Name: Alina Delgado
Age: 13, 8th grade
Address:
Phone number:

Father

My mother was always an *odd* person. She never wanted a daughter. Out of five children, I was her only daughter. My mother despised me. My whole life, I had sought validation from her. I took piano lessons at school, I did every chore around the house, I babysat my younger brother and cousins, I got perfect grades. But still, my mother somehow found a way to criticize my every move. My brothers, however, got praise and attention, something I always wanted, but never received. My mother neglected all my needs. I slept on a mat in the basement while my brothers each got their own rooms with king-sized beds.

I always looked up to my brothers. But all my brothers hated me. Except for my youngest brother, Jackson. Jackson was six years old. He brought me food, gave me blankets, and occasionally comforted me when I was sad. My mother didn't want to see me happy. She screamed at me when I attempted to talk to Jackson. One night, my mother saw Jackson bring a plate of food down to the basement. She was furious, and after Jackson confessed to the secret conversations with me and sneaking food, she demanded we never speak again.

One night, after being unable to sleep, I had to use the bathroom. After returning back to the basement, I turned on the light and was horrified. Something was in the closet. A dark figure, who seemed to be at least 10 feet tall, was hunched over, staring at me. I tried to scream but I couldn't. These figures would appear every night in the same closet. At first, I was terrified of them. I wasn't able to sleep for days. I was terrified of what they may do to me. But eventually, I got used to them. I was unsettled by them, but if I avoided looking in the direction of the closet, I was able to get decent sleep.

Each figure was different. One night, the figure may be tall with a frightening face. Other nights, it may be a faceless, shadowy figure. There were 5 or 6 figures that I would see frequently, but occasionally I would see figures I hadn't seen before. Either way, they all had something in common. They always watched you. If you could see them, they could see you. They never blinked, never looked away, just simply observed. Sometimes I could hear faint whispering from the closet. On those nights, I wasn't able to sleep. Even after I got used to the strange figures, I always made sure to keep my distance and I never once attempted to touch them.

One evening, my mother went out to dinner with my brothers. I, of course, was left alone in the house. My mother rarely fed me and I wasn't allowed to get my own food. But I hadn't eaten in days and I was tired of the constant feeling of hunger. So, I decided to sneak upstairs to find food. I opened the pantry and was immediately overwhelmed by the amount of food. After thinking for at least ten minutes, I decided on a bag of chips. While I was eating, I heard the sound of the garage opening. I quickly grabbed a handful of the chips and ran downstairs. Without a second to spare, mother burst into the basement. I had forgotten to put the bag of chips back into the pantry. My mother proceeded to scream at me as I sat in fear. She then

demanded I stand up. After doing so, I was met with a hard slap to the face. She threw down a to-go box on the floor. "I was going to give this to you! But you decided to be ungrateful!" my mother screamed. She then slammed the door in my face and I was left to sob on the cold basement floor.

Then, I felt a tap on my shoulder. I turned around to see one of the figures hunched over above me. I looked at it and cried even harder. The figures always stayed in the closet and never once moved an inch. Then, the figure hugged me. I was frozen in fear. It stayed hugging me and I eventually eased up and even enjoyed the comfort. I hadn't been hugged in years, especially not for this long. I woke up in the figures arms the next morning. I blinked and suddenly it was gone. I glanced over at the closet and saw a new figure in the closet.

This was the first encounter I had with Father, which I named the figure that had then comforted me. Each time my mother yelled at me or hit me, Father appeared. I eventually learned to love Father and enjoyed his presence and touch. I looked forward to the days Father would appear in the closet. I would spend hours talking to him. I attempted to talk to the other figures before. But I quickly gave up, as I felt an unusual feeling of sorrow when I was by them for too long. But with Father, I felt a warm, welcoming presence and I always felt like he was somehow listening to me.

To me, school was an escape from home. I hated school. My brothers told my classmates horrible things about me. People didn't view me as a human being. They would loudly talk about me to their friends and complain if they had to sit by me. It felt like I was invisible; people thought of me like I was some sort of animal, like I wasn't able to understand their words just because I didn't talk as much as them. But in school I didn't have to worry about my mother. I avoided interactions with people as much as possible and tried to stay focused on my work in class.

I dreaded the summertime. I was left alone in the basement with nothing to do but stare out the window and watch my brother play outside with the other kids in the neighborhood. I was excited leading up to the first day of school. I was going to start 9th grade and although I was nervous, I figured it would be okay if I kept to myself like I had done all these years. A few days before my first day of school my mother pulled into the living room to have a talk. She told me that I needed to stop attending school to "prepare to become a woman." In other words, she wanted me to learn how to cook and clean to fit into her standards of being a woman. I was completely against this new way of life she wanted for me. But I agreed with her and went back down to the basement, partially wishing I had tried to stand up for myself.

From then on, I was expected to do every chore in the house, make three meals a day, and tend to all my brother's needs. My older brothers thought this was hysterical and would constantly tease me and deliberately make messes for me to clean and degrade me if I didn't meet their standards. I was pretty used to cleaning, but I struggled with cooking. If my mother approved of the food I made and if I had good behavior that day, I was allowed to eat supper.

One night, I awoke to the smell of smoke and yelling from my brothers. I quietly snuck upstairs to see a large flame on the stove. I had forgotten to turn the stove off. I watched as my mother turned off the stove and tried to extinguish the fire by fanning it with a hand towel. My oldest brother yelled at my mother to stop, but it was already too late. The wind from the towel fueled the fire and the kitchen quickly engulfed in flames.

I grabbed my youngest brother and headed for the front door, coughing from the thick black smoke that was spreading into the air. My mother and older brothers followed and it wasn't long before firefighters came and extinguished the fire. Luckily, they got here before there was any major damage to the house.

From then on my mother and my brothers refused to speak to me. One morning, I awoke to find that the basement door was locked. My mother would sometimes lock me in the basement if I misbehaved the day prior, but this had only happened a handful of times. The longest I had been trapped in the basement was two or three days. I knew my best option was to wait until she unlocked the basement as knowing my mother, she would lock me in for longer if I attempted to leave.

That night, I saw Father again. He just watched me from the closet as I tried to sleep. Another night went by, the door was still locked. Two nights went by, the door was still locked. It had been six days and the door was still locked. I haven't eaten or drank water in six days. I was used to not eating. I could go multiple days without eating but I had never gone long without water.

I could feel myself getting weaker by the day. I wanted to escape badly. Before I had been scared. But now, I have nothing to lose. I've been locked in here too long and if I can find help maybe my mother could be punished for the cruelty she has treated me with. The only problem is I know I'm too weak now. By day 4, I couldn't stand up without my legs uncontrollably shaking before giving out after a minute. Now, I avoid standing up at all costs. Every movement hurts. I feel a gaping hole in my stomach eating away at my body.

I haven't seen Father in a few days. For some odd reason, I've been scared of him lately. Maybe it's because I know he comes when I'm in a bad situation and I think part of it is that I don't want to accept that this is all real. I feel so weak. I can't keep my eyes open anymore. I don't want to feel like this anymore. It feels like there's a thousand pound weight in my stomach pulling me down. I wish I could just fast forward to when this is all over.

I wake up the next day and I feel comfort. Did I make it? Was I finally put out of my misery? I look up to see Father holding me. I'm not scared anymore. I try to touch Father's face, but as I try to lift my arm up, it feels heavy and starts shaking. Father grabs my hand and puts it to my chest. I try my hardest to muster words to him. "Father, are you going to-" Father then puts a finger to his mouth. "Shh.." I didn't know Father could speak. He doesn't have a mouth, I think. I don't quite remember..

I feel my eyelids become heavy as I drift off into sleep again. I wake up to Father still holding me. How long was I out for? I don't want to be here anymore. I then try to finish my question from earlier. "Father, are you going to take me?" I say in a shaky voice. Father looks down and stares at me. "Please..." Father tilts his head. "Please... it hurts. Please, Father." Father nods his head in understandment. He squeezes me tight before letting me go completely. There, I lay in his arms, taking in everything around me. The smell of the basement, the cold floor beneath me, ringing in my ears.. The ringing in my ears. It's so loud. I can't smell anything. I don't feel anything. I don't see anything. I feel my senses fade away until there is nothing. *Nothing.*

My name is Calvin, I live in a normal house, and live a normal life with my mom. That was until yesterday, when I accidentally raised my dad from the dead, or his skeleton at least. It was Sunday morning and I was getting ready to go to church. My mom is very strict with religion so we go to church every Sunday and Wednesday. I got into some decent clothes, ate breakfast, and we were off. Church had the usual prayers, and songs bla, bla, bla whatever. After church we go to the cemetery to visit our two grandpas and grandmas and my dad. My mother and I split up to go see our relatives in privacy. I immediately went to my dad to put flowers on his gravestone, but when I did a skeletal hand shot up from out of the ground. At first I was confused and wondered if I was hallucinating, but then another hand came up. After that I started to back away, and the hands pulled up the rest of the body. I was totally freaked out by now so I turned to run, but the skeleton just stood there. "Uh... hello" I said weakly.

"What do you command, master?" it responded in a raspy tone. I very nearly jumped out of my skin when it spoke.

"G-g-get back into y-your grave," I whispered. As soon as I finished speaking the skeleton dug back into its grave and reburied itself. After a while of thinking I decided not to tell my mom so that she didn't throw me out of the house for either witchcraft or insanity. That night I barely slept, and the next day at school I almost couldn't speak. Worse, whenever I walked by a dead bug or rat it got up and started walking around. None of them actually came back to life, they just followed me around until I told them to stop. The first half of the school day went on normally, but at lunch it got *much* worse. I was eating like I always did, sitting alone, when somebody started to call me names. At firstI ignored it, but it got to the point where I was on the edge of losing my temper. Then after one more insult I lost it, and every dead thing in the building got up and attacked the person annoying me. Cockroaches, mice, spiders, anything that could bite or claw or stab assaulted them. Everyone in the cafeteria just watched in horror as the cloud of creatures assaulted them. When it was over, all that was left was their bones. Then the bones got up and saluted me! All I could do was run as fast as I could away from civilization. On the way a dead bear got up and put me on its back so we could go faster. Finally when there was no human in sight I stopped and my mount fell over, dead, again. I saw a cave so I ran inside.

Of course on the inside of the cave the grim reaper appeared, just my luck. The grim reaper spoke in a low rumbling voice, "You have finally shown the power we gave you." I had no idea what to do so I just stared. "You are an avatar of the constant battle and balance between life and death. Of course, you are from death which you have most likely figured out by now."

"Well then why shouldn't I just let life win so nobody dies and all?" I said

"Because if life wins the war and there is no death, creatures and plants will just end up fighting for territory and crowding each other, causing eternal suffering with no end," the grim reaper responded.

"Wow, that seems bad," I concluded. As the grim reaper was about to speak another human dashed into the cave and the reaper let out what sounded like a snarl.

"It seems we've been interrupted," it stated right before dashing towards me. Except instead of colliding it went into me, and a scythe appeared in my hand. The other person came running towards me and a sword of fire materialized in their hand. I barely deflected the first attack with the handle of my weapon, but as soon as I did another strike came. I found myself frantically dodging and deflecting attacks while being pushed closer towards the wall of the cave. Finally I was stuck between the cave and my fire- wielding contestant, but as they struck and almost finished me I was thrown back through the wall and fell onto a fiery golden surface.

As I layed down and thanked God that I was still alive I realized I wasn't on Earth anymore. At least I thought I wasn't because I was looking at it. I got up and examined my surroundings. The surface of what I was on looked like fire, but wasn't hot. As I tried to get used to my surroundings the grim reaper lunged out of me. I was surprised and confused then remembered that earlier it jumped into me.

"You currently stand on the Sun," it said calmly.

"I-I-I'm sorry, what did you say?" I asked.

"I said, you are on the surface of the Sun, which is where life and death fight." the grim reaper answered.

"Life and death fight on the surface of *our* sun?" I inquired.

"No, they fight on every star," it explained like I was asking why rock was not water.

"Um, okay so what am I supposed to do?" I said inquisitively.

"I will open your eyes and you will command the armies of death to keep the balance on this star," it insisted, and before I could say anything it shot into me again and everything in my vision warped. I don't know what happened, but one second I was looking at an unpopulated sun and the next I saw skeletons and creatures with wings, human bodies, and the heads of animals fighting. Immediately one dashed at me and I frantically swung my scythe down to meet it. When the two hit, the creature disintegrated. I turned to run, but a voice in my head commanded "Fight fool, the fate of Earth rests in your hands." I turned around just in time to hit another creature trying to kill me. Before I knew what I was doing I ran to the nearest bunch of skeletons to cleave a path through the enemies for them. It seemed my presence gave them a boost as they started hacking through creatures themselves. I led my squadron of undead to rendezvous with another and in no time I had an army all boosted from being near me. Together we fought through the other people-things to a huge temple. I don't know why I ran there, but it just felt right. The temple had pillars with carvings of leaves on them. The roof was a pyramid made of marble, and inside on a pillar there was a huge ball of stone that glowed with bright yellow light. As I touched it half of it became endless, churning, darkness.

"The balance has been restored, you may return to Earth and live normally, but you may be called upon again," a great booming voice said. When it was finished before I could say anything the world around me melted into a tunnel of darkness, and just like that I was back at home at my dad's grave again, going to put flowers on it. Even though the sudden adventure I just experienced was life endangering and insanely scary, I felt good about what I had done, and looked forward to being called upon again.

Hunsicker, Bethany
[redacted]
12 years, 7th grade

From the Field

"Go outside!" Peter shouted at his dogs, Cola and Coke, pointing his fingers at the open back door. He shook his head, "I don't care if you don't have to go, because when you 'don't have to go' it always just means that you want to go in the house!" He paced about, angrily flailing his arms, before realizing that it was pointless.

Peter decided to try another tactic. "Come on!" he ran out the back door, "Look how fun it is out here!"

The two dogs immediately followed, tongues happily lolling out of their mouths. They barked as they ran, thrilled at the promise of a new game.

Peter smiled and raced back inside of the house, closing the door on his dogs. He looked out the window and shuddered. Peter hated the outside at night.

At night the field behind his house would darken. It would vanish into a deep inky abyss. A deep void hiding anything and everything, especially the creatures that don't dare to prowl about in daylight.

Through the door, he could even hear a murder of crows, cawing their solemn song.

Peter hated this about himself. His imagination was overactive, and that was an understatement. Constantly feeding him new stories. It was why he wanted to be an author. He wanted to feed the stories to the paper, to get them out of himself.

Many people were confused as to why he didn't like his little "gift", but this was where they would never get it.

When most people thought of stories, they thought of pink castles, puppies, and happily ever afters. That was where they were incorrect.

His stories weren't always the most pleasant, not that he really let anyone know that. Peter's mind loved to play with him, and was definitely highly qualified to create stories drenched in fear.

Look, there is a car parked on the side of the road, next to where he walked to the bus stop. There is a killer clown hiding inside.

He gets to go on a beautiful zipline. The cord will snap and send him hurling at the cold, hard ground.

He listened as Cola barked. He was reassured by the constant, yappy bark that she commonly made. A deeper bark joined in. Coke's bark.

Peter froze. Cola always barked, but Coke was different. Coke never barked without reason.

Slightly shaking, Peter peered out the window just in time to see that tall weeds at the edge of his open yard rustle. A glimpse of

fleshy-pink appeared in the weeds, but only for a split second.

Peter's breath caught in his throat. He couldn't have seen something. What could it possibly be?

He stepped onto the deck to investigate right in time. Right in time to see Coke launch himself over the fence.

"Coke!" Peter could barely manage to cry out the words.

He felt hot tears begin to drip down his face. He couldn't- just couldn't stand to lose Coke.

Coke was the only person who felt like a true friend to Peter. He couldn't stand to lose that.

He ran down the stairs, and quickly leaped over the small dog fence, hoping that by some miracle he would be able to save his beloved dog.

Peter heard a sharp pain-filled yelp and immediately rushed toward the sound. That was when he saw IT.

The bony frame showed through the warty skin. IT sat on IT's long hind legs, the stubby

pink tail twitching with excitement that the thrill of a new kill.

IT whipped IT's bony face around to stare Peter in the eyes. IT's dark, hollow eyes seeming to search through his soul. IT lifted up the long claws and began to approach Peter.

The rough tongue swiped around IT's lips. IT left the body of Coke, hoping for another victim.

Cola began to bark again.

Peter fell back and tried to crawl away. He hoped that by some miracle, he would be able to survive.

Coke's blood-stained fur began to suddenly rise and fall as he smelt his owner's frigid fear scent. The dog slowly rose to its paws and began to stagger toward him.

"Coke!" Peter cried out joyfully, running toward his pet. He leaned into the stinky, wet fur, "Now we will die as we lived," Peter gave Coke a final scratch on the ear, "together."

Madilyn Reyes, 7th grade, 12 years old, 71 [illegible]2, valley ter.

The Carnival

It was Halloween night and it was Gia's first in this new town. She has many friends already! Ever since she came here, she felt like she belonged. Her friends so far are Jordan, Katie, etc.

"Gia! Hurry please we got to go now or we'll be late!" Jordan screams while she honks her car horn.

Gia looks out the window and sees them looking frustrated as ever. Gia then runs downstairs and searches for her mom. She finds her mom stress baking because of her family. Gia gives her mom a big hug trying to comfort her. Her mom hugs her back but tightly. Her mom kisses her head and says goodbye, before Gia dashes out the door. She hops into the car, fastens her seatbelt, and connects her phone to the bluetooth.

"Are you guys ready for the best night of our lives?!" Gia calls out in excitement.

They all agree with wide grins on their faces.

After a few minutes of driving they arrive.They find their parking spot and grab their essentials. Katie starts stuffing mysterious papers in her bag. Gia looks over the seat to see the papers were money? "Holly crap! Where'd you get all that money!??!?!" Gia exclaims.

Katie looks back looking dumbfounded as ever, "what?" she asks.

"ALL THAT MONEY!" Gia yells out.

"Ohh.. It's fake... Ima robber dummy..My real wallet is in my pocket.." Katie giggles back.

Katie, Jordan, and Gia all start laughing once again about the stupidest thing. They start walking toward the carnival entrance.

