

Trick Or Treat (1st Place)

By Mercy D

Ding-Dong

The doorbell rings, and I hurry to answer it.

“Trick or treat!” Monique says. Or, at least, it sounds like Monique. It looks like a vampire, though, and it’s the perfect costume. Well, *a* perfect costume at least.

“Come on, Monique, and help me get ready!”

“Okay,” she said, and her fangs flash in a grin.

The two of us dart back into my bedroom, where my costume is laid out on the bed.

“What is it?” Monique asks.

“I just read this *amazing* book, Monique, and this was the main character.”

“*Booooring*,” says Monique, “It’s pajamas. That’s not even spooky.”

“Well,” I say, pulling the old nightgown over my head, “It’s the costume of her ghost. Well, sort of. Sort of her zombie, too. But I need your help for some finishing touches.”

“Much better,” Monique decides, after helping me apply some fake blood and vomit on the front.

“Still a dumb costume, though. Books are boring.”

“Are not,” I snap back.

“But where’d you get this book, anyway? I thought the school library didn’t have horror books anymore.” Monique looks at me, adding, “When’d you get so grumpy, anyway?”

I pause, thinking. “I don’t remember. Must’ve been the regular library. Sorry, I just like finding new books, you know?”

“Okay.”

“Bye, Mom!” I call out, “I’m going trick-or-treating with Monique!”

“Goodbye, Melissa,” Mom calls. “Have fun, and be safe tonight, ‘kay?”

“Alright.”

Out on the street we start trick-or-treating when Monique asks, “Do you want to stick together, or split up to cover more ground?” as she scans the street.

“Stick together,” I reply. “We’ll need to, for all the loot we’re getting.”

She gives me a high-five, and we hit the sidewalk, heading for the first house.

“Anyway,” I continue, “About my book— it was really good. The girl was like sick or something because someone tried to poison her, and then she got all—”

“Melissa,” Monique said, stopping on the sidewalk. “Books. Are. Boring. I don’t want to hear anymore about your books or I’m going home.”

And here I thought she was interested for once. I sigh. “Fine, I’ll stop. But I’m thirsty.”

“Yeah, I bet from all your yapping.”

We laugh, and continue on.

“We are going to hit *every* house for a *five. Block. Radius.*” Monique says, pulling out a paper with the best houses written on it.

She meant it.

In half a block, we have over half of our buckets filled, and haven’t even hit the best houses.

But it was later now, and more of a chill had crept into the air. I shiver.

“Still thirsty?”

I nod.

“We’ll get you water at Mrs. Johnston’s house,” Monique promises.

“Thanks,” I reply, feeling rather hoarse. We arrive at Mrs. Johnston’s, and she gladly gives me a bottle of water.

“Feeling better?” Monique asks.

“Yep.”

Another block down, dark spots come in around the edges of my vision, and, aided by the fire flashing and dancing behind the eyes of the jack-o-lanterns’ mocking faces, my head begins to ache.

“Are you alright?” Monique asks as I pinch the bridge of my nose.

“Yeah,” I fib.

“Well,” she hesitates, “I have to use the bathroom. You go on ahead, I’ll catch up.”

“No,” I said, surprising myself with how hoarse I sound.

“I *need* to go, though, and the Hill’s close their doors promptly at 10, and they give out the treat bags! You’ll need to get going if we’re going to get any.” And she dashed to her house up the street.

As she disappears inside, the black spots redouble their efforts to cloud my vision.

I go to take another swig of water, but discover the bottle’s empty. Suddenly, the burning in my throat is too much to bear. I drop to my knees, clutching at my throat. I look up and down the street for help, but it’s empty, save for the rejoicing faces of the jack-o-lanterns.

The black cloud completely covers my vision.

“Melissa, Melissa, I heard you found my diary. That you enjoyed my story. I am flattered that you even dressed up as me... It gave me this opportunity to find you. I bet you're regretting it now.”

I turn my head, unable to see anything but black fog, not knowing what was real or not.

“Help,” I moan feebly.

*“No one can hear you now. No one can help you now. And from now on, you are mine, **Melissa.**”*

The last word is spoken with such force it resounds in my ears, then all of the black smoke rushes towards my face. I try to defend myself, but it’s too late.

My lips and nose feel chapped, and my eyes and throat burn with a cold fire.

* * *

“Melissa? Melissa! Are you okay?”

Melissa was on her hands and knees whispering “Help, help me.” Her body was shaking, and then, suddenly, just stopped.

“Melissa,” I said again, dropping to my knees and putting a hand on her back. “Are you okay?”

Slowly her head raises upward, emerging with a smile. “Did I scare you?”

“Melissa, you jerk!” I shout, and jump up to my feet. “Here,” I give her my hand and pull her up.

“I guess I deserve it for the book thing, but you gave me a *heart attack!*”

“Sorry,” Melissa replies. “I thought it’d be fun.”

I pause. I’m not really mad.

