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Ghost Squad

By Michael Berlin

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I can't see a thing in here.

Ow. Will you cut it out?

- Big shock.

- BOY

I don't hear anything.

Wait.

There it is again.

You must have dog ears,

'cause the only thing I hear
is Charlie breathing.

Let's just get out of here.

This is really stupid.

Yeah. Next time you hear that there's
some kind of hideous, deformed creature
living in some

old abandoned building,

do us a favor

and leave us out of it.

Hey, I had a solid lead.

Jeanie Taylor

told Martie Nixon.

And I heard her telling Ethan

Reynolds about it in Phys Ed.

Besides, I didn't know we were going
to end up trapped in a broom closet.

That's a solid lead?

Nice going, goggles.

You are so not cut out for this.

Hey, don't call me that.

Would you two knock it off
already?

Trust me, whatever it is
you thought you heard,
it's gone.

Let's just go home.

See? I told you

there's nothing out here.

You were saying?

That's got to be the wind
or something.

I'm leaning more

towards "something."

Come on, let's check it out.

I don't think
that's such a good idea.
Fine, stay here then.
Yeah, stay here.
Uh, an even worse idea.
What's that?
Thermal camera.
Monster tracker.
Shh.
I think I heard something.
What is it?
Something's over there.
- I don't see anything.
- Guys?
I think we might want
to find another way out here.
Well, well,
look what we got here.
Our favorite
middle-school wimps.
The monster geek squad!
Actually, it's "Elite Monster-Hunting
Unit," you Neanderthal.
Oh, get up.
"Neanderthal"?
That sounds bad.
It has a bunch of those,
uh, whatchamacallums?
Syllables, moron.
Oh yeah? How about a
bruise for every syllable?
Ne-an-der-thal!
Ah!
What's wrong, dorks?
No science club today,
so you thought you'd try
the life of crime, huh?
A little breaking and entering?
Truth be told,
we were chasing down an
unidentified beast-like creature
right inside that old building.
We have it trapped in there.
Cork it, geek boy!

Nobody's talking to you.
What gives, Charlie? What
are you and the dork patrol
doing mess around
the old bank?
None of your business.
Whoa! Take it down a notch,
brainiac,
or you'll be chewing
on a knuckle sandwich.
A triple decker!
Hey, yeah, what's with
this jacket anyway?
You wear this stupid thing
every day.
He's thinks he's going
to Hartford someday!
Uh, doubt it!
It's "Harvard," you meathead.
You know, you might have thought
high school would have made you
a little bit smarter.
And that jacket
belonged to his brother,
the Marine.
Where are the Marines
when we need them?!
A beast-like creature?
Could you be bigger wimps?
Figures dorks like you would be
afraid of a little kitty cat.
Wait till all the other losers
at their school hear about this!
You're dead meat, Hamilton!
Nice costume, dork.
Told you-hardly anyone else
is wearing a costume.
I feel like a total idiot.
Dude, it's Halloween.
We always wear costumes.
But don't you think we might be getting a
little bit old for this kind of stuff?
No.
Guys!

It finally came!

"Swamp Monsters" 217!

The one where the swamp alien has to battle the zombie slime creatures.

He ends up having to eat his own head.

- Hey, Charlie!

- Oh! Brandy, hey.

How's it going?

Did you finish your chapter for the Chem Lab notes last night?

Oh, yeah, Chem Lab!

Absolutely!

I, uh, got 'em right here.

Oh yeah.

Nice costume. You supposed to be a dog or something?

Oh, no, werewolf actually.

It's cute.

Yeah, we were actually just making fun of all the losers that actually wear costumes. Yeah, usually we're way more mature-

I can see that.

Oh, great.

We could run. I hear Mexico is lovely this time of year.

What's this? "A guide to demons, monsters and aliens"?

Ooh, which chapter are you in?

This is so lame, jake.

Just leave them alone.

Oh, hey look,

it's the geek patrol.

Not so bad when you're not armed with a milkshake, are you?

Serious, Jake!

I'm gonna tell ma.

Hey, why don't you guys knock it off?

What's the matter? Run out of kids to bully at your own school?

- You had to come back here?

- Jake!

How much grass do you think
Charlie here could eat
before he chucks it all up,
huh?

- Maybe we should find out.

- Get off of him!

- How about a game, twerps?

- Ah!

Oh, get real! These losers
couldn't play football
against my grandma's
knitting club.

And those old bags
can't even walk.

Yeah, we were thinking
about taking the day off
from anything that requires
the human brain.

So yeah, maybe football
might just do the trick.

What did you say, geek boy?

It sounded like an insult,
but, no, that can't be right.

That would require guts,
which you and the wimp brigade
don't have.

Charlie! You're not
exactly helping here.

Any rock-for-brains
can throw a football.

Well, apparently not anyone,
since you and your team
have lost almost
every game this year,
and set the record for most
interceptions in a season.

Oh really?

Let's see you do this,
Einstein.

Uh, you were saying?

I was saying
that it doesn't take much
for a bunch of morons

to go out on the court
and bash each other's
brains in.

