-pop and junk food.

I turn my head and I’m blinded by a reflection of light coming from my floor. I walk towards it; I try to pry up the floorboard with my fingers but it’s no use. So I run downstairs and grab my mom’s toolbox and take out a flathead screwdriver. I push the flathead down and under the wood panel and pry it up and it struggles but finally releases and reveals a small cavity under the floor. A small tin box lays there alone and waiting to be found. I pick it up and open it. Rust surrounds the opening, so it takes a bit of elbow grease. The small tin pops open, revealing pictures, a heart-shaped locket, and a folded-up piece of paper. I gently pick up the pictures and scan through them. I see an old man and woman together; her wearing the locket. Other pictures show the house in its prime, others show the old couple, some of just her and some of just him, written on the back of the first photo: Jan and Martin. Unfolding the old paper, I see a letter. It said:

“To my love, our house is a home, our garden will grow and our love may prosper. A gift for you to have me everywhere you go. A locket just for you to keep near and dear to your heart.” That was quite romantic. It’s a shame they’ve both passed years ago. But I don’t understand why all this stuff is still here. You think it would have been given to their kids or something if they had any. I place the box and all its contents on my nightstand to keep it safe

Night fell, and I stayed up all night. I finally passed out before midnight. I must have been asleep for hours. Suddenly, I woke up, and it’s freezing. I swear I could see my breath in the moonlight coming in through the small attic window. I look around with sleepy eyes and where the light stops, I see two figures standing there, staring at me with yellow glowing eyes. I stare back at them, frozen in place, lost, not knowing what to do. What should I do? Do I run past them down the stairs? Ignore them completely and go back to sleep? Or just wait until they go away? I chose the ladder waiting, watching, in fear of leaving my queen size haven for the pitch-black, nothing beyond it.

Before I could gather my thoughts, sleep overtook me, I woke up this morning and had almost forgotten about the whole thing I probably would have but searching for my phone on my nightstand my hand brushed over the spot where I left the tin from yesterday and it was gone. I threw apart my room, but the small tin was nowhere to be found. It was just gone. The floor where I’d taken it from was still open, so I knew it wasn’t a dream. I suppose I’ll never truly know what happened to the small tin. Now there is an old couple who haunts my attic. Every night they stare deep into my soul. I can feel them. They’re a part of my life now, a part of my world.

# Billy Bindle

## Marka Rapenchuk

Little William Bindle, Billy to his folks, was a prankster. His mom would often fuss about his pranks but his dad would just say, “oh, he’ll grow out of it, no harm done.” He had no siblings, so his classmates got the worst of it. His teachers complained about all his classroom distractions especially when they involved bubbles or bugs- and the younger kids learned to avoid him at recess rather than get tricked into eating chocolate covered rocks again.

One day, Billy giggled gleefully as he tossed a can of soda in the air. What luck, finding his favorite flavor just sitting on the ground in his own backyard! He cracked open the can, but instead of hearing the usual hiss, out wafted a foul, green gas. Billy heard a kid’s voice echoing loudly from inside the can.

“What? Why? Who’s there?”

Billy dropped the can and the voice said, “Ouch! Hey, pick me back up!”

Billy eased to the ground and peered into the can. There, gazing back at him, was one purple eye. Billy squealed in fear, then started laughing. He slapped the can away, then picked it up and shook it with all his might. The voice demanded he stop, but Billy was having fun.

Finally, the voice said, “Hey, kid! I’m a genie! Cut it out and I’ll give you some wishes, okay?” That got Billy’s attention!

“Okay, gimme a mountain of candy and come out so I can see how gross you look.”

The voice sighed, then the ground started shaking. Billy watched the sand in his sandbox turn into chocolate bears, lemon lollipops, super sour gummy worms, and more. The pile kept growing until it was as tall as Billy’s house!

The stink from the can grew stronger and slowly formed into an ordinary looking kid, but his colors were all wrong- purple eyes, orange lips, pink hair. His clothes were wafting around like he was standing in a strong wind, but Billy guessed it was the stink gas. That gave him a great idea. “Hey, can I use a wish on a prank?”

The genie started to smile, a truly awful thing to see. He knew that wishes used to hurt other people backfired, but he was pretty sure Billy didn’t know that.

“Sure, kid. Whatever you want.”

“Cool! Okay, I want you to go to my neighbor’s room and wait for him to go to bed. Then I want you to lay your stink on him and ruin his whole night!”

The genie blinked. “Ummm, what?”

“You know, you stink. It’s awful. And that kid over there? His name is Sam and he always tattles on me when I’m doing really good pranks at school. I bet if he smells you all night, he won’t get any sleep and I’ll finally get to do the ultimate prank without him interrupting me. Then I’ll be king of the playground forever!”

The genie smiled again. He knew what “the stink” was, and he couldn’t believe his good luck. Once he finished the prank Billy wished for, this kid was in for the surprise of his life!

After dark, Sam went to bed and the genie wafted into his room. He slowly breathed out and the green gas filled the air. All night he breathed out that one breath but Sam slept like a baby, snuggled in his blanket and snoring. The stink, at first so strong, turned into nothing at all, but it fulfilled Billy’s wish.

As the sun began to rise, the genie disappeared from Sam’s room and appeared by Billy’s bed. He watched as Billy slowly awoke, wrinkling his nose and coughing. The green gas was filling the room and even the genie wished the window was open. His laughter finally caused Billy to open his eyes, and they were watering as they rolled around the room, looking for the genie.

“Oh, wow, genie! You smell extra bad today!” “That’s not me, kiddo. That’s you!”

“What? How? You made a mistake!”

“No, you didn’t ask good questions before you made your wish. You see, you can’t use pranks to harm people or it bounces back to you. And because you chose to stink out your neighbor, well- now you’ll be stinky! And best of all, because you did a prank, you and I get to change places! You go in the can, I go free. I wish I’d asked my genie before I did a prank on my little brother many years ago. I wished that all his food would taste like farts, and now here I am, smelling like farts! But no more. Now I get to go home and apologize to my little brother and grow up into the nice guy I should have been all along. Once you get free, you’ll come right back to this moment and I hope you choose to apologize, too!”

With that, Billy felt himself shrink and squish and then, with a big pop, he was inside the can! He banged on the walls, which grew and expanded. The whole can was filled with cool stuff (every wish the genie had ever granted made a copy inside the can) and he started running around, playing with toy cars and turning on TV’s. He came to a halt in front of a mirror and started screeching- “no, no, no- MY HAIR! MY FACE!” The genie giggled as he tossed the can into the recycle bin outside the house. He reached out to gently place the can upright, then he marched out of Billy Bindle’s backyard and into the green gas that filled the street. Finally he could go back to his life and be the good big brother he now wanted to be more than anything in the world. And the best part? He knew Billy would get the same chance to apologize one day, and he bet green gas that Billy would do the right thing, no harm done.