"OH MY GOODNESS! WHY IS IT SO PACKED??" Gia cries out.

"I mean it is halloween.." Jordan says.

They all get to the front of the line and buy their tickets. Jordan and Katie put their passes in first then rush to the bathroom leaving Gia behind. Gia thinks "this is a perfect time!"

Gia finishes buying her pass but when she walks into the carnival she gets a bad feeling. Like the one she had in her old city. She walks to the bathroom waiting for them to come out. After a little while they come out. Gia starts to complain about how long they took. Jordan suggests that they should look around to see if they want to eat or ride a roller coaster first.

They start walking around trying to remember where all the rides and the food stands are. After they looked around the whole park they decided to go on a ride first. Katie chooses to go on the Tower of Doom first to get them prepared for the night to come. They go in the line and wait.

"Guys I forgot to tell you that I bought fast passes for all of us!" said Gia. So Gia slides into the fast pass line with Katie and Jordan following her exact movements.

They end up the first ones on the ride! They get on and Gia gets the side seats. CLINK! They're buckled in their seats and ready to go. The operator starts counting down. 3..2.. He starts the ride before he says one. They start freaking out while they almost reach the top! Gia feels a slight tap on her shoulder.

"Yes?" She asks but realizes she's on the side seat.

She looks over where Jordan and Katie are and sees them crying and holding hands. Gia gets a cold shiver down her spine. "Maybe I'm just scared of the ride?" she thinks. They reach the top of the tower.

"I will always be watching!" A strange whisper appears from the same side she got tapped on. BOOM! The ride drops.

"AHHHH" everyone starts screaming at the top of their lungs. Gia starts screaming uncontrollably. She usually doesn't scream on roller coasters so that was very odd. The ride ends with people laughing and giggling about how fun it was.

Gia looks at Jordan with a pale face." What's wrong Gia looks like you've seen a ghost." Jordan says sarcastically. Gia tries to play it cool and says it was the ride. Jordan nods in agreement.

Gia decides it was just her mind playing tricks on her, so she shrugs it off. All of them start to walk around to find another ride to go on. Gia still has that weird chill down her spin but it feels a little worse, almost like someone or something is watching. Could it be the rides? Or the food? Or the carnival lights? A million ideas swirled in her mind. She had no idea what it could be. A small whisper starts calling her name.

"Gia.. Giiaaa.. GIIaa.. GIA" Jordan says.

Gia snaps back into reality and looks at Jordan. Jordan asks what was going on. Jordan proceeds to ask questions like do you wanna go home, and are you okay. Gia shakes her head no to every question.

Jordan shrugs and they continue to walk to the next roller coaster. They go on one of the biggest roller coasters and Gia's chill starts to fade

away. They go in their line and wait a few minutes. The roller coaster gate opens and they get strapped in.

Everyone on the ride starts counting down but the operator decides to wait after they all say ''3.. Go" to start the ride. WHOOSH! Everyone starts screaming in fear.

The ride ends, everyone gets off giggling and laughing, but not Gia. Gia was just thinking about the chills down her spin earlier. Katie looks at her wondering why she wasn't laughing or anything. Gia sees in her peripheral vision that Katie was looking at her so Gia starts to pretend to laugh. Katie looks back ahead and they both don't suspect a thing.

Gia starts to overthink about what's going on. Those weird thoughts came back and started to fill her mind again. She thinks of a new idea.. Maybe I'm hungry. She asks Jordan and Katie if they could stop by a food stand and eat really quick. They go to a little hotdog stand and they start to order their food.

She starts getting a stomach ache from just thinking of food. Their food comes out and she gets a smell of it. Gia takes a bite and she feels sick to her stomach. She finishes her food and throws it away. Her stomach starts growling.... BLAH Gia throws up all over the trash cans.

"EWWW" everyone starts yelling out.

Gia runs to the bathrooms and continues to throw up in the toilet. After she's done she starts to cry. She flushes the toilet and washes her hands still crying. Jordan and Kaite rush to the bathrooms hoping she's okay. They help her get all cleaned up and try and take her home but Gia declines and asks if they can at least go into the maze.

They obviously say yes because she literally threw up. They grab a small trash can just in case and they start walking towards the maze. They enter the maze and Gia gets the chills again. Jordan and Katie start to take photos and videos to remember where they already were so they don't go in circles.

Gia starts feeling dizzy and losing track of Jordan and Kaite. She starts to get colder as she goes deeper into the maze.

"Jordan... Katie.." Gia calls out in a soft voice.

Jordan and Katie were nowhere to be seen. Gia starts to freak out and tries to facetime them. They don't answer. Gia starts hyperventilating. She tries calling their names, calling their phone, doing everything she can to try and find them. She starts running around the maze, still feeling weird. She

has a bad headache due to the spinning room, or from her perspective the room is spinning like crazy.

She approaches a scarecrow thinking it's a person," excuse me mister? I-I'm lost, I f-feel sic-k, and I w-wanna get out of-f here! Please h-help me.." She pleads and begs.

Then after no response she looks at the scarecrow and see's little black things wiggling and moving. She rubs her eyes so her vision is clear, therefore she sees... BUGS AND MEALWORMS?!

"AHHHH!!" She screams out very loudly before she starts to crawl back on the edge of throwing up again.

The bugs start making their way down towards Gia therefore Gia starts freaking out and starts to cry. But before they reach her Gia stands up and starts running.. Running into random things.

Gia starts remembering that Jordan and Katie left marks so they don't go in circles, so she starts following the marks hoping she'll make it out. Every step she took she heard something behind her like someone was walking behind her. But everytime she looks back there's nothing to be seen.

Gia notices the mark starting to fade. But that represents that the marks have been sitting there for a while, which means that she's almost to the entrance! She takes one last look behind her to see Jordan and Katie!.. But behind Jordan and Katie Gia notices an old man following them. Gia screams in fear. Therefore everything goes black..

After a couple of hours later Gia wakes up to crying and whimpers coming from Jordan, Katie, and random little kids. She sits up to see a crowd of people surrounding her. The paramedics try to lay her back down. But Gia looks at everyone dumbfounded, then spots the man following them in the maze.

"THAT'S THE MAN FOLLOWING ME IN THE MAZE!" Gia yells out while pointing out the man.

The paramedics look over at the man and one of the paramedics starts dashing toward the man. The man takes a while to respond to the paramedic. Right as the old man started to run the paramedic already caught him. Therefore the team called in for backup, so then the man got into the police car, and they drove him right to the police station for investigation.

About 1 hour later when the ambulance and police leave, Jordan and Katie rush over to Gia. They start hugging her and breaking down in tears apologizing about everything. After a while Gia forgives them, they all walk

to the car, and start driving home. Gia and Katie are in the back with Jordan driving.

They arrive home, get out the car and they go inside Gia's house. Jordan rushes to her mom and tells her everything! Katie turns on the tv for Gia to watch and the news is the first channel to pop up.

"Today at the local carnival a girl was going crazy then passed out in the maze. People who were there were saying how this girl, Gia Marklen, said some man was following them the whole time in the maze." The news lady said.

The guy next to her added on," Yes, and down at the police station, some policemen have reported that the man who was supposably following Gia and her friends, has escaped the jail. Police have been on the search for this man once again, so please stay home and stay safe."

THE END?!??!?!??

Mauricio casarez age 11 grade:6th

25

The Echoes of Elmwood House

In the forgotten town of Elmwood, nestled between sinister woods and a cursed river, stood an old Victorian house shrouded in whispers and shadows. The townsfolk often avoided its crumbling walls, claiming it was haunted by the spirit of Eliza, a young woman who vanished mysteriously one stormy night over a century ago.

One fateful Halloween, a group of four friends—Lila, Mark, Sarah, and Ethan—decided to test their courage. Armed with flashlights and a dare, they made their way to Elmwood House, laughter echoing through the chilly air. The door creaked ominously as they pushed it open, revealing a dimly lit foyer covered in dust and cobwebs.

"Come on, it's just an old house!" Mark exclaimed, trying to hide his unease as he switched on his flashlight. Shadows danced on the walls, giving life to the long-forgotten relics of Eliza's past.

As they explored, strange things began to happen. Lila felt a cold breeze rush past her, and Sarah swore she heard a whisper calling her name. Dismissing it as their imagination, they moved deeper into the house, captivated by an eerie painting of a beautiful woman watching them from the wall.

"That must be Eliza," Ethan said, staring intently at the artwork. Suddenly, the lights flickered, and the temperature dropped drastically. An unseen presence filled the room, heavy and suffocating. The friends exchanged nervous glances, but their curiosity pushed them forward.

They discovered a staircase leading to the attic. Each step seemed to protest under their weight, groaning as if warning them to turn back. Ignoring the instinctual fear clawing at their minds, they ascended. The attic was a treasure trove of forgotten memorabilia—dusty furniture, yellowed letters, and a peculiar trunk sealed tightly.

Driven by an irresistible urge, Lila approached the trunk and forced it open. Inside lay a collection of letters, yellowed with age and filled with haunting tales of Eliza's life, her dreams, and the rumors of her madness. The final letter was written in a frantic scrawl, detailing her descent into despair and hinting at a dark secret buried within the house.

Suddenly, the room quaked, and the trunk slammed shut with a deafening bang. The friends stumbled back, hearts racing. A chilling wind swept through the attic, carrying the echoes of Eliza's pain. Shadows twisted into dark figures, their outlines flickering in and out as if they were struggling to break free from the past.

"Get out!" Ethan shouted, terror etched on his face. They turned to flee but found the staircase had vanished, replaced by an impenetrable wall of darkness. Panic surged as they realized they were trapped.

The air grew heavy with sorrow, and the shadows coalesced into a figure—the ghost of Eliza. Her once-beautiful face was twisted in anguish, eyes hollow and searching. "Help me," she whispered, her voice echoing like a distant cry. "Find my heart!"

The friends were frozen, terror paralyzing them as she reached out. Just then, Sarah noticed a shimmering locket around Eliza's neck. "Maybe it's the locket!" she cried. Desperation drove them to respond. They rushed forward, hoping to uncover the truth.

The moment they touched the locket, visions flooded their minds. Eliza's heartbreak, her betrayal, and the secret she had buried deep within the house—a hidden room, a place of unspeakable horror. As if a door had swung open, the shadows recoiled, revealing a path.

Fueled by adrenaline, they dashed through the darkness, determined to uncover the truth and free Eliza's spirit. They stumbled upon a hidden door beneath the attic floorboards, leading to a forgotten basement filled with remnants of the past—battered trunks, frayed letters, and a heart-shaped jewel, still glimmering amid the decay.

With trembling hands, Lila placed the jewel in Eliza's outstretched palm. A light enveloped the ghost, illuminating the room before it faded to a serene glow. The oppressive atmosphere lifted, and the house sighed in relief as Eliza's spirit finally found peace.

The door to the attic reappeared, and the friends escaped into the cool night air, hearts pounding and minds racing. As they looked back at the house, they knew it would never be the same. The echoes of Elmwood would remain, whispering tales of love, loss, and the courage to confront the darkest corners of the past.

In the safety of the moonlight, they vowed to share Eliza's story, to ensure she was never forgotten again. But deep down, they knew the house still held its secrets, waiting patiently for the next curious souls to approach its haunted doors. **The Echoes of Elmwood House: Part 2** Months had passed since Lila, Mark, Sarah, and Ethan had liberated Eliza's spirit from the clutches of Elmwood House. The chilling experiences had left them forever changed, connected by the eerie bond they shared after confronting the unknown. A sense of peace lingered in the air, but whispers of the past still danced among the townsfolk. While some believed the haunting had truly ended, others remained skeptical, convinced that while Eliza's spirit was free, an ominous presence still lurked within the house. One spring evening, curiosity gnawed at the

friends. Despite their earlier promise to avoid Elmwood House, they found themselves drawn back, this time armed with cameras and the desire to document what they had experienced. “Let’s see if the place feels different,” Ethan suggested, his excitement tempered by a hint of trepidation. As they approached the house, the moon hung high, casting a silvery light over the once-dreaded façade. The door, now slightly ajar as if inviting them in, creaked with an almost familiar welcome. Stepping inside, they immediately noticed the air felt lighter, the shadows less oppressive. In the foyer, sunlight filtered through cracked windows, illuminating dust motes that flickered like stars. “It’s beautiful,” Sarah breathed, moving toward the painting of Eliza that had once sent shivers down her spine. As she gazed at the canvas, a sense of warmth radiated from it, and for a moment, she could have sworn she saw Eliza’s smile reflected there. “Let’s check the attic again,” Lila suggested, her heart racing with a mix of excitement and fear. They climbed the stairs, the wood no longer protesting under their weight. At the top, the attic appeared unchanged, but the atmosphere felt different somehow—poised, almost expectant. Mark began filming, capturing the surroundings. “This feels like a place of healing,” he said, exploring the remnants of Eliza's life that still sat in the dusty corners. As he turned, something glimmered beneath a pile of old blankets. With curiosity piqued, he walked over and pulled back the fabric to reveal an ornate mirror, its surface fogged with grime. “It looks old,” Ethan remarked, wiping a corner with his sleeve. The glass shimmered, and as it cleared, they saw not just their reflections but a vague outline behind them—a fleeting image of Eliza, ethereal and glowing. Just as Mark pressed the camera closer, the image vanished. “Did you see that?” Mark exclaimed, his eyes wide with disbelief. “See what?” Lila asked, her own heart racing. All of them scrambled to look at the mirror, but nothing remained. Just then, a soft whisper echoed through the attic, barely above a breath. “Find me...” it trailed off into silence. “This can’t be happening again,” Sarah whispered, fear creeping back into her voice. Yet after everything, a newfound bravery surged within Lila. “No, this is different now. She’s not trapped. Maybe she just wants us to remember her story.” Driven by determination, Lila suggested they research the circumstances of Eliza’s life more thoroughly. They agreed, forming a plan to explore the remnants of Elmwood’s past, hoping to either uncover more of Eliza’s story or finally lay her memories to rest. The following days were spent combing through dusty archives in the town library, interviewing elderly residents, and piecing together fragmented accounts of Eliza’s tragic life. They learned about a love affair shrouded in scandal, a letter that had never reached its intended recipient, and a deep-seated grief that had consumed her. With each revelation, the bond between the friends strengthened—they felt Eliza’s presence guiding them. Their research led them to an old cemetery at the edge of Elmwood. There, amidst the crumbling stones, they found her grave, secluded beneath an ancient willow tree. The inscription read, “Eliza Hart, Gone But Not Forgotten.” Tears filled their eyes as they placed flowers at her grave. "We’ll tell your story," Lila vowed softly. “You won’t be forgotten.” In that moment, a gentle breeze rustled the branches, and a feeling of warmth enveloped them. They could almost hear Eliza’s soft laughter, tangible and comforting, like a sigh of relief escaping through time. As they made their way back, the friends knew they had not just unearthed Eliza’s past but had interwoven their own lives with hers forever. Elmwood House would remain a monument of stories—of love, loss, and the courage to confront the echoes of history. They returned once more to the house, this time ready to share not just the haunting memory of a lost soul, but the vibrant tale of a life lived, filled with dreams and hopes. Little did they know, the house would always be waiting—its walls

eager to share more stories with those prepared to listen, ready to welcome any brave enough to unearth the hidden truths of Elmwood.

The Echoes of Elmwood House: Part 2 Months passed since that fateful Halloween night, and the friends tried to return to their normal lives, but the remnants of Elmwood House lingered in their minds. Lila, in particular, found herself drawn back to the tales they had unearthed about Eliza. With each passing day, she felt a deeper connection to the lost woman, as if their spirits were intertwined. One evening, as autumn leaves swirled in the brisk wind, Lila gathered her friends once more. "We need to go back," she said, her voice firm. "There's more to Eliza's story, and we didn't uncover everything. I can feel it." Reluctantly, Mark and Ethan agreed, though Sarah's apprehension was palpable. "What if we unleash something again?" she worried. "What if we weren't meant to find the truth?" Their fears didn't deter Lila. She proposed they return not just to explore but to conduct a séance, hoping to contact Eliza one last time. With some hesitation, they arranged to meet at the house under the same crescent moon that had watched over them their first night there. As they stepped inside the familiar foyer, their flashlights flickered nervously as if acknowledging their presence. The atmosphere was thick, pregnant with unresolved stories. Lila led them to the living room, where they arranged old pillows in a circle and lit candles, the flickering flames creating dancing shadows. "Let's call to her," Lila said softly. "Eliza, if you can hear us, we want to help you, to understand the truth." At first, silence reigned, but as they focused on their connection, the air turned dense, and a whisper floated through the room, chilling them to their cores. "Help me," it echoed, reminiscent yet different from their first encounter. Heartbeats quickened as Sarah spoke up, "What if she's trying to tell us something?" Lila closed her eyes, concentrating. "Eliza, we're here for you. You need to guide us." Suddenly, a gust of wind howled through the house, extinguishing the candles in an instant. In the darkness, a soft glow illuminated the center of their circle. It was the locket they had seen on Eliza, now resting on the floor, its heart-shaped form pulsating with an otherworldly light. Mark picked it up, and as he did, images flooded their minds—visions of Eliza's life continuing after her disappearance. She was not just a victim trapped in time; she was a woman full of hopes and regrets, with dreams that had been washed away by tragedy. "I see... a man," Lila gasped. "He hurt her. He… he was jealous!" As the friends pieced together Eliza's shattered memories, the light from the locket illuminated characters from her past: her friends, her family, but most hauntingly, a shadowy figure that loomed large. The visions settled on a garden in the back of the house, where a white rose bush flourished against the crumbling landscape—a place where secrets had bloomed. "We need to go outside!" Ethan exclaimed, urgency filling his voice. "The garden! It's our clue!" The group rushed through the dimly lit house to the back door, fumbling as they pushed it open into the cool night. Once outside, they made their way to the overgrown garden. Even in the darkness, the spectral glow of the locket pointed them to a spot beneath the rose bush. With determination, they began to clear away the underbrush. Their hearts raced as they unearthed a part of Eliza's life forgotten by time: a small wooden box, intricately carved with floral designs, its surface marred by years of neglect. Opening the box revealed letters written by Eliza herself, addressed to the man who had betrayed her love. It became clear that he had hidden part of her past—a locket that contained a tiny portrait of a child, her child, who had been taken from her, lost to an unforgiving world. As the final letter was read aloud—a confession of love and sorrow—the wind around them shifted.