It's a field, professor,
not a court.

No, all right.

All right, Charlie,

I got something for you,
now that you're

Mr. Big and Bold.

Let's hear it.

Name your challenge.

Uh, all right.

Uh...

the old Sullivan place-
one night.

- Ooh!

- You and the geek squad
spend an entire night up there.

- Excuse me?

- Oh, you heard me.

The Sullivan house,
one night.

Isn't that place
supposed to be haunted?

Oh, is it?

Yeah, that's the point,
loser.

You guys think you're some kind
of monster experts?

Prove it.

That's what I thought.

Name the time and place.

We'll be there.

Tomorrow-Halloween.

Done.

Okay, Charlie,
it's your funeral.

Behind the school,
bike path, tomorrow,

6:

What did you
just get us into?

Please tell me
this is a dream.
- I think the word is "nightmare."
- Come on, guys!
Are we going to let them show us
up for the rest of our lives?
How many more swirlies and wedgies and wet
willies are we going to have to take?
I don't know, Charlie, but I'd rather
take more of what they're dishing out
than go near
that Sullivan house.
Yeah, Charlie,
the house is haunted.
Not sure what's confusing
about that.
And you guys
actually believe that?
Yeah, why wouldn't we?
You just want us
to come with you.
Guys, we're going to be in the
same school as them next year.
Do you really want to be a punching
bag for those jerks 'til we graduate?
Fine, I'm done.
So what do you have in mind?
Yeah, what's the plan?
Meet me at my house at 6:00.
I'll lay it out for you guys.
- So you mean you'll make it up as you go?
- Exactly.
Charlie, I wish
you'd drink more milk.
Stop with all that soda.
I'm allergic to milk, mom.
Remember?
And I haven't had a soda
in, like, forever.
Yeah, he's allergic
to everything,
- especially girls.
- Zip it, runt.
Oh no, you don't

still have the hots
for the girl
in your Chemistry Lab, do you?
I'm serious, Todd.
I've got a better idea.
Why don't you come over here
and make me zip it?
Hey!
He threw his peas at me!
And they say you can't
train a baby.
Charlie, Todd, stop it.
Just eat.
I got you some almond milk. They say
it's better for your digestive tract.
Yeah, Charles, or how about
some of Noah's baby formula?
I'm warning you, Todd.
Warning me how?
Sit down and be quiet, Todd,
or I'm going to let Charlie have five
minutes alone with you off the leash.
Not cool, Russ!
Hey, guys?
You might want to come over here
and read this.
"During the 1950s,
"the Sullivan Gang was rumored
to be responsible
"for over 30 bank robberies
in California alone.
"They were finally killed
in a shootout
"right here in Elk Falls
at their hide-out,
"the old Sullivan place.
Cops said it was
a total bloodbath."
Like, body parts everywhere!
It also says the place is supposed
to be haunted by the gang
and their vicious old dog
Salty.
Haunted by a dog?

Let me see that.
"Over the years,
many citizens of Elk Falls
"have reported hearing
strange noises
"coming from the house,
"which to this day
remains abandoned
"due to an ongoing dispute
over ownership
"and the city's inability
to find a buyer
willing to take on
the troubled property."
Dude! Look at these guys!
They look like total psychos!
Hey, this one looks
just like you, goggles.
Haunted by a dog?
What a bunch of baloney!
The place is just old.
We're doing this.
End of story.
Yeah, we kind of have to.
We chicken out now,
our lives at Joe Dante
middle school are gonna suck.
- Probably high school too.
- It already sucks.
Yeah, but we're talking about it
going to an entirely new level.
How are we going
to get our parents
to let us stay the night
in that old house?
It's simple.
We tell our parents
that we're staying over
at each other's houses,
and by morning,
we're heroes.
Jake and those other lug nuts
won't be able
- to push us around anymore.

- I gotta go home.
My mom's making something
that vaguely resembles meatloaf.
If I don't get there soon, my sister
will give hers to the dog before I can.
Remember, we meet behind the
school tomorrow at 6:00.
Does this mean
no trick-or-treating?
What do you think?
This will be better.
Trust me.
Oh, okay, Charlie.
- See you tomorrow night, Charlie.
- No you won't.
Got your new wrestling coach coming
over tomorrow night, remember?
- Charlie doesn't wrestle.
- I hate wrestling, dad.
Well, that's why
you're going to take lessons.
That doesn't make any sense.
You need to do something
more physical, okay?
You're wasting too much time
at your computers.
What kind of wrestling coach
comes over on Halloween, anyway?
Bye, boys.
But dad, we have
a big geometry test coming up.
We're in a study group together.
I can't let my friends down.
What about
letting your dad down?
Day after tomorrow,
I promise.
I expect to see an "A"
on that test.
Geometry test, huh?
I know what you guys
are doing.
- You don't know anything.
- Really?