“It actually kind of was,” I giggle.

She looks at me and full-on grins. Her eyes have a cold, dark shadow behind them, but then she blinks, and it’s gone. I know I must have imagined it.

“Okay, I’ll bite,” I say, as we start going again. “What was your book like?”

She smiles again. “Oh, I think you’ll really like it, I’ll lend it to you when we get back.”

“Okay,” I say. “I’ll read it if it’s really that good.”

“It is,” she promises, and I shiver. “You’re right, it is cold out here.”

THE END

The Escape Room (2nd Place)

By Harlow Sharum

Elaina Reed walked happily into “*Allentown Escape Rooms.*” accompanied by her older brother Jacob, his girlfriend Keira, and Elaina’s best friend Carlos. They all walked up to the counter together and waited for the manager. A minute later a short lady in a bright red bellhop suit walked to the desk and asked, “How can I help you kids today?”

“We would like to do the spooky room today, I have a coupon for a free one hour room.” said Jacob bouncing on the balls of his feet with anticipation.

“Very well, here are the instructions, the first clue, and a key, You will be in room eleven.” she explained in a very blank tone, handing him two pieces of paper and a small silver key. They walked, chattering happily down the dark and dusty corridor and stopped at a hotel style door labeled with a small plaque saying, “Room 11.” Jacob put the key into the door and turned it. The lock clicked and the door suddenly swung open on its own. They all jumped as a loud screech split the air like a knife. The kids, now alert, walked cautiously into the room. As they stepped on the carpet, dust flew into the air and turned into a transparent person. Before them stood a tall dark haired girl in a long white dress. She looked like she had not showered or done her hair in years. Jacob whispered, “It’s a projection, they did a great job on making her look real.”

“WELCOME!” She loudly exclaimed.

“TO YOUR DOOM! YOU HAVE ONE HOUR TO FIGURE OUT FIVE CLUES, EACH ONE HARDER THAN THE LAST! IF YOU DO NOT COMPLETE THEM YOU WILL STAY WITH ME AND THE OTHERS IN MY REALM FOREVER! SO BE WARNED, ONE WRONG MOVE, AND IT'S ALL OVER!”

Shivers engulfed all of them as the girl whipped away through the ceiling. They all looked at each other wide eyed and frightened.

“It’s only fake guys, we’re fine.”

But Elaina was not completely sure. They all crept into the dusty mildewy room. Keira was holding Jacobs hand and Elaina was holding Carlos’s hand with a supposedly unbreakable grip in fright. Finally, Jacob said, “Well, we should probably start on the clues.”

“Yea, we should. What does it say?” Said Elaina, brushing off the moment's fear.

“The thing you seek will be revealed, when one will trust what does appeal. We know your heart, your deepest want, the thing you need is in red font.” Jacob read aloud. “What do you think, Lay, you're the best at these?” Jacob asked Elaina who had spent countless hours on an escape room website.

“Well, red fonts, things that appeal to us, we all love to read, so I'd say something like a book. Look for a book with red letters on the front!” Elaina said.

They searched and finally, “I found it! A book with red letters, inside and out!” Yelled Keira.

They all ran over and Keira opened the book and a piece of paper fell out. Carlos picked it up and read it aloud, *“That's one down, four more to go, but here's something you should know. I'm big and small and sometimes tall. I follow you everywhere but sometimes I'm not there at all.”*

“Correct me if I'm wrong, but that sounds like a shadow.” Jacob explained,

“Yes, a shadow! That's it!” Screamed Elaina.

“Find anything with a shadow, there aren't any windows, so that won't make it confusing.”

They searched for shadows.

“Wait, the ceiling light, it puts a shadow all over the room!” said Carlos.

He pulled a chair under the light and stood on it, then pulled out a piece of folded up paper.

Elaina took it and started to read. *“Two down, three to go, guys, I must admit, you're on a roll. Look at the clock, you have thirty minutes, you will stay with us if you don't finish.”*

They all looked at each other, they were thinking the same thing. One: how do they know what time it is if the note was written beforehand? And two: that wasn't a clue! Or was it?

“Maybe they want us to look at the clock.” Keira said, unsure.

They all looked up at the clock on the wall. They all gasped! Instead of a normal clock hand, a transparent ghost hand was pointing towards the picture on the opposite wall. Jacob ran to the picture and pulled it off the wall.

A message was carved in bright shining letters, “CLUE NUMBER FOUR IS A HARD ONE, ONE MORE AFTER THIS AND YOUR DONE, MAKE YOUR WAY TO THE CLOSET AND TAKE A PEEK INSIDE, AND CRACK THAT LAST CLUE YOU WILL FIND. ONE MUST GO IN AND TAKE THE PLUNGE TO SAVE HIS OR HER FRIENDS BEFORE ITS ALL DONE!!!”

“Wait, that means one of us has to go into the closet!” said Carlos, starting to freak out a bit.