A soft sob echoed within the garden, morphing into a grateful sigh, and the whispered torment that once filled the air turned into a gentle reassurance. Then, as the night deepened, a figure appeared before them—a vision of Eliza, her face no longer twisted in anguish but radiant with peace. "Thank you," she said, her voice like music in the wind. "You've freed me from the shackles of my past. My heart is whole again, and my child will be remembered." With that, Eliza stepped into the shimmering light of the locket, vanishing into the soft glow that now enveloped the garden. The friends stood in silence, the air around them filled with a serene warmth. They had conquered the shadows of Elmwood House and had given Eliza back her identity. The house seemed to breathe easier, the burdens of the past lifted, allowing the echoes to transform from sorrow into sweet remembrance. As dawn broke, painting the sky with hues of gold, Lila, Mark, Sarah, and Ethan remained in the garden, vowing to return to the town and share Eliza's story, not just as a tale of tragedy, but one of love, loss, and ultimately, liberation. As they turned to leave, they felt a last whisper of wind engulf them, carrying Eliza's gratitude into the new day, a solemn reminder that every shadow could lead to the light if only one dares to seek the truth.

The Echoes of Elmwood House: Part 3 Months after their confrontation with Eliza's haunting past, Lila, Mark, Sarah, and Ethan had become local legends in Elmwood—more than just kids who dared to explore a haunted house. The friends found renewed purpose through their connection to Eliza, sharing her story in schools, local events, and even a community documentary. Each retelling brought further light to the darkness that had once overshadowed her life. As they settled into their new roles as storytellers, a strange peace settled over Elmwood, but an exciting curiosity remained. The house—once a symbol of dread—stood as a monument of hope. However, whispers continued to circulate about another spirit; some said the woman in the painting in the attic had begun to morph into something else—a guardian of the stories hidden within the walls. One chilly autumn afternoon, with the scent of damp leaves in the air, the friends decided to return to Elmwood House, not to uncover more secrets, but to connect with the history that lingered gently. "I feel like we left a piece of ourselves there," Lila said, her eyes sparkling with determination. Mark nodded, "Plus, I want to take some footage for our documentary. It's time we closed that chapter, officially." As they entered the house, the atmosphere was markedly different. Sunlight streamed through the dusty windows, illuminating the once-forbidding foyer. The warmth made the place feel welcoming, as if Eliza herself had opened the doors for them. "We should visit the attic one last time," Sarah suggested. "It feels like it's calling us." Together, they made their way up the creaking staircase, now less ominous than before. As they reached the attic, the faint smell of lavender wafted through the air, transporting them back to the memories of their fateful Halloween night. In the center of the attic stood the mirror they had discovered during their last visit—its surface now reflective almost like a portal. As they

gathered around it, something caught their eyes: the figure of Eliza appeared briefly, but this time she looked vibrant, adorned with a peaceful smile. "Eliza?" Lila whispered, her heart racing with a mix of awe and hope. The mirror shimmered, and to their astonishment, the reflection transformed into scenes from Eliza's life—moments of joy and laughter, of love and bond with her child, remnants of dreams turned nightmares now woven together into a tapestry of resilience. “This is amazing,” Ethan said, entranced. “She wants us to see the light she carried.” Suddenly, the mirror flickered, and they glimpsed something darker—shadows swirling in corners of the reflections, remnants of the grief that once enveloped Eliza. “Do you think those are memories of her pain?” Sarah mused, tearing her gaze from the sorrowful images. “There’s more,” Lila replied, “I can feel it.” As she reached out to touch the mirror, it grew warmer, and a flicker of light beckoned. In an instant, they found themselves pulled into the mirror’s grasp, and the attic faded away, replaced by a lush garden—the very same from Eliza’s visions. The air shimmered with golden light, and as they took hesitant steps forward, the outlines of their surroundings shifted. Emerging from a nearby willow tree, Eliza appeared again, more radiant than ever. “You’ve shown me love,” she said, her voice echoing like a sweet melody. “Now, feel the depths of that love. Together, we will gather every shadow of grief and transform it into stories that bond us all.” Before they could comprehend her words, vines from the garden began to intertwine with their hands, binding them together in a circle. A surge of warmth coursed through them, and as Lila closed her eyes, she saw the canvas of memories—Eliza's joy intertwined with every tale of loss in Elmwood, transforming the darkness into laughter, love, and healing. “Tell our stories,” Eliza’s voice resonated within them. “From love’s heart, we learn our lessons. Endings only birth new beginnings.” Suddenly, with a gust of wind, the garden swirled into motion. It felt as if they were flying through time, spiraling through moments witnessed and untold in Elmwood’s history. They saw the laughter of children, the warmth of family, the whispers of long-lost loves, and the solace of friendship. With one final flash, they were hurled back into the attic, breathless and wide-eyed. The mirror pulsed softly, reflecting the euphoric changes in their hearts. “I think we just experienced her legacy,” Mark gasped, a radiant smile breaking across his face. “This is the story we should tell. Not just what happened to her, but how her spirit lives on every day.” As they gathered around the mirror, Lila placed her hand on its surface, tears of joy slipping down her cheeks. “Eliza has taught us so much. We’ll tell her tale in a way that celebrates life, the heartache but also the beauty of love and forgiveness.” And so they did. The friends became not only storytellers but also the voices echoing the lessons learned through Eliza: that every sorrow hides a story, waiting to unfurl; every soul has a tale worth telling. Through those tales, they helped Elmwood heal, igniting sparks of hope and connection throughout the community. And though the house still stood there, ancient and majestic, it carried a new aura—one of warmth and life, forever echoing the promise of love transcending loss. Eliza’s spirit, now a part of every corner of Elmwood, whispered softly through time, reminding all that echoes never truly fade; they simply transform into new beginnings.

The Echoes of Elmwood House: Part 4 Months rolled on since the friends had freed Eliza's spirit, and the once-dreaded Elmwood House now stood as a symbol of hope and healing. The townsfolk began to share tales of Eliza's true story, celebrating her life rather than mourning her untimely departure. Lila, Mark, Sarah, and Ethan found solace in their shared mission and the legacy they had forged with Eliza's memory. As autumn bloomed into winter, unsettling dreams began to plague Sarah. Night after night, she was haunted by visions of the house shrouded in fog, distant sobbing echoing through the walls. Each morning, she awoke with a sense of dread, the weight of a forgotten chapter pressing on her heart. "One night, I dreamt I was back in the attic," she confessed one chilly evening, her voice trembling. "Eliza was there, but she wasn't alone. There was a presence—something dark that seemed to pull at her." Concerned, Lila listened intently. "Maybe there's more to discover. Eliza may have found peace, but perhaps the house still holds something. She might need our help again." Despite their reservations, the group decided to return one last time, convinced that they needed to confront the lingering shadows buried within the house. As night fell, they retraced their steps to Elmwood, where the biting winter air bounced against their skin and the moonlight bathed the building in silver. Crossing the threshold, they noticed an unnerving silence enveloping the house, the warmth they had previously felt replaced by an eerie chill. The once-bright foyer seemed darker, and the shadows seemed to stretch unnaturally against the walls. Something was amiss. "Let's head straight to the attic," Ethan urged, his voice a mix of excitement and trepidation. They ascended creaking stairs, each step echoing with the weight of caution. In the attic, they found the mirror—a piece that had been untouched since their last visit. It stood ominously, reflecting the dim glow of their flashlights. "Is it just me, or does it look different?" Mark noted, stepping closer. The surface shimmered as if alive, swirling with fog like storm clouds ready to unleash fury. Suddenly, a low growl reverberated through the room, echoing between the wooden beams above. The lights flickered, plunging them into darkness, and a voice—gruff and malevolent—pierced the air. "You should not have returned!" Fear gripped them, but Lila stood firm, summoning her courage. "We're not afraid of you! We're here to help Eliza again!" The shadows within the attic convulsed violently, swirling into a menacing form that distorted into the visage of a man, his expression twisted with rage. "You freed her, but you cannot understand what I have taken from this house. I gave her everything! She was mine!" Panic surged, but Sarah stepped forward. "She chose love, she chose freedom! You cannot own someone's heart!" With her words, the atmosphere shifted. Light flickered back, brightening the space and illuminating the mirror. Reflecting

inward, they could see haunting glimpses of Eliza's life intertwining with that of the shadowy figure: a love turned toxic, a trust betrayed, a heart shattering under the weight of jealousy. "Let her go!" Mark shouted, rallying his friends. They formed a circle around the mirror, holding hands as they concentrated on the love they had uncovered for Eliza. Lila began to chant softly, "Eliza, your heart is free. You are more than a memory; you are love eternal." The ghostly figure howled in despair, thrashing wildly as they concentrated. The mirror began to pulse, the glass pulling images of Eliza's life—her joy, her beauty, her heartache—into its depths. With each image, the presence grew dimmer and more agitated, realizing its hold over her was dissipating. "Together, friends!" Ethan urged. "We can break this curse!" With renewed determination, they shouted in unison, "Eliza, reclaim your legacy! You are not bound to this darkness!" As their voices crescendoed, the shadows erupted, swirling in a violent torrent, battling against the brightness of Eliza's memories. The rift between light and dark widened, and with one final burst of energy, the angry specter was drawn into the mirror, trapped within the turmoil of its own making. In that moment, a ripple washed through the attic; the air felt lighter, and Eliza's spirit manifested once more, radiating strength and wisdom. "Thank you," she whispered, a soft light enveloping her. "You've set me free again." As her essence began to dissolve into bright motes of light, she looked at each of them. "Remember that the past holds both pain and beauty. Carry my heart with you, but don't let it trap you in sorrow." With her final words, she vanished, but her presence lingered, filling the attic with warmth. The mirrors' surface returned to transparency, reflecting their awestruck faces. They felt her gratitude in the space around them—as if Elmwood House itself sighed in relief, finally unburdened of its past. As dawn broke over Elmwood, the friends watched the first rays of sunlight pierce through the attic windows, illuminating their path forward. They had not only uncovered the darkness but had also reaffirmed the power of love, resilience, and friendship in the face of despair. From that day forward, Elmwood House transformed into a haven, a place where stories of love and loss could be shared freely and where the echoes of its past could guide those brave enough to listen. The friends vowed to return regularly, ensuring that Eliza's story was cherished, teaching the lesson that every echo, no matter how haunting, has the potential to guide one toward the light.

The revenge of the spirit

3 messages

Pascua, Izabel
To: Security Public Library <spl@wsd3.org>

Wed, Oct 30, 2024 at 2:42 PM

The revenge of the spirits

By. Izabel Pascua

In 1982, an old orphanage closed due to bankruptcy and they were forced to leave everything behind. Over time, nature reclaimed the abandoned building and became home to various wildlife, including bears and wolves.
On a foggy and brisk Halloween morning on Kodiak Island, a little girl wandered off into the woods, unaware of the dangers posed by the bears and wolves that now call the area home. A wolf pack lurks in the shadows of the forest hunting for prey in their new home. At the same time, the bears eat leftover food in the orphanage.

A police station had a Halloween party in the morning in 1983. The police station gets a call about a little girl who wanders off into the woods. 18 people rush to get into their search and rescue uniforms and take their walkmans, flash flashlights, and a gun just in case.

"Do you think she's still alive?" Elijah mutters.

"There's a possibility that she might be alive," Jake responds.

"Well let's hope you are right, this is your first mission as a caption," Elijah said

"Let's hope I made the right call," Jake responded with a worried voice thinking about her worried parents. The 18 people head out, then they follow the girl's muddy footsteps to the orphanage that was abandoned because kids went missing in the care of that orphanage. As they approached the orphanage one of them spotted six crows sitting on a spiked metal fence.

" Wow, I've never seen six crows before," one of them said. 17 of them looked at the six crows except for Jake, who thought it was ridiculous that they were surprised that six crows were sitting on the fence.

"When my grandma died she also spotted six crows," said a guy next to the man who spotted the six crows. Then they felt a gust of wind blow, sounding like a voice talking. It said *get out of here NOW.*

"Ummm I going crazy or did I just hear a voice," a man said

"I hear it too," said a woman all of them agreed

"Let's keep going," Jake said as he rolled his eyes, thinking that the wind was howling. As they entered they all turned on their flashlights and they all saw black goo on the floor and ceiling, they also saw all of the stuff was still there.

"What is all of this," said Eilah

" Is sticky," said one of the men as he picked up the black goo and squashed it between his fingers.

"Let's watch out for bears, I don't feel like dying today," Jake said. The group moved into the next room. A group of bears and wolves emerged from the shadows. The wolves climbed into a broken window. As if they were planning an attack on the group and the bears lurked outside in the shadows.

"Hey, Let's try to split up so you can find her quicker" Jake suggested,

"There will be 6 groups," he said, and they all agreed.

"Number 1 Your group will get the bedrooms, number 2 You will get the kitchen And we will get the outside, oh and remember if you see a bear or a wolf pull the trigger and we will come running to you guys, ok?" Jake said.

Group 1 went to the bedrooms, and looked around.

"I wonder why they left all the things here," said one of the men

"Maybe because they saw bears and left, there are more bear sightings" responded a woman

"I guess so," the man said

"Umm, guys, am I seeing things because there's a pair of eyes staring at me" a guy said pointing a flashlight under the bed.

" Don't be so freaked out man it's probably just a wild animal or something, I can't believe you're that scared of some wild animal, you know what let me prove you scaredy-cat" The man said, sounding off. As he got closer and closer to the under-the-bed the others were trying to convince him not to stick his arm under the bed.

"Come on guys, you can't tell that you're all scared of some animal," said the man confidently. The man lay down and slowly stuck his arm under the bed.

"See-" Suddenly, something snatched his arm, and before he could react, his body was violently pulled under the bed, leaving everyone in shock. Then something behind them growled in an einstein, and the wolves attacked them.

They regroup not noticing that some of them are missing. Suddenly they hear something growling at them. They slowly look behind them and see a pack of bears and wolves but something looks off about them. They look like they have black goo coming from their eyes and salivating from their mouth...immediately the wolves and bears attack them, and they all run for their lives. Hearing the screams Jake, Elijah, and Olivia run for their lives and into the basement. A pack of wolves follows them but gets lost, hungry for revenge. The basement looked old and worn out, it was also pitch black a hint of light came from the window.

"Wha-what happened, " said Jake with shaky hands and teary eyes

"I-I don't know, there-they're all dead a-all of them" replied Elijah also with teary eyes and shaky hands.

"' I'm scared" Olivia replied Jake comforts Olivia by hugging her

"Shh is ok will be ok," jest as Jake said that they heard a little girl laugh. It was coming from the corner of the basement.

"Umm does anyone have a flashlight" Jake said

"Yeah-yeah I do, here," said Olivia Jake grabbed the flashlight from the shaky hands of Olivia. Jake shined the Flashlight.

"What is this place?" said Elijah feeling sick seeing the cages and the dead kids corps in it. Then the laugh grew louder, and the three slowly walked to the laughter. They looked at the corner and saw a little girl standing in the corner facing the wall wearing an old white gown, having long thick black messy hair that looked like I touched her butt and You could barely see her arms.

"Hey, are you lost... I don't think you should be here. There are bears and wolves here. It's not safe here," Elijah said sacredly.

"Oh I'm not lost oh no," said an echoing voice that sounded like it was coming from the girl.

"Who-who are you," Elijah responded with a frightened voice

"I'm the girl you were looking for" replied the girl

"We need you to come with us, we...will try to get you back safely" Jake replied as he remembered all the people that got slaughtered by the bears and wolves.

'"Hahaha, you're pretty silly, you still want to save me after what happened," the girl said.

"What do you mean" Jake replied confused.

"Oh, you know... all the people that died or should I say slaughtered," said the girl.

"How-how do you know that," Jake said while the other two looked in shock.

"Hahaha, oh poor you, I meant all the friends that died and the blood you owe them for trying to save a little girl all alone in the forest and maybe a little more blood you owe but I'll save that for you to figure out," the girl said to Jake, Olvila and, Elija was shocked at what she said.

"What do you mean?" said Jake

"This," said the little girl then they heard footsteps followed by a growl coming from upstairs.

"Your times running out Jake," said the girl

"WHAT DO YOU MEAN ?" Jake shouted, covering his mouth in shock at what he had done.

"Wow, you do have a death wish, well I guess it's my turn" She slowly turned around...

"What the frick," Jack said as he looked at the girl. She looked like a rotting corpse; she had one arm missing and an eye dangling from her head.

"I forgot to introduce myself, my name is Lily I was a prisoner in the orphanage they kept me here in this cage rotting for years," Lily said still with an echoing voice.
Before Jake could speak she started again

"I was the one who brought your group here, you poor things followed a corpse all the way here then we possessed all the bears and wolves in the forest," Lily said smiling at them.

"It's a shame I have to say goodbye to my new "friends"...but it's for a good cost bye-bye "friends," that was Lily's last words as her body instantly fell to the ground. Jake and the others felt something pass them. Then they heard growling coming closer, the wolves went down the stairs and into the basement.

"RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!" Jake's panicked voice echoed through the abandoned hall as they all sprinted for the exit. The sound of snarling grew louder as the wolves closed in. With a surge of desperation, Jake lunged for the door, his trembling hand gripping the handle as he threw his weight against it. The door creaked open just in time, Jake waited for the other as they ran out Jake slammed the door closed Elija and Oliva helped keep the door closed as the wolves slammed their body trying to open the door.

"Do you think will make it if we run," Jake said

"No, the wolves are fast we won't make it," Elija said

"So what's the plan," Oliva said

"one of us needs to hold them back," Elija said before anyone could say something Elija said "I'll do it," he said boldly.

"What are you insane? Why would you do that," said Jake, the door almost unattached from the building.

"There's no time for that go," Elija said

"NO I WON'T DO IT," Jake yelled

"JAKE LOOK AT ME," Elija yelled back, Jake turned his head around

"Listen I love you and you know that I would kill myself if I ever see you die and I know you would to...I don't want you to die so please let me do this for you," Jake was too shocked to say anything his eyes watered so did Oliva and Elija's eyes.