Maybe we should have a talk
with mom and dad then.
I'll do your homework
for a week.
You're not getting my bank.
I already looked in there.
There's not enough.
25 bucks, that's the price
for my silence.
I'll kill him for free.
Deal.
Not a word.
And you're doing my homework.
I'm impressed.
Didn't think
you guys would show.
This is a piece of cake.
If you're doing this
for my sister, forget about it.
- You got no shot with her.
- I'm doing this
because I'm tired of you guys
always giving us a hard time.
We do this,
you guys back off.
Deal?
Deal, but I won't
hold my breath.
Ha!
You clowns ready?
Born ready.
Yeah? Well, talk is cheap,
professor.
Smart money says
you won't make it 'til dark.
I bet they don't
even go inside.
Let's just do this.
Are you sure about this,
Charlie? You don't have to.
Sure he is! The dare is you
stay the entire night.
Of course if you decide
to split early,

youtube and the whole rest
of the world will be watching.
You guys will be
on hidden cameras all night.
Uh, bye, boys.
Can we go now, please?
What are you doing? We didn't
even get to the house yet.
My dad! We're supposed to
be studying for a math test
at your house, remember?
Come on, let's go.
Are we almost there yet,
Charlie?
Almost.
Hey, did you read the new
"zombie invasion" comic?
Yes, it's awesome!
Dude, it was awesome. I like
"the zombie warrior" better.
Well, yeah,
because that was the first one.
I mean, it's expected.
What now?
How are we
getting in this place?
Okay, come on.
There, that's our entrance.
We pry that wood off
and slip inside.
Let's see here.
We're sure we really
want to do this?
Don't chicken out now, Nick.
They could be watching us
on those cameras.
No turning back now.
This is way too easy.
This is going
to be an awesome night.
Meet up at my place in an hour,
make sure everything's ready.
- I got this.
- Tonight,

those dipsticks are going
to get a double dose of ghost.
- Do you guys really have cameras in there?
- Jake's dad works security.
He gave me a few toys. Heighten
the experience a little.
Plus we got to make sure
your friends don't wuss out.
Don't you think
that's kind of mean, Jake?
Absolutely!
Oh, my face.
Would you get off me, please?
I'm trying!
Man, it's higher
than I thought.
I don't think we could get back out
that way even if we wanted to.
Great!
So we're trapped
in here?
We shouldn't even be here,
Charlie.
This is all your fault.
Yeah, I had my grimm reaper
super-hero costume
all ready to go for tonight.
But no, I'm trapped here
in this stupid old
haunted house with you guys!
Would you guys calm down? You
whine worse than my baby brother.
So you're calling us babies?
Yeah, snot-nosed
little diaper-wearing babies.
Okay, that's it.
I'm done.
Party's over.
Give me a boost, Nick.
No way,
you give me a boost.
Guys, you really
want to leave?
Aren't you tired of those jerks

always getting the best of us?
This is our chance to show
everyone what we're made of.
We go back out that window now,
we can never show our faces
in the school again.
We can do this,
you know we can.
Unless you really think we're the
gutless losers they say we are.
We're not losers.
So prove it.
Come on, guys.
Forget those guys,
right?
I guess.
Let's take inventory.
Supply check.
I brought the entertainment.
Ipad, video game, dvd,
D.S., and G.P.S.,
just in case.
Oh, and this.
Nice touch.
Thought you'd appreciate
the irony.
I brought the food.
Chips, salsa-not too spicy-
drinks,
chocolate-covered debby cakes,
and my personal favorite,
hungry boy
fried chicken dinners.
These are frozen dinners.
They'll thaw out
by the time we eat them.
All right, so I brought
the batteries, matches,
non-drip candles.
No one will ever know
that we were here.
What about the window?
Cat did it.
Oh, and these-

standard army flashlights.

- They're the real deal.

- No, thanks.

I have my cactus jack
ranger pocket knife.

It has a light
built into it.

Look.

Did you get that
out of cereal box?

- It's for small, tight spaces.

- Like your brain?

Let's just look around
and find a place
to settle down for the night.

Maybe we should
just stay right here.

In a dusty old basement?

I don't think so.

Let's just go. This place
smells like a dungeon.

Ready?

Be quiet,
just in case.

Just in case what?

In case the bloody, rotting
corpses of the Sullivan Gang
- are still living upstairs.

- That's not funny!

Hello?

Anyone home?

Are you crazy, Charlie?

It's just us.

Let's go.

You guys waiting
for a formal invitation?

Maybe we should go
back downstairs.

They'll never know.

Rangers never retreat.

You guys coming or what?

What do you see?

Uh, big empty house.

See for yourself.

Whoa, look at that.
Wow!
This is pretty cool.
Yeah, see? No ghosts,
no Sullivan Gang, no Salty.
Yeah.
Hey, we found a perfect spot
for us.
Oh, and the best part?
After tomorrow,
no more Jake and his meathead
friends bothering us.
I have to admit,
I thought you were out of your
gourd for getting us into this.
Yeah, this actually turned out to
be a pretty good idea, Charlie.
So, if you Neanderthals
are watching us,
hello from the haunted house.
Jake, help us!
Zombies got us and turned us
into the living dead.
Yeah! Please tell our teachers we won't
be coming back to school anymore.
They can give our homework
to someone else.
You really think the Sullivan
Gang ever lived here?
I don't know.
Doesn't really matter, though.
I mean, you saw
all the furniture in there.
Somebody lived there,
a long time ago, anyway.
And besides, there's
no such thing as ghosts.
That's what they always say
in the movies
right before one shows up
and rips their face off.
Wow, it's really pretty.
Yeah, just like Brandy Benson.
Don't even, Alex!