“I’ll go,” said Jacob, putting on a brave face.

“NO!!! Jacob, can't you see? This isn't a joke, it's real. Let's find another way out, you can't do this!” screamed Elaina, terror on her face at her brother's proposal.

“I have to, or you guys will be in trouble, I can't let that happen!” he said sternly to Elaina.

He started to walk over to the closet when Elaina grabbed his wrist.

“What about me, I'm your sister, you can't go. What if it takes you?” she was crying now, her tears splashing onto the rug and leaving dark wet spots.

He looked back at the others with a look of worry on his face. “Then what do we do?” he said, looking at Elaina. Five minutes later they ran out of the room with their hands over their heads. They ran into the lobby and spotted the manager.

“Hey!” Jacob yelled.

She turned, gave a grim smile,

and everything went pitch black...

THE END

The Cabin (3rd Place)

(Anonymous)

Me and my family arrived at a little cabin in the woods. I thought I saw something hiding in the woods but I just shook it off. There was a nice lake nearby so we could fish and swim if we wanted to. The day was pretty fun; we went hiking, then canoeing then we went fishing and finally we ended off the day roasting dinner, which was some fish we had caught earlier that day, over the campfire then we told scary stories while eating s'mores.

My little sister, Angela, wasn't really good at stories, being six and all, but she told a story about the boogeyman. It wasn't really scary but it wasn't that bad of a story. I told the story of El Sibón, my parents weren't really happy about that because it scared my little sister a lot.

My mom told a tale about skinwalkers which led to my dad telling us a really scary story about wendigos. He told it as if this was his personal experience. Whatever, it's just a scary story. It was pretty scary though, it ran through my mind the rest of the night until it was time for bed.

That story was really scary. Angie told me as we were getting ready for bed, I rolled my eyes at

her. Look, it's not real. I said. Do you want to play Bloody Mary? I asked, laughed to myself as she refused and hid under her blanket. She slowly peered up from the blanket before she spoke.

Was papa's story real? I looked over at her. The one with the wendigos? I asked, rolling my eyes

again and snickering. Of course not, and even if it was, what makes you think they'd be anywhere near middle-of-nowhere Michigan? She thought for a while before yawning and going

to sleep. Shortly after, I went to sleep; The soft rain poured down as I shut my eyes, the wind

howled through the woods surrounding the cold dark cabin my family was staying in. It was peaceful.

I was soon awoken by what sounded like knocking on the bedroom window; I looked over to where my sister was sleeping but she wasn't there. I nervously glanced at the window, wondering if I should look behind the curtains. I felt like every bone in my body was saying not to but I felt so compelled to at the same time. I decided to take a peek. Nothing, just the woods, it must've been a bird or something. I got out of bed, the flooring creaking under my feet as I walked to the bedroom door. I thought twice before opening the door and going to look for my sister.

I looked around hesitantly before finally deciding to walk out into the living room. After a couple minutes of searching I decided to look in our parents room, there she was; she was hiding between them seemingly fast asleep. Those stories must've scared her a lot. I was heading back to the room I would be sleeping in when I glanced at the front door and saw it was slightly ajar. I figured we must've accidentally left it open and I just went to shut and lock it, something compelled me to go outside but I knew I shouldn't so I just went back to bed after making sure the other door was shut.

I woke up again a few hours later by what sounded like someone with heavy footsteps walking along the patio outside. I thought about looking to see who it was but as I set foot on the ground I felt something in my gut; I knew something was wrong. I slowly creaked open the bedroom door and peered out into the hallway that lead into the living room. After a few near silent minutes I started walking towards my parents room; on the way there I noticed the front door was open again, this time it was open much wider.

Once I opened the door to their room I noticed my little sister was gone, so I went to look for her again. I couldn't find her in the house but I was scared to go outside. I grabbed a small flashlight and as soon as I left the cabin I heard what sounded like her giggling from just beyond the treeline but it sounded a little off. I hesitantly started walking towards it. There was something so eerie about the voice, it didn't sound quite right but I couldn't find another explanation. As I walked into the woods I felt my legs start to give. It was terrifying to be alone in the woods at night and I felt like everything was watching me.

I kept going farther into the woods looking for her but I still hadn't found her yet I kept hearing her giggling, did she think this was a game? Angie, this isn't funny! As soon as I said that the voice got more demented and started coming from multiple directions. I ran. I ran faster than I've ever ran before.

I heard the demented voice trying to beckon me back towards it and I heard loud footsteps running behind me as though it was trying to catch me.

Finally I made it back to the cabin and I slammed the door shut and locked it as fast as possible, I heard desperate knocking and otherworldly screaming on the other side telling me to let it in. I dared not look through the windows as I stood there in front of the door until the sun rose.

Finally my parents awoke and I told them what happened, we searched for my sister but we couldn't find her anywhere. Eventually though we did find her, she was badly injured and hiding under a canoe by the water. We left later that day and didn't look back. The End.