" I love you, brother," Elija pushed Jake and Oliva back as the door opened and the ravaged wolves went in for the kill. They stumbled out into the night, the wolves' hungry growls fading into the distance. "Aaaaa," Elijah screamed bloody murder as Jake and Olilva ran for their lives. Red eyes stared at them from the trees.

"We should be good for now," said Jake out of breath

"Ok," said Olilva of breath to

"Hey do you feel like something is watching you or stalking you," Oliva said in a scared voice

"your right I do, umm but we're so close to the town," Jake said still with tears in his eyes. Suddenly a bear popped up out of nowhere and grabbed Oliva by the shoulder and threw her to the ground.

"RUN, NOW...I LOVE YOU" Oliva said with tears in his eyes as gasping for breath, instinctively Jake ran he didn't want to but he still kept running and running. Until he reached the town. He realized that the town was silent.

A pack of wolves and bears sneakily followed from behind him. "Help anyone Help me please..." Jake screamed and cried at the top of his lungs, then he heard a laugh not a normal laugh but an echoing laugh like the one in the basement. It was coming from his house Jake ran to his house unhinging the door when Jake got in he saw a streak of blood coming from the bedroom. Jake darted to the kitchen to grab a knife and ran to his mother's and father's room, when he went to the room he saw the same girl from the basement. Lily turned around, staring Jake dead in the eyes. He didn't realize the blood on her arm, gown and the knife in her hand. She looked the same as she did in the basement. Jake was too focused on Lily so he forgot about his parents.

"What are you doing here," Jake said

"Well you came here faster than I thought," said Lily

"What do you want from us," Jake said

"Well I don't think "us" is a good word to use after all you are alone, in this cruel and dark world," Lily said

"What do you mean" Jake replied

Remember what I said in the basement

" Maybe a little more blood you owe but I'll save that for you to figure out," Lily repeated.

"Well I meant you Jake, Williams, you killed everyone in your group and in your town, even your brother, fiance, and, oh and don't forget your lovely parents," Lily said. She went to the side. Jake almost dropped his knife seeing his parents covered in blood and everything around it.

"What did you do," Jake said shocked

"Are you blind ?" said Lily

"I killed them" Lily replied

"No, Aaaaaah" Lily screamed. Jake woke up from the shock, he saw Lily's body on the ground. Then he felt something behind him. He quickly turned around so hard he fell down. He saw a bright light that looks the shape of an angel, It was so bright he couldn't see anything the angel said

"Go to the bay, you will be safe there." got up and sprinted outside the broken door he wasted no time and headed for the bay then he heard something chasing him but he didn't care. After a while of running me into the bay, he saw a big ship. He saw a glimpse of the words on the side of the boat that said navy seal. He smiled thinking he was safe then a bear came out and bit him on the shoulder then he heard shots firing and one got the bear.

"COME HERE, "said an army guy Jake ran to the safe place

"Are you ok?" said one of the military guy

"Is there anyone else alive ?" the military guy said

"No...it's just me, " said Jake

"Ok, " said the military guy

"LET'S RETREAT" shouted the military guy.

As the years have rolled on, Jake has cultivated a warm and loving family, surrounded by the laughter and joy of his wife and children. Each day, he finds delight in the little moments—family dinners where everyone shares stories, weekend adventures that spark excitement, and quiet evenings filled with tender conversations. Despite the happiness that envelops him, the shadows of his past linger, sometimes emerging in quiet moments of reflection. Memories he thought he had buried resurface, reminding him of the struggles and heartaches he once faced. However, with each passing day, he is gradually discovering a sense of peace amidst the turmoil. He is learning to navigate his emotions, using them as stepping stones toward a brighter future. The journey is not always easy, but Jake is committed to moving forward, embracing both the present and the hope that lies ahead.

Have you ever gone to a place that you have never been to, and you feel like something was... off? Well this happened to a boy named John, John was an exciting energized person overall happy, Little did he know this was going to take a turn. John was going on a family vacation to the Rockies in Colorado and he was booked in a cabin with his family when he felt sick and light headed. He goes outside to get a breather but he hears something rustling in the nearby woods, wooshs, wooshs. He turns around and warns his family, "We should leave, NOW"

His Mother asks, "Why?" John felt a sudden jolt and fell to the ground. Mother rushes up to John and feels cold, lifeless hands. Suddenly it starts raining, Mother, and the bunch pack everything as fast as they can, hop in the car and drive to the nearest hospital. As John is "dead" he has a flashback of some sort, although it wasn't his flashback, this flashback is about a ship on a full moon but the ship seems to be abandoned. I woke up in our home town in New York City and I felt normal but when I went to school everyone that knew me was very distant with me, I wondered why. Even the teachers wouldn't call on me even though I was a straight "A" student. I asked my Brother what was wrong and he said that I killed the doctor that was trying to save me? I didn't believe him because I was "dead" when I "killed" the doctor, he said that when I was "dead" I rose up and said that something bad was going to happen and then I fell right back down to the nurse bed. The next thing that happened, my brother continued, the doctor was so frightened that she threw the scalpel in the air and landed in her left eye and hit her Occipital lobe.

My brother says looking down "She was rushed to the operating room, but she lost too much blood." He says with a tear out of his eye. My brother says that he was the only one to witness this and when he told others they got scared but they didn't believe it but are still scared of me just in case. My brother said that he doesn't want to talk about it anymore and just to leave him alone. Now me and my brother were really close and were like peanut butter and jelly, and for him to just tell me to leave him alone? He must have been scarred for life because of me. I ended up leaving him alone all day, my mom was at work and my dad passed away when I was three, but my mom says that he was a bad person, so my mom never talked about him. When my mom said how I was doing and I told her about the flashback, and her face went pale, she asked me how I knew about the boat and I said I didn't know anything about a ship and that it was just a flashback that was never mine. She told me that our dad was a captain on a boat called the "Ghoul S.S" and how the Ghoul would go out on sea and

Aaron Hennek

Grade 7

A Bad Place For a Gnome

By Aaron Hennek

The fall season had come, all the gnomes had started packing up to leave for the winter and they had began to head out, they walked out of their summer home and began traversing towards the south but a bad storm was on the rise and these gnomes, had stuff that can not be wet so, they found the nearest cave to make temporary shelter until the storm blew over.

Out of the 25 gnomes that were in the group, 10 of them, known as Brian, Rivers, Patrick, Matt, Bartholomew, Brad, Micheal, Trevor, Franklin and Ezikiel began to wonder what lay farther inside the cave and they, out of curiosity, sent out to explore the rest of the cave and right as they set foot inside the path, a wave of the smell of wet bear fur, a strange owl and spider mixed smell overwhelmed them but nevertheless, they kept exploring.

Fred took the lead and he spotted something he thought was important, a wall with multiple scratch marks on it with what looked like a strawberry jam that made a trail from wall to wall and ended up in a den, and a lifeless older gnome body lay in the den, they never knew who it was and where the gnome came from. That did not break their spirits though, they kept going, as if pushing their luck. They kept walking down the trail but a pile of rocks blocked the main trail, Bartholomew found an opposite trail and they followed it but they could smell a strange gas in the air, as if the cave had gas pipes directly underneath where they stand.

As they walked into a spider web covered area, they saw an owl perched on a branch. They kept wandering into the cave and they heard heavy breathing behind them, as if coming from three bear heads. Everyone but Brad saw what was behind them and Brad said "He's right behind me, isn't he." and Jonas shook his head in agreement, and they all bolted down the corridor to attempt to get away from the creature that could only be described as "A three headed monster of a bear!" screamed Brad. The pounding of the bear's footsteps became louder and heavier as they slowed down in a shortness of breath, one after another they each hid behind the door frame with Ezikiel being the one to get taken, they were safe for now. They kept on walking hoping to find the exit but they wandered into a giant spider's nest that had owl feathers scattered in the nest. They found Brad in a terrible condition, scratches, bites and he was stuck in the spider web. They managed to break him loose but he was out, and Rivers threw his body on his shoulder and they continued toward a doorway that was covered in shadow that led to a dark room. A strange hoot echoed through the room and the crawl of a

spider's legs surrounded the room and something decided to show itself, a Owl with the body of a spider or a spider with the head of an owl.

Without a second thought, Rivers said "Look around for an exit!" but it was too late, they were cornered until Trevor spotted a tunnel that was right above them, they stacked on top of each other one by one and with 5 of the survivors, they pulled everyone up and into the tunnel just in time. They crawled through the tunnels until the sound of a cymbal echoed through the tunnel and an animatronic monkey started hopping towards them. They took the nearest right and all the while the monkey was smashing the cymbals together and gaining on them. Franklin realized it's not even half their size. He kicked it and it was broken, safe at last.

Patrick noticed the camp and he directed everyone over. They fell out of the exit and ran back to the rest of the group, with Ezekiel turning out to be safe, just very traumatized. They packed up their stuff and made their way out. The hoot of the owl-spider and the roar of the multi-bear did not bring back pleasant memories. They continued on their way South and now more traumatized than ever

The Very Normal Day

By:Alexandria Gonzalez

It was a chilly day at Fountainview Middle School. Halloween day had just started. There was a girl named Love who was dressed up as Dorthy from the wizard of OZ. She loved school, learning all of the new things and how kind the teachers were. Love was always getting bullied because of her skin color. Later that afternoon, everyone left the school to go home. Love had stayed after school for extra help on some assignments. When she was walking through the school she saw those boys who had been bullying her. They weren't after her, they looked scared to death. An evil demon with green glowing goop on him started running towards them. Love and the boys all started running away. They had fright in their eyes. Love ran straight home, but something didn't feel right. She looked all around the house. When she looked in the bathroom she saw her sister was in the shower. Love pulled back the curtain and saw her sister had blood running down her eyes. Then her sister screamed and jumped at her. Love ran as fast as she could to get away from her sister.

Love ran so far that she ended up in the woods.The woods were dark.In her ears she could hear what sounded like bones in a graveyard,but it was only the sound of a twig maybe being stepped on. Love had no idea what it was,so she started running. Almost frightened half to death, Love stopped…she saw what maybe looked like a house. She couldn't see with all the fog in her face. Like a gust of wind,more fog started to appear. She slowly and quickly walked up to the porch of the house. Hoping that someone was there, Love knocked on the door.When she knocked on the door she found an old woman.That old had blood running down her eyes as well.It looked like whatever was happening spread to the whole town.Then all of a sudden the old woman started running towards her and love couldn't get away.She shrieked "AAAAAAhhhhh"

She was never to be seen again. The next day everyone was suddenly cured. Love had been gone for some time. Her parents were starting to get worried. Love's parents called the police but nobody could find her.Love spent several years haunting anyone who was being bullied because the color of their skin.So beware she might be haunting you.

Library, Security Public <spl@wsd3.org>

Scary story for the contest

1 message

Hubbard, Jayden ·
To: Security Public Library <spl@wsd3.org>

Wed, Oct 30, 2024 at 9:49 AM

My name is Jayden Hubbard
My grade is 8th grade
I live at
Colorado Springs, CO 80911
My mom's phone number i
I have a scary and funny story for you and here it is. it is called Tethered

In a dimly lit room, a group of friends gathered around a flickering candle, eager to share their scariest tales. One friend, with a mischievous grin, began to recount the legend of the Tether—a ghostly figure that roamed the shadows, forever bound to the living by an invisible string. This entity, they said, thrived on fear, growing stronger with every scream and shiver it elicited. As the story unfolded, the friends leaned in closer, their eyes wide with a mix of terror and amusement. The Tether was said to appear when least expected, often during mundane activities like brushing your teeth or scrolling through your phone. Just when you thought you were safe, it would tug at the string, sending chills down your spine and making your heart race. The twist? The Tether was not just a harbinger of doom; it had a knack for the absurd, often pulling pranks that left its victims laughing nervously, unsure whether to scream or chuckle. The tale took a hilarious turn when the Tether decided to haunt a particularly brave friend who had dared to mock it. Instead of terrifying him, it turned his socks into mismatched monsters that danced around his feet, leaving him in fits of laughter while simultaneously questioning his sanity. The friends erupted into laughter, realizing that sometimes, the scariest things can also be the most ridiculous. In the end, the legend of the Tether served as a reminder that fear and humor often walk hand in hand, lurking in the shadows, waiting for the perfect moment to pounce. And as they extinguished the candle, they couldn't shake the feeling that perhaps the Tether was still out there, ready to tug at their hearts and tickle their funny bones when they least expected it.

This is a student email account monitored by Widefield School District. The contents of this email are governed by state laws and the board policies of the school district.

The tale of the ticking clock heart

Chapter one.

A blue jay soared through the gloomy snowy sky as it moved effortlessly around tall homes that had icicles like long nails growing on the roofs. It was a cold and icy afternoon, the kind of cold day that would send shivers down your spine and have your feet growing numb as well as your hands. A girl was walking across a bridge to head home after an exhausting and long lasting day of school. It was torture to her having to walk through the bitter cold snowy afternoon especially with her hands and fingers starting to feel like theyd fall off at any given moment. But despite all of the odds against her she couldn't help but feel something watching over her. Something offbeat.. Like something was lurking in the treacherous snow with her.

She spoke up in an anxious yet demanding tone "If there is someone following me, Speak up or you might as well *be a creep* towards some other girl." Yet Serena got no response.. Not a single one.. Despite the gut wrenching feeling growing larger inside her she pushed herself to head home. So she continued through the bitter biting snow once again though she felt the same gut wrenching feeling it was like she couldn't quite push it away. It already had built up inside her so she paused again in her tracks and spoke up in an annoyed tone.

"*Can you not take a hint? Just get away from me. Go home. It's getting late and I'm certain some pair of parents want their freakshow kid back!?*" Serena whipped her head to look behind her but yet there was nothing except for the snow that had kept going on and on like it was never ending.

Chapter two.

She couldn't deny that she felt like the worst was yet to come. But, once again she carried on with the trip back home. While walking home she got close but suddenly her ears rang as she heard a twig snap effortlessly like it was as fragile as glass behind her. She snapped her head over to find a girl who looked to be about her age but seemed deadly. By the way she stood there with no such fear in her eyes and she didn't seem cold. In fact her hands were already a shade of dark blue and purple at the tips. And one black pocket watch that its hands ticked slowly every minute passed was in

replacement of the girl's right eye. Serena mentally gagged at the girl's condition but she spoke up to the girl in a disgusted tone. "Ew.. I mean.. Sorry.. You're quite the sight, you know." but as a response the girl just nodded at Serena and the girl slowly started to limp past Serena paying no mind to her as the girl disappeared into the frosty afternoon. Serena was anxious, a kind of anxious that turned her stomach into hoops and knots and loopy dee loops and upside down. Nevertheless, she continued on through the snowy atmosphere as her fingertips and hands grew a shade of light blue and shook slightly. While on the way back home she suddenly felt lightheaded like at any moment she could pass out right there in the bitter snow, eyes shut frozen and fingers a deep shade of blue where the point one finger could fall off and reveal the bone. Serena stood there and looked forward with a wave of fear coursing through her however Serena felt as if she was paralyzed because before she could push through she passed out. On the cold icy frost ground.. Abruptly, Serena woke up and felt a sharp exhausting feeling as she slowly got up. Yet she felt this emptiness like something was unusual when she looked down she saw her heart was no longer there instead it was replaced with a cuckoo clock. Serena's heart was plucked out effortlessly by the strings and the cuckoo clock shoved deep to the core of once where her heart laid. *She felt the hands ticking and the cuckoo clock bird dancing around waiting for afternoon and midnight and each tick the hands made would sting, a bad sting the kind that ached and shrieked and made you want to cry until you felt your eye sockets give up.* **To be continued..** 'An old worthless clock that just keeps ticking and cuckooing without meaning nothing' - Ken Kesey.

By: Colie Wallace

Address: [redacted]

Phone Number: [redacted]

Age: 13 years old

Grade: 8th

The Midnight Costume Contest

It was the night of Halloween, with children running around
With the sound of laughter filling the air
People in costumes waiting for the crown
Could it be the little one with hair so fair?
Or the witch holding a broom?
I guess we'll never know until the Halloween bell rings

Dong, Dong, Dong, Dong, Dong, Dong

There the bell rings to seal your doom
One by one the costumes go up, as the last bell dings
You impatiently delay your time
As you stand in the back of the line
A skeleton walks up to the stage with no grime
You see the ghost float up, the moon still shines
You finally walk up; a pit of despair fills your belly
The children stop and stare as you walk up looking stunning
You spin around watching the judges, turning into jelly
You exit the stage feeling oh so proud, knowing you'll be in the running
Everyone impatiently waits
For their fates to be declared
You feel your stomach churning and the world crushes you like weights
The judges start calling names, waiting hoping that yours wasn't spared
One by one
5th place
4th place

3rd place
2nd place
Finally 1st, you hear your name get called
You don't believe it
It has to be a dream
For you have just won the bit
You won the Midnight Costume Contest

The Watcher- Book 1

—Bill—

The emergency alert system blinked on and off on the tv. The photo of the boy looked familiar to Cadence. This was a boy in her grade that really enjoyed playing football and wrestling. This was the boy who was good in subjects like math and science, but he was also the boy who wouldn't get lost in such a simple neighborhood like hers.

He had been at Cadence's bus stop ever since fifth grade, when he moved into town. He was never annoying. He had always been a quiet student, a reason Cadence did not know him well. He scored a 100 on every math test, but that was all she knew about him, besides the fact that he was her best friend's little brother.

She couldn't believe it. A kid she knew was just gone. He had walked off the bus just like all of the other kids that evening. Cadence grew concerned as she started to read the description:

MISSING KID

BILL WHITE

AGE 13

-LAST SPOTTED AT 104 TIMBER DRIVE

Cadence knew that street. That was exactly where the bus stop was. But it wasn't possible that he had last been seen there. Bill had turned the corner he usually does to get home. *Unless he wandered off into the close woods..* Cadence thought. *...but he would know better, right?*

"Oh goodness! I hope that boy isn't gone!" yelled her mom.