Got to admit, Charlie,
we wouldn't be here right now
if Brandy wasn't standing there
yesterday.
Yep, you'd be out trick-or-treating,
just like you always do.
What's wrong
with trick-or-treating?
It's for kids.
Oh yeah,
so what's that make you?
- Some kind of grown-up?
- Truce, guys.
Look at this-
sunset, three friends.
This is a total
beer-commercial moment.
You guys are ruining it.
Okay.
But he started it.
And yeah,
Brandy Benson is beautiful.
What are you doing?
Tempting fate.
That's what Rangers do.
Dude, that's what idiots do.
Get over here.
- Come on, dude.
- Man, come on.
I don't remember it being this dark in here.
What are you doing now?
Seeing if any
of the light switches work.
That would be a great idea if
there were any lights to turn on.
But there aren't.
So just stay close,
okay?
Did we leave the door open?
What's that down there?
It's just the wind.
I thought I heard it
say something.
Nick!

I'm coming to get you.
If it gets me,
I promise,
it's getting you first.
That's right, boys.
Make yourselves comfortable.
It's going to be
a bumpy ride.
When do the ghosts arrive?
Hey, patience, amigo.
They'll be making a house call
very soon.
I've got it all wired
into that single unit.
Can control it all
from there.
You promised
I could do this part, Jake.
And I am a man
of my word.
I've never eaten
a frozen drumstick before.
Just suck on it till it melts.
Then you can bite into it.
Sorry, I had to grab
whatever I could
before my mom asked me
where I was going
with three
hungry boy meals.
This piece is a little softer.
Kind of slushy.
Not bad.
Get out, Debbie!
Debbie, look out!
What?
Nothing.
Sometimes I think
you're a little hard on Charlie.
That's all.
No, my old man
was hard on me.
I had a job
when I was 13.

These kids
live lives of leisure.
It wouldn't kill you
to try a little harder.
That's all I'm saying.
I asked him to help me
fix the car last weekend.
He said no.
What am I gonna do?
He's a smart kid.
He likes what he likes.
Did you ever think maybe
that doesn't include wresting
or fixing the car?
What kids don't like wrestling
and fixing cars?
It might be nice
to take an interest
in the things
that he's interested in.
Charlie's growing up.
Todd too.
We have
this tiny little window
where they actually
still want to be with us.
You're missing it.
Oh, I think Noah
needs a new diaper.
Can you smell his butt
for me?
Okay, Todd, let's go!
We're gonna go get dinner.
Get in the car.
Aw, man!
Shut up, Todd.
- Go on!
- Yeah, do it!
This is so much better
than trick-or-treating.
Ooh, smarties!
Dibs!
Check it out.
I added a skull there.

Plus the hand
coming out of the grave.
Dude, you wrote that
on your science book?
Yeah. It's either that
or study photosynthesis.
What if somebody sees it?
You bring "zombie invasion" 33?
Ho ho ho!
Who do you think
would win in a fight?
The zombie warrior
or the big plant monster
from "tales of terror" 16?
Can't we talk
about something other
than that stupid kids' stuff
all the time?
I like being a kid.
Yeah, what's so great
about being a grown-up anyway?
The only thing I ever hear
my parents talking about
are bills, "how come you didn't stop
at the grocery store on the way home?"
Or how to, like, lower your
cholesterol and stuff.
Okay, Mr. Grown-Up.
You promised to tell us
the Brandy story.
Let's hear it.
Yeah, what is it
about that girl
that makes you volunteer
to do crazy stuff like this?
It's not normal.
It's not much of a story.
Okay, you can hardly remember
your name when she's around.
- That's something.
- Well...
it all started-
it was last summer.
I was on my way home

from the pool
and I saw Brandy's dad
doing some yard work.
And I asked him
if I could give him a hand.
And he said, "sure, come marry
my beautiful daughter."

No!

Then I spent
the next two hours
bagging up all the leaves
and stuff
and taking them
out to the curb.

What does that have to do
with Brandy?

Well, when I was finished,
Mr. Benson goes inside,
and a few minutes later...
Brandy comes out to give me
some money for the work.

It was like everything
just stopped.

Then what happened?

Then I said goodbye
and left.

- That's it?

- So she touched your hand
and you've been gaga
over her ever since?

Pretty much.

What was that?

Let's find out.

No way.

I'm staying right here.

Your choice.

We'll be right back.

You guys can't leave me
here alone.

Watch us.

All right, then give me
your cactus jack ranger knife.

No way,

I'm coming with you.

What are you doing? We're not supposed to hit them with the big guns till later. I didn't do anything. That wasn't me. Odds or even?

- What?

- To see who goes in first.

This whole thing was your idea, fearless leader. I nominate you. Just so you know, if it's some maniac with a chainsaw, I'm leaving you guys in the dust.

- Charlie?

- Shh!

You can put the knife away, goggles. It's just a branch. Must have broke off in the wind. Hey, a Ranger can never be too careful. Who got mashed potatoes again? Get me the six-piece extra-crispy combo, Russ. Wings and drumsticks only. You think you could call me dad, at least when we're in public? Okay, dad. White meat, extra sauce. Can I help you with something? You're Brandy Benson. Do I know you? You're the screensaver on my brother's computer. Your picture, he stares at it all day. And your brother is?

- Charlie. Charlie Hamilton.

- I told you he was a stalker. You know he's only doing this to impress you.

What do you mean?

I know all about him spending the night in the old Sullivan place.

Him and the other two rocket scientists he hangs out with.

You're prettier in person.

What a weirdo.

I'm worried about Charlie.

I should have never let him agree to this stupid thing in the first place.

First of all,

you didn't let him do anything.

He made his own bed

and now he has to sleep in it.

That bed just happens to be an incredibly scary old haunted house.

Just lightning.

I think we'll keep this on just in case.

Just in case what?

That had to be

the basement door, right?

Yeah, it's just the wind.

Okay, the wind

blows the door shut.

I heard it slam.

So how exactly does the wind blow it open again?

Okay, Mr. "It's just the wind," you want to explain that one to me?

Your dad's gear

is completely off the hook.

Dude, look at

those little losers.

You got the place

totally rigged.

That's nothing.

Check it out.

I bet this scares them

right out of the house.

What was that?

Is there someone in here with us?

I say we get

the heck out of here.

I've said "uncle"

enough times in my life

to know when to say it,

Charlie.

And this is one

of those times.

He's right.

Let's get out of here, Charlie.

- To heck with the bet.

- I'm not leaving.

I've always wondered what a

ghost looked like up close.

- Are you crazy?

- Nope.

I just don't believe

in ghosts.

If I don't make it back,

make sure Todd doesn't get

my \$25.

Gah!

Didn't want you

to have all the fun.

Hello?

Let's run!

Help me with this, you guys!

Put your backs up against it!

Turn your light on, Charlie.

I can't see a thing in here.

It's out there.

I dropped it.

Nice going, Charlie!

Where's your cactus jack

ranger light?

I left it

in my sleeping bag.

Well, we're not getting out

this way.

- What time is it?

- What does that matter?!

Sunrise is 6:

I looked it up!

I say we stay right here

until it's light.
Then we make a break
for the front door.
Look, if whatever is out there
wanted to hurt us,
it would have done it already.
Maybe it's just trying
to scare us.
It's doing a pretty good job.
D- d-did you just see that?
That sheet just moved.
Maybe it's just the wind
again.
There is no wind
in this room.
What am I looking at?
I could have sworn
that thing moved.
Look, there's got to be a logical
explanation for all of this.
This house is really old
and it's got creaks and drafts
and all kinds of crazy stuff.
Just like my grandma Arletta.
It's moving again.
Didn't we just go through this?
Guys?
Charlie?
I think he's right.
- Run!
- Which way?
To anywhere but here!
Go!
Oh, are you all right?
I tripped over something.
I think you tripped
over this.
What is it?
Come on.
Just as I thought.
Jake.
Him and his meathead friends
rigged all this up
so that we'd leave

and they'd win the bet.
I mean, think about it-
slamming doors,
the scary footsteps.
Come on.
Let's see what else
they set up for us.
Yeah.
Maybe we can give them
a little surprise.
Carol, we're out of candy.
Mr. Hamilton?
There's something
I need to tell you.
Whoa whoa, what's going on?
I told you
not to touch anything.
I didn't touch anything.
Well, then what happened
to the picture?
Maybe a ghost got 'em.
Very funny.
We're missing all the action.
- Reboot it.
- I did. It's not working.
Come on,
let's go get a closer look.
Uh, how close exactly?
Front-row seats.
So you knew your brother was sneaking
off to pull this crazy stunt
- and you didn't tell anybody?
- Dad, he begged me.
I don't want to hear
another word from you.
\$25? Is that what a lie
goes for these days?
Mr. Hamilton,
Charlie was really determined.
Charlie and his friends
lied.
What if they got hurt
or they needed help?
I wouldn't even know

where to find them.
Mr. Hamilton.
Didn't you do anything like this
when you were a kid?
My dad was never a kid.
All right,
get in the van, Todd.
I'm not done with you. Come on,
I'll give you a ride home.
And then I'm going
to deal with this nonsense.
Let's go!
Watch it, Russ.
There's your Sullivan-Gang
ghosts,
all in one neat little pile.
This is Jake's dad's stuff.
That's how they rigged
the entire house.
It's also how they made
all the doors close and stuff.
No ghosts, huh?
You sound disappointed.
A little.
Maybe we should just leave now.
They'll never know
the difference.
Forget about that.
Look, when we walk out of here
tomorrow morning,
I want to see the look
on Jake and his friends' faces
when we throw all of this stuff
right back at 'em.
Neanderthals!
But before we go,
let's take one last look around
to make sure that there aren't
any more surprises.
Please?
Come on.
Let's check out all the windows
and meet back here.
We'll see who has the best view