"It will be alright. If he isn't found in two days, we can be in the search party." answered her dad.

"Alright. I just hope..I just hope.."

"Relax. You have to stay strong for their family."

"I'll try."

Cadence then walked off into her room and laid on the bed. *He turned the corner, right?* Suddenly, Cadence's phone buzzed from the corner of her room. Cadence got up and read the message. "Did you see the tv?"It was her best friend Livi. She didn't want to answer. She has never sat silent to a friend's message, but she wanted some good news, something that wasn't about a missing kid.

"Dinner!" called her dad from the kitchen.

Cadence rolled off the bed and then sat down at the dining table. She silently watched her mother, wondering if she was going to talk to her and her sister about Bill. But she stayed silent. Cadence assumed she was too shocked to speak, so she broke the silence.

"Dad, how was work?"

"It was ridiculous! I mean, the jury clearly should've chosen not guilty! We had all the evidence, and yet all they had were their opinions and-"

Cadence stopped listening to her dad. It was the same story every day, he is mad because he is a lawyer and he never wins the case, no matter how much evidence and how many eyewitnesses his side has.

.....

During math the next day, Cadence couldn't help but notice Livi's look.
"What is the matter?"
"Have you heard about Bill?"
"Yes. I am sorry about what happened." Bill had been Livi's brother, and she couldn't help but feel sorry for Livi and her family.
"We will find him. We are going with a search party today. You should come with us.""
"Actually..." Cadence was about to mention that she had to head home early that day, but her parents were involved in the party as well. "..I can. I'll do anything for your brother. Plus, my parents will be looking as well."
"Thank you, really. Things have been pretty rough."

Ms. Bates then walked over from the other side of the room. "Today we will be doing a test on Unit 4. I will give you five minutes to study from your notebook while you can. Time starts now!"

However, Cadence could not think about her math test. All she could think about was innocent Bill being kidnapped, or getting lost, or getting hurt...was it possible that Bill veered off into the nearby woods? The woods were not big at all, and someone like him would know how to get out of the small area. Cadence had only seen Bill a few times, however she enjoyed his good nature whenever she was around him. Livi would walk with Bill to the bus stop and then they would sit in separate seats on the bus. Bill had also been at Livi's house a few times when Cadence came over to bake cookies or practice clarinet. Cadence didn't think that it was possible to hate Bill. He left them alone when they were together. He was smart, and he wasn't one of the annoying boys. The more Cadence thought about him, the worse she felt about being guilty of not seeing if he made it home. He wasn't young, he was already a seventh grader, but Livi would usually tell Cadence to make sure Bill walks to his house, or else he might be at a friend's house, which Livi's parents would need to know. "Time has ended! Start your test!" Cadence snapped out of her thoughts and started looking through the answers on the test.
Please let Bill be safe. Please,

After math, Cadence stared at Livi all of band class. Livi didn't seem to want to play her clarinet at all, which she was usually excited to play. Livi looked tired, afraid, and lost, emotions Cadence would have never expected to see on her pleasant friend's face. She noticed some other students looking at her friend, too. Luke and two girls named Max and Hailey seemed to be looking at Livi too. It was clear to people who probably didn't even know what happened had noticed something serious had to happen if Livi was like this. Even during times of hardship, Livi had always been funny and cheerful, lightening the mood. However, this time, whatever happened could have been unfixable.

Throughout the rest of the school day, Cadence comforted Livi as they went through all of their classes. They then had their sculpting class, then lunch, language arts, history, and then

jazz band. Eventually, the bell rang and Livi and Cadence headed to the football field, where they would practice soccer for a mere two hours.

"Alright everyone, bring it in!"

Cadence and Livi jogged over to the coaches and they listened carefully to what they had to say.

"Okay, so we all know how difficult this game is going to be. Sunrise has already won five games in a row this year and we were beat 15 to 0 last year!"

The team started muttering and groaning.

"We don't want that again do we?!"

"NO!" The whole team yelled.

"Tomorrow we will go out there and win that game! Today, we have to be mostly focused on defense and forwards. Everyone else will do a mini scrimmage."

The team dispersed and Livi walked with Cadence in awkward silence as they headed towards their positions. Every time Cadence glanced at Livi, Livi seemed to veer off in different directions, not even noticing that she was going to the wrong part of the field.

"Livi! You have to stop here, you're striker!" Cadence warned her.

Livi jerked her head up in shock and then she turned around and faced the goal.

For the few minutes that the team was getting ready, Cadence kept thinking about Bill. At least she was going to go to the search party and find him. She didn't know Bill much, but he was innocent, the kind of innocent where the person has never even been mad at their sibling, which is difficult to achieve. If Cadence could help Livi, she would have just picked Bill out of the whole world and placed him right back at home, if only she could do such a thing.

"Preep!" The whistle blew and the scrimmage started.

Cadence started moving up the field with Livi, watching the ball as Livi passed it to the opposite forward. A defender suddenly jumped in front of Cadence as the ball was passed in her direction. Cadence shouldered the defender out of the way and she then slide tackled the ball beneath her. Livi then braced for impact and she struck the ball right over the goalie's hands. Cadence smiled and then she high- fived Livi. Livi looked like she was in better spirits, but the only way to fix whatever was going on was to find Bill. Find Bill, and then return him home in one piece, which hopefully he was.

After Cadence exited the locker room, she noticed Livi staring at her with hope that they would find Bill this day.

"Are you ready? Your parents said I should come get you."

"They are driving us there, right?"

"Yeah. They said I should make sure you come to the right spot. They are parked down the hill this time."

"Okay, that's fine."

Livi and Cadence trotted in their cleats down the sidewalk until they finally noticed Cadence's white SUV with her mom waving through the rear- view mirror.'

"How was practice?"

"Good." Cadence and Livi answered in unison.

"Livi got us a goal during a scrimmage today!" Cadence nudged Livi's arm as she slightly blushed.

"That's good! Getting goals during practice improves your play during the game!" Cadence's mom explained.

Throughout the drive to the woods, Cadence had stared out her window, looking over the roads as buildings popped into view. Hotels, stores, and small businesses were all present on the side of the road, while Cadence was thinking about every place in the whole town where Bill could be. For all they knew, he could have simply been at the nearby high school watching a football game with some miscommunication with his parents.

The drive was long and hard, with everyone hoping to find Bill or at least a trace of him. The drive was mostly silent, as there were two ways the following search will go. They would find Bill, or they wouldn't. There was no in between.

Eventually, the car turned around the dirt road and parked in a sparse parking lot with at least another three cars plus two police cars. Cadence shut the door behind her and zipped up her winter jacket as a harsh wind blew into her face. The three of them walked towards a group of people, mostly with people Cadence had never seen, probably family members and close friends of Livi's family. The only people she noticed from the group were Livi's own parents, people Cadence's parents had talked to when at birthday parties, sports games, and just hangouts. Livi had carefully walked over to her parents and then the conversation ended as Cadence's family showed up.

"Alright. That should be everyone. You are the Cooper family, correct?" asked one of the officers.

Cadence's mom nodded.

"Yes, I am Hope, this is my daughter, Cadence."

"Nice to meet you! Can each of you grab these whistles and a flashlight?"

The group of them started shuffling around in the bag, finding a working flashlight and then finding a whistle to hang around their necks.

"We are ready to go. Make sure to blow your whistle if you spot something."

The group then separated into a long line and they all started to walk into the woods. Cadence and Livi had walked side by side while searching the never- ending darkness. Livi focused on one area for almost a minute, being so focused on finding her brother, that she believed he could be hiding in every little shrub. Cadence watched as she did this, and she sometimes searched the bushes as well, hearing little scuttles in them which were probably mice or rabbits.

"Livi, we will find Bill. Plus, you need to calm your nerves down a little bit."

Livi just walked silent, until she answered after a long pause.

"I guess I am just worried. He is the sweetest thing I know. Plus, it is difficult for Bill to get lost, so that means something big had to happen."

Livi wasn't wrong. Bill had been great at knowing his way around the place, given the fact he always went on bike rides around the area. He also hiked with Livi and their dad in the woods when they had a free weekend. It was nearly impossible to get lost here, especially the fact the woods were only about 10 miles across, so it wouldn't be hard to leave the woods in less than a day.

"You have a point, but that doesn't mean that he's still here. He would have already found help but they just couldn't get our phone."

"That doesn't make sense though. There wouldn't be police officers here still looking for him. They would have been notified."

This had also made sense. Cadence ran out of options to comfort Livi, and she just wouldn't be able to comfort her friend. She couldn't imagine how she would feel if she had lost one of her parents. She didn't have siblings, so she would never know how it feels to have one, let alone lose one.

The group kept walking over the overgrowth and littered branches as they made their way further into the woods.

Cadence pointed her flashlight at the thick bushes and through the layers of grass that she had been stepping over. All of a sudden, a scurrying sound startled both Livi and Cadence and they shined their flashlights towards the sound. A little critter sprinted for shelter in a nearby bush and the two of them jumped back.

"Just a rabbit.." Livi told Cadence.

"Yeah, yeah." Cadence was still unsure it was a rabbit, but then the more she thought about it, the more it looked like a rabbit, and the less she worried about the dark woods.

They had all walked through the woods for half the night, with not a sign of anything unusual. There was one whistle, but the only thing they had found that night was really just a stray dog that had gotten lost in those woods. The police had detained the dog, but the group did not find any trace of Bill that night.

.....

The alarm clock beeped and Cadence shot up in alarm. She swiftly got up and turned it off. *What a way to start a morning..* She thought. She had usually woken up before the alarm, but after yesterday's incident during the search, she couldn't think about anything but a nice, restful sleep. Cadence brushed her teeth, made her hair, and she got dressed before heading down the stairs and sitting at the dining table.

"It usually doesn't take you this long to get breakfast.." Cadence's mom began.

"Yeah, well after seeing a rabbit jump out of a bush yesterday, I needed to have a nice calm sleep."

Cadence's dad started putting on his jacket and he slung his backpack on his shoulder.

"I have to head to the office. Make sure to win your soccer game! Love you!"

Her dad shut the door behind him, and Cadence started eating her breakfast.

"What school are you going against again? Was it the eagles?"

"Yes. We are going against the eagles today."

"Wasn't their team last year pretty hard to beat?"

"Yeah. We won by one point last year though. Hopefully we will win by a few more this year."

"Make sure you don't jinx it!"

So far, Cadence's soccer team was undefeated, however she felt like this game would be different, maybe because Livi and herself weren't going to be fully focused on the game, as Bill had gotten lost two days ago.

Cadence finished her bowl of oatmeal and she placed it near the kitchen sink. She then pulled her backpack out of the closet and she started packing in her computer, lunch box, gatorade, water, folder, phone, and her soccer bag.

Then, she watched the time as she started tying her shoes and pulling on her sweatshirt. The time hit 6: 39 and she said goodbye to her mother and then she walked outside. The walk to her bus stop was much further for her than it was for Livi. Livi got to walk down the street, but Cadence had to walk down two streets and make a turn before she made it to the bus stop. When the beginning trees of the woods came into view, Cadence remembered the scare a rabbit gave her the night before, and she hoped that nothing bigger would appear out of the bushes tomorrow.

Livi was already awaiting Cadence's arrival at the bus stop. Livi did a shy, curt wave, as if she felt too worn down and worried to do anything more. Livi had made her hair into a nice single braid that morning, and she kept twisting it around her fingers as they stood waiting.
"Still kind of jumpscared of that rabbit?" Cadence asked.
"Yes. It's not only that, but I am nervous for Bill. What if he got lost somewhere even further than here?"
That was the worst thing that Livi could have said. Not only could this have been true, but this meant that if he left their woods, he would most likely never be found again.
"Livi, we don't want to make the situation worse, and assuming he is even further out is one way to make it worse. Sorry."
"It's okay. You are right." Livi looked down as if she was embarrassed from all of the "if's" she was presenting since the first day he had disappeared. Then, a question entered her mind, and she felt she needed to ask it, but not on the bus with all the people and all the cameras. They walked up the steps of the bus and they squeezed through the tightly- filled rows of seats as they finally stumbled into their own.

The ride was as sad as ever. Usually like every morning, it was kind of darker, and there was a fog that had always lifted above all the buildings. However, this morning, there was even a kind of mist that fell on them whenever they had opened the windows. It was as if mother nature knew that things could only get worse with Bill and his family. Cadence just imagined that there was a wolf or a bear that took Bill. It was possible, the larger forests were nearby, but the last time they had either of these in their woods was four years ago, before Cadence even knew who Bill was.

Cadence waited by the entry door of the school and once they were let to their lockers, Cadence heard the teachers all talking about something from the woods. The most she could make out was:
"Did you hear about the sighting in the woods yesterday?"
"Yes. What did they see though?"
"Someone said they saw a large wolf running around near the road."
"A wolf? The last time I saw one was four years ago. Plus, a large wolf! That's funny, I mean, large wolves live in the actual forest. All we have is the woods."

The rest was just a distinct mutter, but this was enough to convince Cadence. There was something that the rabbit was running from.

Throughout all of her classes, she kept trying to convince herself it was just a rabbit, but she couldn't stop thinking that it was something else. The more she remembered, the more it looked like a rabbit, however she kept thinking, *What if I didn't pay enough attention? What if this is the sighting the teachers were talking about?* Of course, it didn't seem likely the rabbit

would have been mistaken for a large wolf, nor the other way around. No matter how much Cadence thought about it, she still believed she could have figured out what that was.

Lunch was pretty loud, given the fact that some other students had overheard the teacher's conversation. Some of the tables with boys were yelling and the tables with the quieter people were whispering.

Little did any of them know, Livi and Cadence had been where that "wolf" was just a few hours before, luckily not seeing sight of whatever that thing was. She could see the same expression in Livi's face, that they could've met whatever the teachers knew about.

The rest of the day was like any other day, except for the fact that Livi and Cadence were in their soccer uniforms and on the soccer field with girls from another school. Even some of the players noticed that Livi didn't look alright. Not only did everyone know that her brother is the boy who was missing, but they also noticed that every time the "wolf" was mentioned, Livi's eyes seemed to widen and she seemed to be stuck in a trance for a couple minutes. Cadence knew what this meant, Livi was keeping something from her, and one way or another, she was going to find out.

After a quick pep talk with the coaches, everyone ran to their positions on the field. Livi and Cadence both stood up front on the field, and Livi was ready to take the ball from the other team right as the kickoff began. The whistle blew and the other team was instantly getting shoved far onto their side. Cadence suddenly caught a glimpse of the ball heading underneath her feet and she fought over it with a girl from the other team. This girl had been much taller than Cadence, but Cadence was able to kick the ball between the girl's legs and sprint past her until she got control over the ball again. Livi was standing to her right with her hand raised and she was calling, "Open, open!" Cadence kicked the ball to her and their team slowly got past the other team's midfielders. Cadence was beginning to feel the thrill of the game again, forgetting about her previous worries. She was too focused on getting shot on goal. The ball was passed to her and she was about to kick it towards the goal. Suddenly, a girl from the other team elbowed her into the ground and Cadence found herself trapped underneath three different girls, all kicking at the ball, which was bouncing from Cadence onto the other girls. Cadence pushed herself off of the ground, just in time to spot the ball heading towards her face. She jumped up, attempting to trap the ball, and then she passed it back to Livi. Everyone, even the players on the bench were watching with anticipation, as Livi pushed up towards the goal.

Livi did one final touch and then she shot the ball towards the goal. The goalie reached up for the ball, but she missed it, as it passed over her hands and the ball then hit the net of the goal. Everyone celebrated and cheered. Even Livi looked like she was in higher spirits, as she was smiling and she even high- fived Cadence, as this was their common move to getting a goal. They ran backwards as the goalie was ready to punt the ball across the field. The ball flew above Livi's head, and towards one of their midfield players. Three different girls from the other team crowded around their midfielder, and the ball was suddenly taken from her possession. The ball was then passed up towards their goal, and Cadence called for the ball to be kicked back across to the other side. Their sweeper then kicked the ball across the field, just as Cadence was hoping.

Throughout the entire game, they ended up scoring four times, winning the game instantly. This was what Cadence wanted life to be like. Just the fun times of anticipation, sports, and times where they would laugh, rather than things occurring like missing people, and scary

events. For once, Cadence thought that Livi actually forgot about her brother for at least an hour, which was good for her, as she needed to have time to relax and have fun. As soon as they were walking around the track to make it to their parents, Cadence felt the urge to ask Livi what was going on before the game commenced.

"Livi, you need to tell me what is bothering you. Everytime someone mentions 'the wolf' you seem to immediately be scared or you look like you saw something."

Livi walked silently and looked at the ground. It was a whole minute before Livi decided to answer, her voice almost a whisper.

"I- I saw a...skinny, bony, furry- looking thing."

"Did it, did it look like a wolf?" Cadence asked frantically.

"Like a diseased one."

The two walked silently after that, and Cadence was right, Livi had seen something, and whatever it was, they might see it for the search party they were going to go on the next day.

When Cadence got in the car, her mother started driving home, luckily not noticing what Cadence had known, or else there would be more panic. She now understood why Livi was acting this way, she saw the "wolf", she saw what could have taken her brother.

–The "Wolf"–

The next evening, Livi and Cadence both got into Livi's car, ready to look for the "wolf" everyone was talking about. Livi and Cadence were the only ones concerned, as they knew about what they might see this night. However, while Livi's parents heard the news, they didn't know Livi saw it and they didn't even know it was in the part of the woods they would be searching in.

When the car parked, Livi and Cadence went through the same routine they did last time. They grabbed flashlights and whistles then headed into the woods after a quick discussion over instructions. Livi and Cadence walked together as always, while all the parents and other adults were on their left side, all walking in a long line. Livi and Cadence walked for a while, before they eventually got to the furthest spot they walked last time, where Livi and Cadence got jumped by a rabbit. Being prepared from the previous trip, Livi shined the light into the thick bushes where the rabbit jumped out of. Luckily, there didn't seem to be any movement and there was nothing in there that they would be able to spot.

This time however, the group was going to walk even further, to see if Bill was somewhere further in the woods. Cadence wondered if they would catch the "wolf" and be able to see it clearly, or at least she would be able to. Cadence didn't want Livi to see that again, especially after the way she looked after seeing him once. If he was seen again, she would not let Livi stay behind. Afterall, she was the most scarred she has ever been.