inside.
And don't make any noise.
Those little dorks think
they're so smart, don't they?
You're mad, aren't you?
Good night, Brandy.
Sorry you had to get dragged
through all this.
I'm not.
Charlie's my friend.
I know he lied to you, Mr. Hamilton,
but it was for a good reason.
Yeah, to prove to those other
kids he's some kind of tough guy.
That's not Charlie,
Mr. Hamilton.
I think he did it to prove
to himself he wasn't afraid.
It's not easy
being a kid, you know?
Especially when you're afraid
all the time.
What would you know
about that?
I'm scared all the time
that people won't like me,
that I'll disappoint
my parents,
that people will realize
I'm a dork
just like everybody else
and I won't be popular anymore.
I guess it's tough
being a kid sometimes.
That's exactly what I've been
trying to tell you, Russ.
Shut up, Todd.
There's nothing back there.
Same here.
Rooms are all empty.
They're in there. I just saw
a flashlight in the hallway.
Hold on, I think
they're coming back.

I think I see something.
You hear that?
Go go go! Go go go!
Guess it was nothing.
Man, this was so much
more fun than trick-or-treating.
There's always a next year.
You'll be 14 next year.
Hey, as long as people
are giving out candy,
I'm putting on a costume.
I don't care if I'm 50.
What was that?
Some kind of
prehistoric monster.
- There's no such thing.
- What was it then?
Big teeth, red eyes,
claws to rip your face off.
Whatever it was, those little
twerps are stuck in there with it.
Shouldn't we do something?
Yeah.
Yeah, go home
and keep your mouths shut.
Those big shots want to show us
how tough they are?
Now is their chance.
Unless you want to go back
and help them?
Yeah, that's what I thought.
Let's go.
Okay, this is where
you get out.
Go.
What are you gonna do?
I'm not sure yet.
You mean there's a chance
I could still get my \$25?
You're such an idiot.
Go in the house and tell your mother
I'll call her in a few minutes.
I want to go with you.
That's not happening.

Good night.
I'm serious.
So am I!
Go inside.
Look, I know I'm not the best
brother a kid could have.
You think?
But I do care about Charlie.
I want to see if he's okay.
Put your seatbelt back on.
We're going.
Okay, so maybe I want
to protect my investment too.
Shut up, Todd.
'Night, guys.
Leave your light on, Charlie.
Okay.
Yeah, no more scary
bedtime stories.
I think the excitement's over
for the night.
See you guys in the morning.
Yeah, good night.
I think that's a terrible idea.
Look, will you just
listen for one minute?
He lied, Russ.
His friends too.
We have to tell their parents.
I'm not condoning
what he did.
If we let him stay the night
in that house,
it's like saying
that lying was okay.
He is gonna be punished,
I promise.
Yeah, be tough, Russ.
Zip it
or you're walking home.
I don't know, Russ.
Don't try to tell me
this is some kind of guy thing.
Well, it kind of is.

Charlie's friend Brandy
was right.
He should stay the night in the
house, see something through.
Maybe he could learn
that way.
Honesty is what he needs
to learn.
If he asked us to let him stay
the night in this old house-
we would have said no.
Exactly.
He's 13.
He's trying to figure out
how to be a man.
You told me I should take
interest in what he's doing,
so why don't you let me? Nothing's
going to happen to him.
Todd and I are sitting
right outside the door.
If I see any kind of trouble,
I'll pull the plug.
All right, Russ.
But this one is on you.
I will see you
in the morning.
Thanks again
for letting me come, Russ.
Yeah, well, just keep an eye
on the house.
- Alex, Nick, wake up.
- What's up?
There's something going on
over there.
I thought we'd found
all of Jake's little toys.
Well, apparently we didn't.
Go check it out.
What are you doing?
I'm getting my Ranger knife.
For what?
You never know.
Hey, danger is my middle name.

Did they-did they drop you
on your head as a kid?

Only once.

It is so somebody else's turn.

Go ahead,

just do it already.

It must have turned on

by accident.

You guys see a remote

anywhere?

I'm pretty sure this TV was made
before remote controls were invented.

Maybe there was a power surge.

There is no power in this house.

How could there be a power surge?

Um, guys?

It's not plugged in.

Let's not overreact.

How do you explain the TV?

I can't, okay?

But it's not the time

to panic.

"Dateline Elk Falls."

The tale of a band of notorious
outlaws known as the Sullivan Gang
- appears to be coming to a close.

- It's about the Sullivan Gang!

Local authorities have announced
that they in fact have the Sullivans
wanted in connection with over
30 bank robberies since 1952
surrounded at their hideout
in Elk Falls.

- The Sullivan Gang...

- I think it's time to panic. Let's get out of here.

I'll see you out front!

...sure to be a fateful clash
with local police.

Let me try.

We're locked in.

I'm not liking this
one bit.

The back door.

Very slowly.

What the heck is that?
What was that?
I don't know.
You want to go back and ask?
What now?
Put your light on it.
The batteries are dead!
Where's yours?
I left it by my sleeping bag!
Nice work, Sherlock!
- Run!
- Where?
This way!
In here quick.
Wait, wait, wait, wait, how do
we know it's safe in there?
We'll take our chances!
Me too!
- Lock the door, Alex!
- There is no lock.
I want to go home.
Nothing gets through
this door.
What was that? That sure
wasn't Jake and his friends.
I don't know
and I don't want to find out.
Go away!
Leave us alone!
I think whatever was out there
is gone.
What if it's waiting
for us to open the door?
- We have to open it eventually.
- No we don't.
So we stay here until?
College.
Or until our parents
come to find us.
- Yeah! Then they kill us.
- Parents I can deal with.
Whatever that thing is, it's
three of us versus one of them.
What exactly

is the "them"?

I don't know, but if we stick together, we'll be okay.

Not a sound.

We leave this room,
go right,
30 feet to the back door
and then out of here.

- Don't stop for anything.

- What about our stuff?

I don't think your mom
will miss the TV dinners.

Let's go.

Charlie?

- That was nuts!

- Totally!

I've never been so scared
in my life.

What was that in there?

A ghost!

Tons of them!

I don't know! We didn't exactly
get a very good look at it.

What was that fireball,
or those red eyes
or that scratching on the closet door?

That wasn't the wind.

What happens
when we see Jake?

We'll worry about that
tomorrow.

Tomorrow should be here
in about two hours.

Well, we'll come back then,
wait for him, and win the bet.

How do you figure that?

Well, we took out all of
Jake's cameras and stuff
so now they won't have any idea that
we're not in the house anymore.

Let's go home, boys.

Yeah.

Hey, you coming or what?

- I have to go back in there.

- What are you talking about?
I left my jacket. I have to
go back in there and get it.
It's just a jacket, Alex.
I can't leave it.
Who knows what'll happen to it?
Well, whatever happens to it
is going to happen to you too.
- I mean, maybe when it's light-
- I'm not asking you to come.
What's the problem?
Alex wants to go back in there
and get his raggedy old jacket.
It's my good-luck jacket.
I'm not leaving without it.
Look, what is it
with that jacket, Alex?
It's special.
It's falling apart.
Okay?
You wear it every single day.
It's my brother's, Charlie.
He's deployed overseas.
We don't get to hear
from him. Half the time,
we don't even know
where he is.
So as long
as I'm wearing that jacket,
I know he's safe.
I'm going.
Alex.
Come on.
Alex, wait up.
What are you guys doing?
We're in this together,
remember?
Friends till the end.
Yeah.
Don't sound so excited,
goggles.
Let's just get your jacket
and get out of here.
Do you remember

where you left it?
It should be right next
to my sleeping bag,
unless that thing
got its claws on it.
All quiet.
Let's go.
Hey, Charlie?
Thanks for coming back for me.
Those things
won't do you any good
against a ghost.
How do you know?
Good point.
- It's not here!
- What do you mean it's not here?
- You sure this is where you left it?
- I'm sure.
Hurry up, guys!
Come on, let's go!
At least your flashlight
still works.
It's not showing
another rerun, is it?
Man, I'd really like to know how that
thing turned off and on all by itself.
Yeah! Or where
that fireball came from.
And those eyes!
Maybe we didn't find it all.
Jake's stuff, I mean!
Maybe there's still more.
Come on, Alex!
Hurry up, let's go.
I'm not leaving here
without my jacket.
Then maybe we should each
split up and take a room.
Have you ever actually
seen a war movie, Charlie?
No way! I'm staying with you
and that flashlight.
Then come on.
Ahh!

Another ghost!
Wait a second.
You can open your eyes now,
Rambo.
Oh.
There it is!
My jacket.
You sure you didn't drop it
when we ran out of here?
Yeah, I'm sure.
Then how did it get there?
Guys, we walked right
by here when we came back in.
It wasn't there.
We would have seen it.
Maybe we just missed it.
Or maybe something
put it there
after we ran in,
meaning whatever it is,
it's still in the house with us.
You got a better explanation?
Come on, Charlie.
Let's just get the heck
out of this spooky old dump!
I think you made
the spooky old dump mad.
Come on!
Try one of the windows!
I can't get it off!
Just stay calm!
They're trying
to scare us again.
Yeah? Well, they're doing
a pretty good job of it.
Just stay close
and don't move.
We'll be fine as long
as we cover each other's backs.
Charlie, you may want to reconsider
that whole "don't move" thing.
There are those eyes again.
My mom's gonna kill me.
Come on!