Most of the walk wasn't as quiet and eerie as Cadence had expected. They could hear the parents and adults talking loudly to their side, while they were walking noisily among the ferns. Somehow, this seemed to comfort Cadence. A rustling sound wouldn't be as startling in all of this noise.

Then the forest started to get more bare. There were more trees and ferns than ever, but there were also little cricket chirps or any noises that would be made from an animal. It seemed as if the whole forest was holding its breath. Livi even noticed this, as she was desperately looking around at the trees and constantly spinning her head left and right, as if she was expecting something to pounce on her.

"Here!" Livi yelled. Cadence turned towards her direction and noticed a black backpack covered in dirt and overgrowth.

"Is that Bill's backpack?"

Livi nodded and pulled it off of the ground, searching through the bag in search of its contents.

Cadence noticed he had a school textbook, a folder, a lunchbox, and his phone. Of course, Livi opened up his phone to see if he had ever attempted to call anyone, but it seemed there was nothing. She went through his messages and phone app and neither had anything recently sent by him himself. Livi seemed discouraged from this, as she wouldn't be able to find

out where he went. Livi even flipped the backpack upside down, trying to knock out anything she may not have seen, but the rest was empty of any items.
"Livi, you should whistle. Maybe the police can find footprints in the ground. They have done it before!"

Livi instantly whistled frantically and Cadence could hear the distant sound of police running with heavy equipment. Livi eventually stopped, and when she did, they both heard a twig snap behind them. In instinct, Cadence threw her head back and she pointed the light towards the sound. She couldn't see anything, but then she heard a hard grunt and a few lighter grunts after the first one. Within seconds, a skinny, bony, furry, tall creature glared at them with its two huge yellow eyes.

The two started sprinting, and Cadence even tumbled upon a tree root on her way to Livi. Luckily, she managed to get up and the two of them sprinted towards the forest, not even knowing which direction they were heading. By default, Cadence started screaming.
"Stay back! We're being chased! Help!"
Livi even joined in on the screaming, yelling, "Help! Help us!"

It seems that the search party had heard their efforts for help and the police even let off a whistle to direct Livi and Cadence back towards the group. However, Livi and Cadence were running the complete opposite direction, and it would be extremely difficult to turn back that direction while being chased by an agile, long- legged creature. Cadence kept sprinting, refusing to get eaten alive by a huge human- eater. Her chest was aching, her breath difficult to catch, and a terrible cramp had taken her right hip. Her legs slowly turned to jelly as she kept sprinting towards the never- ending darkness. Livi had been slightly in front of her the whole time, trying to sprint away from the danger, but the danger just seemed to creep closer and closer, until it would be at their feet, deciding their fate. Livi was starting to slow down, but Cadence kept pushing her forward and they even sprinted in one part, just trying to end this nightmare. All of a sudden, a flare went off about forty feet to their right, and Cadence watched as the creature quickly made its way towards the light. Cadence and Livi started running more to the left to flee further from the creature. Finally, when Cadence spotted the police officers ready to attack the creature, Cadence's eyes drooped shut and then she remembered a hard hit into her head and left side as she collapsed into the leaf- littered ground of the woods.

.....

Cadence stared into the empty woods as she heard grunts and growls surrounding her from every direction. Fog started to lift around her and she saw the wolf- like creatures starting to creep up on her and then she screamed as one jumped onto her.

Cadence woke up, confused and scared, but then she understood, it was a dream. At least the one attacking her was a dream, but she knew that Livi and herself were running away from real ones in the woods.

Cadence then opened her eyes and she was in a hospital bed. There was no one in the room, so she was glad no one saw her wake up in fear. Her hospital bed was actually quite comfortable, and the room was mostly empty except for the big computers and machines. Her bedside table had some flowers and a tray with some food. She assumed it was breakfast, as it had a croissant, some fruit skewers, a few pancakes sprinkled with powdered sugar, and some

yogurt with granola. She didn't know if she was allowed to eat yet, so she kept it where she had seen it. She also spotted her favorite book, The Secret Garden, sitting on the table. She reached out for it and she read. She had read for almost an hour before there was a knock on the door and a nurse with her parents walked in.

"Oh thank goodness you are alright!" her mother squealed.

"You scared us quite a bit yesterday!" her father said.

The nurse then checked the heartbeat meter.

"All that happened is that you passed out from shock or exhaustion, or both. There are no serious injuries, although you might have a sore hip for a few days. We checked your head and luckily nothing severe. We thought you got a concussion but you are luckily alright."

Cadence slowly nodded, still slightly confused as to whether or not her parents were aware of the creature chasing Cadence.

"I know this all feels a little crazy but you may have police interviewing both you and Livi in the afternoon. They want to know what you were running from."

Cadence then jumped back into reality, completely forgetting that this had in fact happened yesterday.

Her parents stayed with her for a few more minutes, telling her about what they saw, and then asking her to explain what happened. Eventually, her parents left to go to work, and Cadence was left with a book, a bowl of some grapes and oranges as snacks, and a Kanoodle puzzle she had often enjoyed solving when she was bored.

The next few hours flew by quickly. She had read and entertained herself so much she had lost track of time. Soon enough, her lunch was brought to her and then she even had a small slice of raspberry cheesecake for dessert.

Soon enough, two cops walked through the doorway and they talked to the nurse for a bit, most likely about whether or not Cadence is capable of talking. The nurse walked out of the room and shut the door.

"All we are going to do is interview you about yesterday. Both you and Livi most likely know most of what you saw."

Cadence just silently nodded.

"First question, around what time did you see this creature?" asked the tall police officer, Officer Miller.

"Well, we started the search at 9 o' clock and we walked for a while towards the middle. Maybe around 9: 30?"

"Okay. Next, how did this creature look?" asked the second officer, Officer Kean.

"Umm..it was tall, skinny, bony, furry, it had a wolf face with huge yellow eyes," Cadence imagined the creature again as she explained its features.

"Anything else that makes it recognizable?" asked Officer Kean.

"It makes a lot of grunting sounds, sometimes a growl." she answered.

Officer Miller quickly jotted this down on his notepad.

"Anything else? Any designated area where you saw this creature?"

"We saw it where we found Bill's backpack." As soon as she said it, she noticed what had happened to Bill.

"That is enough for today," Officer Kean said.

The two walked out the door and Cadence was left wondering about what she had just discovered. Bill had been murdered by one of these "things".

She immediately searched for her phone, however she had been unsure whether or not her mother brought it along with the book and puzzle. She lifted off the bed and she searched through the pile of books and puzzles her mother had given her. Luckily, she had found her phone. However, she then rethought what she had wanted to tell Livi. Livi wouldn't believe it. Livi would also be terribly miserable until she knew exactly where Bill was. Additionally, Livi would most likely already assume what had happened to Bill.

Over the next few hours, Cadence had read and read while nurses and doctors made sure all of her vitals were normal. Luckily, they were. Then, Cadence was let out of the hospital, back home.

"How was your day?" Cadence's mom asked.

"It was good. I was able to read a lot and do some puzzles. Plus, the meals here are shockingly good for a hospital."

"That's good to hear. You answered all of the questions honestly, right?"

"Yes."

After that, the conversation had ended, and Cadence dozed off before the end of the ride, as she had been anxious all day about what the police would do to find the creatures, and Bill.

—The Sight—

The next morning, Cadence had gone to school like any other day. She had gone through all of her core classes, through band and soccer, and then she headed home and did some math homework. Cadence plotted points while she smelled her mother cooking delicious gyros in the kitchen. The sizzling sound flowed into Cadence's nostrils while the television had the chief of police for Franklin speaking to reporters.

"Chief Davis, what is your view on the creature spotted in the Franklin Woods?" asked a woman, most likely a reporter.

"This creature should obviously be captured or recorded on video, I- I mean we want this creature to be found and to be investigated by many biologists who have asked for permits in our woods.This helps us. We want people to feel safe around Franklin, rather than be constantly haunted by these creatures. Just yesterday, there was a spotting of about two roaming around the outside of the football field during the high school football game. It is clear that this matter is serious and it needs to be resolved. Think about the people we could lose. Bill White, the missing 8th grader from Franklin Middle School, we will wish hope and luck upon his family, has been missing for almost a week. There is no knowing whether or not this so- called "wolf" has gotten to him already. However, we will still be holding evening search parties, even with the risks of these creatures in the woods. There is going to be double security this time, so you can stay assured no one will lose their lives."

The reporter then nodded and added, "What has happened to the girl who was found passed out after a chase with the "wolf"?"

"She is safe. She was transported to the hospital for treatment, and she had nothing more than a faint from exhaustion and shock. Luckily, there is nothing long- term that has happened after this incident. The police have also spoken with her and we have as much information as we need to find this creature."

The reporter then sat down and another instantly stood up, this time a man.

"Sir, since you say this, what are your plans on finding this creature?" he asked.

"We cannot share this information due to confidential restrictions in the government. However, as I am speaking we have a team down in the woods right now. They are doing a perimeter sweep of the entire 10- mile area and we will hopefully find more information on Bill or on the creature."

Cadence then sat in shock. She simply thought the police were asking her for this information so that biologists can study these creatures from a distance and learn of their

behavior through cameras and drones. She had not expected them to use her and Livi to immediately fight these creatures. While Livi and Cadence were at the sight, they had no idea what the ability of these creatures had been, thus it would be foolish for anyone to dive in headfirst, as Chief Davis just did. Cadence then walked into the kitchen and she impatiently tapped her mom on the shoulder.

"Mom? Chief Davis should not be doing this. Yes, Livi and I were there, but we don't know what this creature is capable of, it would be foolish to just immediately go fight it!"

"Cadence, I know you are worried, but he knows what he's doing."

"Even I know this might be a bad idea!"

"Sshh, everything will be alright. Just breathe."

Cadence had hugged her mom more tightly than she ever had. This situation was going to go either perfectly or it would be a deadly mistake. An hour later, her dad arrived home. Since it was a Friday, everyone had been in the living room much longer than they would on a school day. Her mother washed the dishes while her father watched the news on the couch and she listened along with him. She felt that there would be some sort of news once the sweep was complete, and hopefully good news. Her parents all wondered the same, and they refused to sleep until they got a direct response about the outcome of the sweep.

All of a sudden, the emergency alarm system blinked on and off the TV, just as it had before. This time, the message read:

WARNING

STAY INDOORS- LEAVE ALL BLINDS, CURTAINS, AND DOORS PROPERLY CLOSED AND SEALED

FOLLOW UNTIL FURTHER ADVISED

Cadence's parents stared in the same horror that Cadence had on the screen. Her dad immediately went over to lock the side door and garage door. Her mother rushed to lock the front door. Cadence was in charge of closing the blinds and closing the window leading into the dining room. She swiftly closed a few blinds for the living room and she then pushed the window of the dining room closed. Just as she had turned, she heard a loud grunt and then a low growl. She turned her head to see what she had feared. A tall, bony, skinny, yellow- eyed creature gleamed back at Cadence. Terror had rushed over Cadence, she had known her fate all along.

Vivianna Lopez
6th grade

(719) [redacted]

5

The Loop

Jim woke up one day and went to the pool. Then he was about to go home but he noticed someone was watching him. He just shook it off. When he went home he felt like he was being watched. While he was walking home the some guy came up to him and yelled your "the one, the one, the one!" The dude sounded scared. So he ran to his house as fast as he can and locked the door with a, slam! After eating dinner he took a nice hot bath. But when he was in the bath he heard a sound he jumped up and grabbed a towel he went out to check everywere but when he checked the door it was unlocked. But Jim swore up and down that after the pool he locked it. After locking the door he went back to the bathroom. After he went to his room his friend called him and he asked to go to the pool. He said "sure Emma." While sleeping in his bed his back hurt really bad. When he woke up he took some painkillers because he still wanted to go to the pool with Emma. He went to his cabnet and something popped out at him but luckly it was just some medicine. When walking to the pool. Emma waved to him. She looked at him and said "Why are you walking?" Jim said "my car broke down." Emma right after said "how?" "I don't

Viviana

know?" said Jim. Well a little while later they jumped in the pool. Later on that day they left but he seen the same dude looking at him through the apartment blinds. The fact that it was right next to his apartment. While he was going up the elevator he seen a reflection of somebody in the mirror with a mask. Then Jim woke up in a room with a mask on.

To be Continued

In ancient times, swirls, more known as the churn-sucker were often used to hypnotize people. They could hypnotize the desired person from any where in the world, whether it was on the opposite side of the world to the deepest place on earth. The performer of the ritual could give the desired victim any task they wanted. After the deed was done, they would fall straight to the ground and die. After about 1,000 years the pharaohs believed that they had killed all bloodlines who knew the technique of the churn-sucker. Though, recent studies prove this inncorrect.

On October 17 through October 19, 2027, a brand called Churn-swirlers would be released. A simple candy with a bug called a caecilian rolled into a swirl, covered with a sweet glaze. It hit the internet right away. With unexpected responses from famous internet stars they claimed that the delicious coating distracted the flavor of the bug.

On October 27, a technique would get popular. It is instead of biting the bug, people would lick the flavoring off, then when the bug is soft you swallow it.

October 28-30 were some of the busiest days. Lines were being formed outside of stores, major fights where individuals called the police.

October the 31, more known as Halloween would occur. Kids were trick or treating, and churn swirlers were being passed out. Though the next couple of hours over 200 people would be rushed to surgery. About 70% of those kids would face a tragic death. Parents were heartbroken, but also angry. They wanted to know why and who caused this.

On January 3, 2028, Ms. Klara Dany would make a shocking discovery. Ms. Klara Dany is a herpetologist. A herpetologist is someone who studies amphibians. She was and is still studying the insect called a gymnophiona, more known as a caecilians. While looking at a caecilian, she performed a test a see if any animals would eat it. Not one of the animals stepped foot near it. Puzzled, she decided to search in the body of the bug to see if it had any poison in it, though she would not find poison, instead a gas. With more studying and scientists, she would find out the answer to what happened October 31, 2027.

On October 31, 2027, it turns out that the reason so many people died that day was because of the candy Churn-Swirlers.

The gas that is produced by caecilians is very similar to the old ritural called the churn-sucker. The gas caecilians produce can control you, though the chances are very small that it works. Sometimes the bug was to small, sometimes the gas wasn't strong enough to control the child but was still enough to kill them both. Although the main reason was because the childs body wasn't strong enough to take in the gas. Scientists suspect that even though a childs body isn't strong enough an adults body is.

Recently on January 21, 2028 a interview with Ms. Kiera Darry took place, where she would talk about how she expected the caecilian to control you. She stated "In our research center, me and other scientists suspect that after the bug reaches the stomach, it creates its own tunnel to the lungs, its a very painful proccess. When it releases the gas, it starts suffocating the person until its able to control them."

There is still a question to be answered, why does the bug do this? Some recent studies show that after the bug is finished controling the person, it dies aswell. Although no theories have been proved correct.

Chyrm-Swirlers were quickly removed off shelves. Workers making this product have been brought into questioning, and officials are looking for anyone who has been controled or for the person who made this "candy". Strange enough, when the goverment was trying to get in contact with the people who aproved the candy, they were all found dead. When checking in their insides, a dead caecilian was found in all of their lungs. Meaning that they were probably controled.

No one knows the intentions of the bugs or "candy" creator(s). But who knows.... was this story enough to make your skin crawl?

Anahi Chavira
12 years old 7th
719-232-3538

On the Haunted Railroad, all roads lead to McPherson's Manor. Abandoned it lay, in the darkness of fog it stayed. Old residents claim it to be haunted by an individual who would pop out of nowhere, in the middle of the night. Woosh! It always goes fast, so nobody can see him. One day, Richard decided to explore without his parents knowing. He walked up to the entrance and opened the door.

Waiting for him, the figure, who looked as tall as a giant, greeted him. "WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!" shouted the ever so eerily figure. The boy screamed, "I-I-I'm s-sorry…AHHHHHH", as the boy ran away, his footsteps getting louder, And Louder, AND LOUDER. Then it stopped. He stopped. The boy stopped. He.. just couldn't move. He wasn't too weak, but there was something… holding on for dear life. He screamed," AHHHH GET OFF MEEEEE", but no one heard.

What he thought to be a fun adventure turned into a nightmare in disguise. As he wailed and cried and begged for help, just hoping someone would save him, it seemed hopeless. As the creature bit into his skin, he wailed out one last time. But it was too late. As he drifted in and out of consciousness, he felt something… he looked at his skin and it was pitch black. He looked at his wound and it was healed. He had become his worst nightmare.

We never knew what happened to the boy after that day. Rumors that his spirit remains at the manor were never fully proven. All we did know was that he was never the same ever again.

2 YEARS LATER

Welp, here's some news. Local police are investigating the incident at McPherson Manor. Lets hope they don't suffer the same fate as the boy. As the police approached the manor, they started hearing things in the distance. Not loud sounds, but loud enough to hear them.

They walked up the steps, a group of around 4 people. The point man yelled as they got ready to breach the door. "Stafford County Sheriff's Department! Open up right now!". They breached the door and they heard a crying sound. The sound came from upstairs, so SGT. Evans and LT. Daniels went up while the other two stayed downstairs. As they ascended the stairs, they heard screams from the other two officers.

They immediately went downstairs and saw the most horrifying sight imaginable. Those two officers lay on the floor, disconfigured, with no blood or sight of who did it. As they went to examine the bodies, Evans was grabbed by an

opaque spirit, black in color. "Help me!!!", the officer pleaded. All Daniels could do was watch as the spirit held on and started flinging Evans across the room. By the time the rampage was over, Evans lay upon the pile of bodies, dead.

Before the last officer had time to react, the spirit broke his arms and legs, rendering him unconscious. As he woke up, He saw the spirit laying over him. Looking around, he saw he had no arms or legs, but no pain. As he fell dead, the story of the McPherson Manor grew national. First responders everywhere, hoping nobody would make the same mistake the 5 others did.

Name: Peyton Wright
Phone:
Age:11 Grade:6
Watson JHS

It was 1997 in Berlin Germany. A boy named Adam was walking around his neighborhood and decided to visit a friend. His mom called his friend's house, and said to come home, it was time for dinner. Adam had walked 3 miles that day, so it would take him a while to get back to his house. While he was walking back he saw a man he had never seen before watching him. Adam didn't think much of it, said, "Hi!" and went on with his day. He kept walking but the man was still watching him. Finally, Adam returned home at 8:30 p.m. and told his mom about the man. The next day Adam ate breakfast and went outside to go to school…there he was the man that was watching him yesterday, standing behind a tree! The man did not say anything, just stared at Adam, similar to yesterday. He just stood there watching Adam, nothing else, just watching…

Despite being a bit stressed and nerve wracked by the second encounter, Adam got to school safely. After school, Adam took an alternative route home, hoping that he could avoid the strange figure. He came screeching around the corner on his bike, feeling happy and free that the intimidating man was nowhere to be found. As Adam picked up speed, he looked up and immediately planted his feet firmly on his brakes- the man was about three feet in front of him, in the middle of the road! Adam stopped just short of the man, but he had to throw his foot down hard and pull his bike around to avoid crashing into him. Adam mumbled, "Sorry," but he was irritated and freaked out- why didn't this guy leave him alone? Adam had scratched up his whole leg and had bits of gravel stuck in his knee. He limped home and met his mother at the door. She was worried and asked Adam if the man hurt him? Attacked him? But Adam assured her that all he does is stand there. His mom reminded him tomorrow was Halloween, helped Adam clean his leg, and cooked his favorite dinner and dessert. Adam went to bed feeling content and excited about the next day, so he momentarily forgot about the man.

Adam awoke the next day, it was Halloween! He ate breakfast then he walked to school and felt relieved that he got all the way to school and realized he hadn't seen, or thought about the man, once! Everyone at school had their costumes on, and there was a class party at the end of the day. Adam thought he saw the strange man staring at him from around the corner in the cafeteria, but Adam decided he must be losing it, or just excited about the evening coming up. At the end of school Adam sped home, and once again did not see the man. He took a deep breath, thrilled to be free of this weird guy. Adam and his mom were getting ready to go trick or treating when they heard a knock on the door. Adam answered the door- it was the man he had seen this morning! Adam tried to close the door on the man, but he forced his arm and foot in the doorway,

holding the door open. Adam ran into the kitchen, shouting for his Mom, unaware the man followed him into the house. Adam's mom laughed when she realized that this was who her son had been going on about. She told him it was her friend, Jack. They went on their way trick-or-treating, and they went very far that night. The entire time, Adam had so many questions...Was this man really his mom's friend or was he someone else? When they came back from collecting candy, they ate dinner and after that, they dug into their candy. After some time, Jack had to go home, Adam's mom said it's time to go to bed. We've had a long night. When Adam went to bed he saw Jack peeking through the window but he looked different then before. He had blood on his face like he had been shot in the face. He told his mom and she did not know who this man was. She had never seen him before. She screamed and called 911, but by the time the police got there he was gone. Adam's mom told the cops she had never seen this man before, but that he did look kind of like her friend Jack. The police asked for his last name. She said Wright the cops said we found the man that has been killing people for the last ten years. Adam was only 11 years old and his dad died when he was one year old. The cops have been trying to find this man for many years but they finnlay found. The cops asked for his address since his mom had been seeing him for a while. She knew where he lived. She told the cops he lives at 125 main street camden NewYork. The cops found his house and broke down the door and looked everywhere and found him in his basement and arrested him.

The next day Adam and his mom watched the news. After a few months Adam and his mom forgot about the man that almost murdered her son two months back. But Adam was walking to school and he saw the same man at the bush right by his school. After Adam got out of school he saw the man but he looked different but Adam still remembered how the man he once just thought was his mom's friend. But the man acted differently. He acted kind of nice. He said to Adam good morning as Adam walked past him. Adam said in his head "I guess the slammer really changed him after all." After school he did not see the man that Adam thought to himself this is not normal. When Adam got home he asked his mom about the man she told him was just her friend. Adam's mom said that man had DID which means he has different personalities some times he acts out like you saw the night before. Adam went to bed after his new found info. The next morning he saw the man again but this time Jack told me your mom still owes me the money, Adam thought to himself what money my mom owes someone money. After school Adam asked his mom "Jack told me that you owe him money, what money do you owe him?" She said a long time ago before you were born I asked Jack for some money for food and he said ok but you have one week to pay me back. A week went by and I did not pay him back, so Jack began murdering people and said on the news If Emma Jackson does pay back in two days I will kill more people than you could imagine. But then she said something that at first Adam believed she

said that man is your father. Adam never knew his father and all his mom ever told him about is they got divorced when he was only one year old.

Old Man Story

The year was 2050, Little Timmy[Timothy] is an 8 year old. Timmy is caring and has a doctor while his mom is an anesthesiologist. Timmy went to Arkansas over break to visit his grandpa. He boarded a flight to Phoenix Airport, while on the flight his plane got attacked by a Canadian goose, but was safe. They drive to Eureka Spring for about 2 hours. They got into a fatal car crash, but his family luckily survived. They called in a tow truck and walked to grandpa's house. After they went to his house, a large mansion. Timmy went to bed, he couldn't sleep so he went downstairs and saw his grandpa.

His Grandpa ask " Do you want to hear a story about grandpa"

" Yes Grandpa" excitedly said Timmy. Timmy only had heard his grandpa's story when he lived in Arkansas.

The thing the old man said that shocked Timmy was he used to be a man from 1916, the height of World War 1. He was with his friend and was out to sabotage enemy supplies and maybe get some, but they miscalculated and they were far from their Trench in the middle of No-Man land, an area between enemy trench and allies and soldiers would often die because there was no protection. Although he had to camp there in an abandoned Mark IV. But during their sleep, his friend woke him up and saw a large haunted house. They went into the haunted house and stayed in it, seeing there was a nice looking bed and a nice bathroom. During his sleep the man had nightmares about his loved one dying and many horror things happening to his family. The next morning he woke up to a loud noise in the house. Apparently his friend had opened a library in the house where there was an endless room of books and artifacts, with anything ranging far from what they have ever known in their life like Egyptian mummies and modern cars like a Tesla. Edward yelled at Robert to come down quickly.

Robert headed down quickly, before he could say something he saw the library, he was amazed by the library in the middle of the room was a book and another in a different room, one containing the birth and death date of each person and organism, another containing a list of organisms like human and dog. One name stood out to him in the "Book of the Death", Him, it said that he was supposed to be killed the morning when he was asleep when the German invaded the French Trench, same with his friend.. After deciding not to go any further into the library knowing they could easily get lost and possibly die in it, they close the passage, a small hole in the shelf with a key they hide it in the dining table drawer, the one with a white diamond .

He looked outside,there were a lot of trees and that was it . Robert feels the worst when he steps out thinking anything can happen like he could just fall through the ground and fall to his death. Edward stepped out in a blink of an eye, without thinking about the consequence nor what he could do to prevent something. It looks like Edward doesn't care about it, but he was armed with a weapon. As they venture out they see a road but with a weird white line in between the yellow which is in the middle of the entire road they walk down the road. Edward sees a sign with American English that shows the familiar "Eureka Springs". His grandfather used to live there before moving to London. Robert tried to stop one of the cars, many cars passed him instead he went to a car in a large lot. He went up to the car, the man who was tall and muscular got scared thinking he was getting robbed. He opens the window,

Robert immediately asks "what time it was".

The man was confused, he looked at his watch, and said "12:11 P.M.", Robert asked "No, what year,". The man was even more confused saying "1981."

Robert pulls Edward away. "We just time travel"

Robert went back to the man and said if they could go somewhere to check himself if they were alive. The man agreed, he waited for them outside. Robert went inside to check his citizenship, but they were shocked to see him alive so they decided to switch his citizenship and the pledge to the flag again.

The next month Robert got a job as a police officer. He does a fantastic job and is getting a promotion while Edward is going to acting school so he can become an actor. Before Edward, was able to sell the old coin and dollar for a lot of money. Robert married a caring wife and got a beautiful little baby.

"Ok, little Timmy it is time to go to sleep, it's very late right now" said Grandpa.

Little Timmy went to bed happily, trying to pass time so he could learn more about his grandpa.

THE HAUNTED STREET

ON THE NIGHT OF OCTOBER 18TH IN THE TOWN OF BROOMFIELD MARLEY AND HIS FRIENDS PAUL, AND JORDAN WERE RIDING THEIR BIKES NEAR THE SKATEPARK. ITS NOT COMMON TO FIND AN ABANDONED STREET IN THE MIDDLE OF SUBURBAN DENVER SINCE ITS SO MODERN NOW. BUT PAUL FOUND THE STREET AND TOLD MARLEY AND JORDAN TO GO EXPLORE IT WITH THEM. MARLEY TURNED THE OPPORTUNITY DOWN BECAUSE HES A BIG BABY. JORDAN ALSO TURNED IT DOWN BUT IT WAS NOT BECAUSE HES A BABY ITS BECAUSE HE ISN'T PREPARED. SEVERAL DAYS LATER ON OCTOBER 31ST MARLEY AND HIS FRIENDS DECIDED TO GO ONTO THE HAUNTED STREET. THE STREET WAS CALLED APPALACIAN STREET. THEY DROVE FROM DENVER TO BROOMFIELD WHICH TOOK 25 MINS. IMMEDIATELY GOING ONTO THE STREET THEY COULD SEE AN OLD ABANDONED MCDONALDS AND COSTCO WAREHOUSE WHERE THERE WAS OLD TORN UP SIGNS AND BLOOD ON THE DRIVEWAY. JORDAN DIDN'T LIKE THAT SO HE STAYED IN THE CAR WHILE WE WENT INTO THE COSTCO. ONCE MARLEY AND PAUL ENTERED THE COSTCO ALREADY SOMETHING SEEMED VERY FISHY. THERE WAS STOCKED SHELVES AND THE CHECKOUT WAS WORKING BUT THERE WAS 0 LIGHT FOR SOME REASON. BUT THINGS GOT EVEN WORSE WHEN THEY WENT TOWARDS THE BACK OF THE STORE. THERE WAS LITERAL BONES ON THE GROUND FROM HUMANS WITH RATS EATING AWAY AT THE MEAT. AT THIS POINT THEY ARE TRAUMITIZED AND QUICKLY RAN OUT THE COSTCO. THEY WENT BACK INTO THE CAR AND WENT TO THE MCDONALDS. THIS TIME JORDAN JOINED IN. ONCE EVERYONE GOT INSIDE IT WAS A WAY DIFFERENT STORY THAN COSTCO. ON THE WALLS IT LOOKED LIKE BIG MAC SAUCE WAS

SPLASHED ONTO IT AND THE SPIDERS WAS AT LEAST 15 POUNDS AND RUNNING EVERYWHERE THE CREW WENT TO. MARLEY FOUND A BIG MAC BOX AND HE OPENED IT TO FIND A MOLDY BIGMAC THAT WAS COMPLETELY GREEN AND REEKED OF ROTTEN MUSHROOM EWW GROSS. PAUL FOUND A CHICKEN NUGGET BOX AND IT WAS FULL OF CRUSHED UP RAT TAILS. JORDAN FOUND A MC FLURRY CUP FULL OF BLOOD. BUT THATS NOT EVEN THE WORST PART BECAUSE THEY HEARD A SHREEEEEEEEEEEEIIIIIIK SOUND WHICH MADE PAUL SOIL HIS PANTS A BIT. MARLEY SAW A SHADOW AND WAS READY TO THROW THE MC FLURRY MACHINE AT THE SHADOW. AN OLD MAN ABOUT 55-63 YEARS OLD CAME RUNNING OUT AND THANK GOODNESS MARLEY MISSED. THE OLD MAN SAID WHAT ARE YOU GUYS DOING HERE PAUL SAID WE ARE EXPLORING THE STREET AND SO FAR ITS SUPER SCARY. IVE LIVED IN THIS MCDONALDS FOR 55 YEARS AND NO ONE HAS EVER VISITED HERE. HOW OLD ARE YOU KIDS SAID THE OLD MAN. 14 SAID JORDAN. 15 SAID MARLEY. 16 SAID PAUL. WELL IM 64 YEARS OLD SAID THE OLD MAN. SO YOU'VE BEEN LIVING HERE SINCE YOU WERE 9 YEARS OLD? YUP SAID THE OLD MAN. WE WERE GONNA GO EXPLORE THE APARTMENT BUILDING AFTER THIS. CAN I JOIN SAID THE OLD MAN. SURE EVERYONE SAID. 10 MINS LATER THEY ARRIVED AT THE OLD APARTMENT BUILDING. DANG HOW OLD IS THIS BUILDING SAID MARLEY. IT WAS BUILT IN 1972 AND WAS ABANDONED IN 2007 SAID THE OLD MAN. WOW THAT'S A LONG TIME. ANYWAYS READY TO GO IN SAID THE OLD MAN. ONCE THEY ENTERED THE BUILDING THEY SMELLED ROTTEN MILK FROM THE MILK CARTON ON THE LOBBY DESK. THE OLD MAN OPENED THE DOOR ON THE FIFTH FLOOR AND NOTHING HAPPENED UNTIL HE OPENED THE BEDROOM DOOR. BATS FLEW OUT WHEN HE OPENED THE DOOR. NO ONE ELSE KNEW ABOUT THIS BESIDES THE OLD MAN. WHEN

MARLEY OPENED THE PANTRY HE FOUND FOOD THAT SURPRISINGLY DIDN'T LOOK OR SMELL EXPIRED BUT WHEN HE OPENED A CAN OF PINEAPPLE HE FOUND SPIDER EYES. PAUL WENT TO THE LAUNDRY ROOM AND FOUND OLD CLOTHES BUT IN THE DRYER HE FOUND A WHOLE BODY STUFFED IN THERE. JORDAN WENT TO THE BATHROOM AND FOUND TOOLS UNDERNEATH THE SINK SO HE FIGURED THEY WERE DOING OLD PLUMBING PRACTICE. EVERYONE WENT UP TO THE SEVENTEENTH FLOOR AND FOUND JUST ONE APARTMENT WHICH HAD LIGHTS ON AFTER 17 YEARS. BUT THEN ONCE THEY OPENED THE DOOR A BIG BLACK SHADOW APPERED AND MADE EVERYONE BLACK OUT

TO BE CONTINUED.....

The Horde

As he walked up to the tracks his eyes grew wide at the site of the murder.It felt as if his brain exploded as he was overrun with emotion. He did not know what to do. He wanted to call 911 but he could not move because it was behind him. He tried to run but it was too late it was on top of him trying to bite him. Then like an angel his sister shot the beast and as it fell he rushed to his feet. And ran back home. But, as he walked through the door he saw his sister was on her bed the whole time so he wondered what was going on so he checked the girl who saved him and she transformed into another beast he thought there was only one now he wonders how many there really are.

He got his real sister and ran to the car it was chasing us and it was to fast it grabbed his 15 year old sister she was to young rest in peace but then as i ran to the car got in and drove off i went to the police station to look for survivors i went in but it was like a ghost town. It was eerie and all of the sudden I heard a groan from right behind me. I sprinted to the armory, grabbed a gun and hid in a locker. It walked in. I don't think it saw me go in it left. I waited an extra ten minutes.

Once I knew no one was alive I left the police station and I went to the military no one was there. I kept looking for places. It's a dead city so after I confirmed the city was dead I went to find weapons. So I went back to the police station to get more weapons and I got an ak47 and a couple mags of ammo. When I came out I was surprised to see my sister but she was not normal. It hurt my heart but I did what I had to do.as she fell to the ground I cried and wept but it would not change what happened i crawled to my feet and got in the car.

I got home, I looked in her room and sat on her bed.I heard something banging on the door, I froze. I grabbed the ak47 and raised it at the door. It opened, and I let off a fury of bullets holding all of my anger then I looked and looked and I saw the last one, as it stared at me. I let him go peacefully. As he fell, I caught his head and laid it down gently. I got to my feet and I went home knowing, I avenged my little sister.

[illegible]

EVERYONE

"Anthony!" Rosie shouted from the other side of the room, a pitch black house abandoned in the depths of the woods. In a small village a few friends heard about a so-called haunted house so they all snuck out at midnight to explore. As soon as they stepped in TWAM! The door slammed, immediately they heard a cold soft chuckle of laughter it sounded like a child, but they couldn't tell where it was coming from. The walls? Anthony the most daring in the group went off alone exploring deeper in the house, cobwebs everywhere, spiders crawling out of the cracks of the ceiling, and snakes in the floors. The group looked around calling "Anthony!" suddenly they heard a loud shriek, was it anthony or someone else?

ANTHONY

I shrieked when the room went black, what's going on? Where are the others? The chuckles of laughter got louder, its like whatever was in here knew they were messing with us all, its like the plan was to separate us. I start calling out to everyone, Anna!, Rosie!, Oliver!, Somebody! I walk around trying to retrace my steps but the door I went through is now locked. The haunting laugh of that thing sounds like its getting closer, I start bandaging on the door BANG!, BANG!, BANG! Screaming as I try to get out as the thing behind me gets closer. I struggle but its too late, its behind me, its here, its behind me, its there, its breath is hot on my neck then suddenly black...

ANNA

I hear the screams, the banging of the door knowing there is someone in here, I look around for someone or something but everyone is gone and nothing here is useful. I start to walk around careful not to trip while I look for a lightswitch or maybe a breaker. After a while of looking in different rooms I find a switch and flip it on but nothing, so I turn it off then on again CLICK, CLICK, CLICK but still nothing. The laugh appears again the one we hear when its there, theres nothing I can do, it is watching, it is there so I run. I run as fast as possible until I duck into a corner covering my mouth so im not heard. This constant laughter it haunts me, it makes my blood run cold, I peek out a crack to see a little girl skipping around with a torn up doll in her hand. I sigh closing my eyes listening to the broken clock on the wall TICK TICK TICK, After a few minutes i open my eyes to see the girl handing upside down smiling at me and she says "I found you".

OLIVER AND ROSIE

Unlike the others they stook close holding hands so they don't get separated, they have found out the monster only goes after those who are alone. They walk slowly around each room until they get to a kitchen, looking through each drawer until they feel something sharp and grabbed it. Blade in hand they walk around the house searching, waiting for the monster but its no where to be seen. The soft laugh comes again and anna says "There it is! Follow it!" so we do, making our way through the house until they get to an attic? "Whats going on" Rosie said

"no Idea" Oliver says back. The laugh continues so they keep walking deeper into the attic until they spot something horrifying.

ANNA AND ANTHONY

We wake up tied up in a room both across from each other. "ANNA!" Anthony shouts but Anna is still asleep. The laugh starts again and the girl hangs from the ceiling smiling wide. When anna wakes up the girl turns her head all the way around just like a owl it makes a shiver run down my spine. The girl tries to attack Anna but Rosie swoops in cutting the roped holding her down and saving anna, Oliver does the same to Anthony.

EVERYONE

The girl scurrys away into the depths and we run out the house finding the door unlocked, thankfully we escaped mostly unharmed but to this day we dont know what she was planning or where she is right now...

WIDEFIELD SCHOOL DISTRICT 3

Library, Security Public <spl@wsd3.org>

Scary Story Contest!

1 message

Foote, Ian <
To: Security Public Library <spl@wsd3.org>

Thu, Oct 31, 2024 at 12:35 PM

Hello! I would like to participate in the Scary Story Contest!

Name:
Age:
Grade:
Address:
Phone: (

There were two friends, Colton and Nate. They thought it would be funny to go to a haunted house and film it for their YouTube channel, In agreement, the duo headed to the house and went inside.

Colton jokingly claimed.

"Dude, this house has got to be at least a hundred years old!"

Nate agreed with his statement and then looked around. As Colton followed him, he heard a crash. Nate heard nothing and continued forward, while Colton tried to pick the broken vase up. Afterward, Colton followed Nate to the kitchen. Then they took out their EMF meter, also known as an electromagnetic field. Unfortunately, they didn't find anything in the kitchen. Then they went down the hall to the bedroom. But when they went to the basement, it was on the fifth level of the device. (The highest level.) Then Nate, being scared, ran out of the house. Colton scoffed. He continued to search around, but something caught his attention. A closed door creaks open with light seeping through it. He touched the door handle, just for him to jump back as his palm was scorching hot. He started attempting to cool off his hand however he could. (Breathing through his teeth afterward.) He looked in the kitchen for something that could protect his hand, to which nothing worked. So he decided to keep his hand on for an extended amount of time until he could open it. He succeeded, then looked inside just to see what looked like a 7 foot tall, entity? No, creature? No. he thought it

was something else…. Possibly a demon? He couldn't decide. But he did decide to slam the door behind him and run outside. He called for Nate… It was too late, he was already eaten by… it. He fell to the floor, in tears. He wanted to avenge his friend, but couldn't gather the courage and ended up running out of the house. But then….

He woke up… from this spine-chilling nightmare… He thought….

THE END?

This is a student email account monitored by Widefield School District. The contents of this email are governed by state laws and the board policies of the school district.

The swapped

Chapter One: The Humble Beginnings

Beeep, Beeep, Beeep, Beeep, Beeep, Crash! " Ssssh, Ahh! Why does this always happen? This is the 6Th time it has happened this week," a voice from the dark says. I get up off of the floor seeing my dimly lit clock that says 7:56. I was supposed to be with my friend 10 minutes ago. I sprint while changing and brushing my teeth. Skipping breakfast, I sprint out the door as fast as I can trying to catch my friends.

I finally catch up with them panting trying to catch my breath.

"Whoa Luna, where did you come from." My best friend says, I catch my breath and start telling the story about how my alarm was set wrong and how I had to sprint without stopping. This wasn't the truth but I like to dramatize things.

"So, say Charithy, why didn't you wait for me?"

"I did, you just weren't there"

To be honest, I slept in just a smidge too long. I missed the bus, and my friends, so she was right.

We get to the bleak-looking school and sigh.

"Why must we go to school? It is so boring, and I don't wanna do it," I say.

" Well did you hear Mrs. McCartney is out for unknown reasons?"

I think that she is sick or something along the lines of that.

"Yesterday, weren't you going to tell me a story, or something like that," I say trying to remember.

"Oh ya right so basically…" RING RING "Oh that's our bell I will tell you at lunch" School, you know that feeling of dread when you enter an old building, that's how I feel every day at school. I get to class, and just like normal the teacher goes

over things like math, science, and all of those other things. I am excited for lunch.

RING RING

"Ok class, it's time for lunch." the sub says as I sprint out to my locker, throwing all of my stuff in, running to the lunch room. I sit next to my friend, as she starts to tell her story.

"Ok, so I heard there is an abandoned insane asylum right outside of the city. It is said to be haunted. It was closed in 1847 because someone disappeared and they didn't want people to get hurt. We should go there." She said in an exhilarated voice.

"Ok but how are we going to get there," I say concerned.

"My mother will let me use her car to get there." And we set out with a plan.

Chapter Two: The Asylum

We get into her mom's 1930 red Packard. It is a beautiful car with soft back padding and sleek wheels. We started to head out. She's driving us because as her mom said "I'm not suited for driving". I start to watch as we go from building, to building, to building, to a forest, and then ominous, foggy, dark forest. Then we see the run-down broken rock of a building. It has a slanted roof.

She says to me "So, you ready to go in"

"I mean not really, but let's go for it," I say scared out of my mind. We walk up to it and see that the door is locked. She pulls out a rock and smashes the door open. We walk in and all we see are cobwebs and a block on the floor.

Charithy says "Hold on one second, I gotta go grab something out of the car" She runs out and I look around, trying to see what I can find as I hear the door creaking.

Chapter Three: The attack

I turn around and see nothing. Pops out Charithy in a weird mask and a crowbar.

"Charithy, what are you doing" I say scared.

"Hello!" She pops out and starts to chase me with the crowbar. I trip and fall and as I do, she slashes me with it. It's not a large cut but the crowbar was rusty, so that's not good. I get upright as she runs away, but I chase her down and catch her. I take off her mask and slap her trying to get her back to normal.

She finally gets up and says "What happened? Where am I? What happened to your leg it's all purple?"

I look down and it is purple but why?

Chapter Four: The swap

Suddenly I felt a jump and I said "What? How can I see me?" Then I thought, wait, she and i just swapped bodies, but how? I have a slight suspicion that it has something to do with the mask. I look and see there is an inscription on it that reads "Thee that shall where this mask shall swap with the next person who touches it. The only way to switch back is for thee to find the cure to the hex."

I go up to Charithy in my body and say "We need to do whatever we can to break this curse. Also, I need to cure this, What is something we can do?"

She turns over to me and says "I think I know something." and we head out on our way.

Chapter Five: What is going on

"So what is your plan" I say to her.

"I read in a book that the only way to get back into our body and cure it is to take 8 things that we like, and take them to a descendant of a person that worked at the asylum and then that should fix it."

This is reasonable until you think about how old this place is and how hard it will be to find a descendant of a worker that worked here 200 years ago, that is very long ago. So now we have to scour the files. After about 3 days, my other leg and my right arm turning purple, we found one, Madison Johnson. The one descendant alive. We found that she lives on Calea Victoriei which is just down the block from where I live.

We go up to her house and say "Hello ma'am, I am Luna in my friend Charithy's body and this is Charithy in my body. I was told to get rid of this curse, we had to give you 8 things we love."

I handed her some old things that reminded me of my mom. The most important one was a dress that she had made me when I was 4. Suddenly I feel as if I am back in my body and see I that the purple is gone. I look at Charithy and say “We did it we are free.”

Just as fast as it came, it left. The hex was cured and we decided to burn the mask. We saw a small child's face and some floating spirits but finally, it was over.

Jaelyn Salazar
-
7

Echoes of The Lost

Written by: Jaelyn Salazar-S

Claire, who is a normal, trusted teenage girl in a boring town, and doing her everyday routine. She woke up, brushed her teeth, ate breakfast, and is getting ready. But as she's getting to the end of her routine, something feels off and different. Almost as if something bad had happened or has happened. Something that Claires body has always been able to do ever since she was younger was her body can feel if something is wrong or if something happened. She is feeling that feeling right now but she thinks nothing of it. As Claire finished her little morning routine, she started heading downstairs to tell her sister and usually her parents goodbye before she leaves but, Claire's parents had gone on a business trip, and left her in charge of the house, so she can only say goodbye to her sister, Sarah.

"I'll see you after.." Claire said as she quickly opened her sister's bedroom food but paused mid-sentence. Her eyes widened and realized that her sister wasn't in her room like she usually is. She's usually either in bed still or starting to get ready for the day. She decided to look in the living room, bathroom, and everywhere else around the house.

"Ugh, come on Sarah I don't have time for this. I gotta go!" Claire said, annoyed, pacing around the house. But then she suddenly remembered that Sarah had gone out with her friends last night.

"Oh. She must've stayed the night at a friend's house or something". She said as she now thought nothing of this situation. Claire started walking out the door and was trying to think of anything she could have forgotten before locking it. As she locks it and walks to her car, she still has this horrible feeling that something is still not right. When she gets in her car she decides to text her sister to see if she'll respond.

"Hey, where u at?! Lmk. Ur actually starting to scare me." Claire typed frantically. As she starts to drive to work she has an extremely nervous, scared look on her face still not knowing what's wrong and what's making her feel this way, while of course, trying not to get distracted by her thoughts and making sure she has most of her attention on the road. Because of this dreadful feeling, she decided to call her best friend, Emily so she can ask for some advice. Emily is Claire's best friend and they have been friends for a very long time. In fact, they've been inseparable ever since they were kids. Whenever something is wrong, they always go to each other no matter what. While Claire is calling Emily she is biting her nails while holding the phone in one hand. Because a lot of rings are going by, Claire starts getting anxious thinking that Emily won't pick up the phone. After a couple minutes of Claire trying to get a hold of her, she finally answers.

"Hey, what's up?" Emily said in the sweetest tone.

"Omg, finally you pick up!" Claire responded, sounding stressed out.

"I know I'm sorry, I was busy. But what's wrong? You don't sound okay." Emily said, sounding very interested and concerned.

"No, I feel like somethings wrong but I have no clue what it is. I just have been having this really weird feeling that something bad is going to happen or something bad happened and I don't know what to do, I can't figure it out!" Claire said as she was sitting in the parking lot of her work.

"Oh, well knowing you, I'm sure you'll figure it out." Said Emily, sounding in a rush to get off the phone.

"Okay well I guess I'll just go try to figure it out on my own then." Said Claire, hanging up the phone will no help or input on the situation which was the whole point of the phone call. After the unhelpful call Claire decided to sit in her car for a couple minutes to try to think. As her eyes are closed, and thinking hard, she all of a sudden gets a text message from a random number that she's never seen before. When she opened her phone and skimmed through the message, her eyes widened and began to tear up while covering her mouth in disbelief. Turns out it was a text from One of Sarah's friends' parents. It was a very frantic message that was reporting that their kids had gone missing and as of right now, are nowhere to be found. Claire's eyes began to get heavy due to her thick tears that were pouring down her face, onto her neck, and down her loose shirt. She also was not able to control her breathing and had extremely shaky hands also. She had felt as if she was going to pass out or have a heart attack.

"No, this can't be happening. I don;t believe it for a second!" Claire said in a shaky breath but having no choice but to believe the heart aching news. Instead of going into work, she decided to just drive home instead.

As she stormed into her room devastated and frustrated, slamming her door behind her, she said, "I need to find her. I'm going to Dr. Evelyn." Dr. Evelyn is Claire's psychologist who helps Claire with the emotional toll of her emotions and is sort of a therapist to her. Claire has been going to Dr. Evelyn for a very long time and is Claire's safe place.

"So, I've heard the news. Are you okay kiddo?" Said Dr. Evelyn as she looked concerned and softly grazed her hand on Claires shoulder.

"No! Why and how would I be okay if my sister is literally missing. I need to go find them now!" Claire said angrily but on the verge of tears for the millionth time.

"I have no clue how my parents are going to react when they find out about this. I was supposed to be in charge. I was supposed to be the adult of the family for a week and my sister is missing, and I feel like I'm losing my mind. I knew something was wrong, I felt it!" Claire ranted as she was pacing back and forth across the room bursting into tears again.

"It's all my fault. I shouldn't have let her go to her friend's house late at night. What was I thinking?!" She said as she continued ranting while taking only a couple breaths.

"Hey, stop this all right now. It's not your fault, trust me! They'll find her, I know they will." Said Dr. Evelyn in the sweetest, softest voice ever.

"Okay well I'm going to be the first one to find her. Matter of fact, I'm going right now." Claire said as she rushed out the door without giving Dr. Evelyn a chance to speak and without saying goodbye.

Claire decided to go back home and go into Sarah's room to see if she can find some clues or hints to where her and her friends could be. She goes through every single drawer and searches everywhere but while she is searching something really strange and creepy happens.

All of a sudden, from down the hallway right outside of Sarah's bedroom door, Claire hears, "Hello? Is anyone there? Please, help us!" In a sort of faint voice. Claire quickly opens the door but no one's there. She goes in every room including downstairs and she is the only one in the house.

"W-What just h-happened. Omg, am I really going crazy or is this for real." Claire said, trembling on her words, slowly heading back into Sarah's room. As she continues searching she keeps having the need to look over her shoulder, thinking something, or someone is standing right behind her. But everytime, there's no one. She continues to just keep going and try not to think about it too much.Finally, after about an hour of searching, she fia]nally finds something that seems as though it could be helpful. It looks like a torn, dirty journal page from her journal that she would never let anyone read. Claire decides to uncrumble the paper and notices that it is a map of the town drawn on it. On the map is an X with an arrow saying, "Meeting spot." In messy, rushed handwriting.

"There's no way I found a clue this easily." Claire said in disbelief while crumbling the paper back up and shoving it into her pocket. Claire now decided to call Emily and tell her about the good news.

"Emily! I found something, it's a really good clue, come on, we should go to it right away." Claire said, sounding extremely excited. Emily agrees and tells Claire to go and pick her up and they start heading to where the X is. As they start getting closer and closer to the spot, Emily starts growing very nervous after realizing where the X had been marked on the map.

"You know what? I'm sure this is just some sort of prank, or drawing Sarah did when she got bored! I bet it's a joke or something, let's just turn back around and just leave." Emily said.

"What!? No, we're almost there, don't be scared. Claire said as she was very confused on why Emily had been acting this way. They pull up to where the X is and all of a sudden they realize that they are completely on the outskirts of town in a dark, mysterious forest.

"This is so weird. We're standing right where the X should be.." Claire said, scratching her head in confusion looking at the map.

"Oh wow, that is weird. Guess we'll just have to leave then!" Emily explained while taking Claire's arm and started pulling her towards the car.

"No, what are you doing? Why do you wanna leave so badly!?" Claire said, yanking Emily's hand off of her arm and going back to where she was standing before. All fo a sudden Emily looks down and sees a small door under the dirt and covers it with her feet the best she can.

"What are you doing? Why Are you acting so weird today? Claire explained, angrily pushing her out of the way.

"Claire no!-" Emily yelled.

"Woah, Its like a underground bunker." Claire said quietly to herself. Claire opened the doors to the bunker and started getting inside. Claire began looking around and explored the bunker. As she was looking around she suddenly heard a voice over her shoulder, "Yes, keep looking! But you better hurry! Tick tock, tick tock." Something whispered in her ear. "AHH! What was that? Emily was that you??" Claire said in an extremely scared voice.

"What are you talking about, you sound crazy." Emily said as she was on the whole other side of the bunker.

"What's going on.." Claire said in her mind. There wasn't much they found in the bunker but suddenly they started hearing faint voices and banging on the walls. "Do you hear that? I know I'm not crazy this time. That was actually real." Claire said, running over to Emily.

"What? I don;t hear anything. Let's just go, there's nothing in here anyways." Emily said, trying to push Claire to the door.

"No! I feel like I'm somewhat close to finding the truth. What's your deal? Why are you always in a rush?" Claire said, sounding extremely angry at this point. "I'm about to just do this by myself."

Emily felt very nervous knowing that Claire was very close to finding out the truth. "You know what, I just don't think we should be friends anymore because you think you're soo smart and you think you know everything." Emily explained.

"Are you serious? I can't believe you! Fine. Leave then. I'll just finish this on my own then." Claire said as her heart was slowly shattering.

"Okay but you should go too cause you're not going to find anything in there. I'm telling you!" Emily said as she slowly started leaving the bunker.

As Claire is looking around, she finds a really weird button in a random spot that seems as though it was trying to be hidden so no one could see it. But, it was pretty obvious. She pressed the button and a hidden door slowly began opening. All of a sudden Claire hears her sister's voice yelling. "Omg, Sarah?" Claire said running as fast as she could into the room. As she went further, she saw Sarah and her friends in a big cage.

"Hurry, help! If the door is open too long then it sets off an alarm and they'll come back!" Sarah explained.

"How do I get you guys out? Claire asked, in a rush and sounding nervous.

" There should be a key around her somewhere." One of Sarah's friends said. The clock was quickly running out of time while Claire was frantically searching for the key.

"I found it!" Claire said with only 2 minutes left on the clock. She let everyone out and they all ran as fast as they could. As they slipped out the door they were all in tears and sweat. When they got out of the bunker, they all thanked Claire and gave her extremely tight, long hugs. After Claire and Sarah got home, Sarah explained everything to Claire. She admitted that she was in a secret group called The Hidden Order. This group meets up late at night and tries to discover things about the town's past and history. She explained how she and her friend had found something that they weren't supposed to see and the leader had to punish them. After this explanation, Claire told Sarah how she was hearing a really weird voice, like there was a person that had an opinion and input on the clues she was finding and what she was doing. Sarah said that one of her friends had sadly passed away because she was the one who knew the most about the town.

"Before she passed away she said, 'Don't worry guys, I'll make sure Claire finds you guys.' " "And I don't know if it's true but people said she meant that she is going to help you." Sarah said.

But, the craziest part of the story that Sarah was waiting to tell Claire, was that the leader of this secret group was someone Claire knows very well. The leader is Emily. Claire's ex best friend.