Let us out of here!
I'll even give you my cactus
jack knife if you want!
Just leave us alone!
- Alex!
- Something's got my foot!
- What is it?
- How should I know?
Help me, Charlie!
Do something!
You guys?
Alex, can you hear me?
Hang on!
I told you we shouldn't
have come back in here.
- Just help me, will you?
- In fact,
we never even should have
come here in the first place.
This is all your fault,
Charlie.
I should be home right now eating
Halloween candy 'til I puke.
But no! You had to
take that stupid dare.
It's not the time, Nick!
Alex is in trouble.
In case you hadn't noticed,
so are we!
Charlie, you guys! Help!
Snap out of it! That thing
out there has our friend,
and he needs our help!
Now help me with the door.
"This job definitely isn't worth
eleven five a year."
"Ghostbusters"?
You are so weird.
Remind me again
why we're doing this.
So I can see the look
on my brother's face
when Charlie and his friends
walk out of that house.

What makes you so sure
they actually stayed the night?
They're not exactly the bravest bunch
of seventh graders I've ever seen.
Because I know Charlie.
He's sweet and he always
sticks to his word.
Be quiet
and don't wake up my parents.
Alex?
Can you hear me?
Where are you?
Ooh!
Holy smokes.
Charlie, check it out.
The sun's finally up.
Will you get back?
You think they're
still in there?
Would you be?
- Alex, are you in there?
- Yeah, I'm in here.
But you won't believe
what I'm looking at.
Check, please.
Okay, new plan-
we go home,
forget this night
ever happened,
and start looking
for a new best friend.
Was that-
Salty.
The Sullivan Gang's dog?
Didn't he rip people to shreds
who crossed the gang?
- Shut up, Nick!
- Well, that's what the story said.
Alex, can you move?
It won't let me.
We've got to do something.
I got an idea!
Uh...
fetch, doggie.

Well, it was worth a try!
We need a diversion.
We need something
that will give us enough time
to get Alex out of there.
Uh, give me a phone.
I'll call in an air strike!
I've got an idea!
Coffee.
I don't think
I can do this, Charlie.
Whatever happened
to "Rangers never retreat,"
tempting fate
and all that stuff?
Whatever happened
to "live to see 14"?
This has got to be the dumbest
thing I've ever done.
Nope, it's the bravest.
Come on.
You guys!
Ahh!
- Are you okay?
- I think so.
Ahh!
Charlie!
Come on!
Hey!
Over here!
Get away from me!
Sit!
Charlie!
Easy, boy.
It's not working, Charlie!
Sit!
That's it.
Good boy.
What's he doing?
He's a dog.
A dog needs a friend.
Attaboy.
Awesome.
See that?

We didn't mean you any harm.
Man's best friend, right?
Let's just get our stuff
and get out of here.
Don't forget your Ranger knife,
goggles.
Just in case.
You think that thing
was really a ghost?
There's no such thing
as ghosts, remember?
Besides, who'd believe us
anyway?
This was the craziest adventure
we've ever had.
Yeah, and the coolest.
What are we going
to tell everybody at school?
Nothing.
It was a piece of cake.
Hey, I've got an idea.
No more bets, please.
This will be even better.
So we spread the word around
that if we,
the lowly geek squad,
can spend the night
in this place,
that Jake and his friends shouldn't
be afraid to do it either.
Yeah, I heard Jake's
a dog person.
Do you think
it'll let us out?
Uh... uh-oh, Charlie.
It's your dad.
Todd must've squealed.
What are you
going to tell him?
The truth, I guess.
Well, most of it anyway.
Time to face the music.
Morning, fellas.
Hey, dad.

Morning, Mr. Hamilton.
So how was your study group
last night?
I'm really sorry.
It's kind of a long story.
I know.
I heard the whole thing.
Todd!
It wasn't me this time,
I swear.
For once, he's actually
telling the truth.
Your friend Brandy
came over last night.
- She told me the whole story.
- She came to our house?
Yeah. Personally, I think
she has a crush on me.
But don't worry, Charlie.
I'll let her down easy.
- Todd.
- What?
Oh yeah, right, sorry.
She's a nice girl, Charlie.
I'm sorry
that I lied to you, dad.
Sorry about the whole thing.
I know, and you're grounded
for lying, kiddo.
And I'm sure you guys are too
once your parents find out.
Yes, Mr. Hamilton.
But I'm proud of you too.
Thanks, dad.
You boys must have had quite an
experience in there last night, huh?
Nothing we couldn't handle.
All right, let's go, boys.
Let's get you home. Come on.
Hey, uh, do you mind
if we walk?
I'll come straight home,
I promise.
All right, but straight home.

All right? Let's go.

Sorry, bro.

Wow, I must be hearing things.

We can discuss the matter
of my \$25 later.

Todd! Van now.

Oh yeah,

and if your mom asks,
you tell her I got real angry
and I couldn't stop yelling,
just like I always do,
all right?

It's our secret, dad.

All right.

You know, since you're
in such a forgiving mood, Russ,
there's this letter that got
sent home with me from school
that I've been meaning
to talk to you about.

- Todd?

- Yeah?

Shut up.

Wow, your dad's
full of surprises.

Yeah, seems to be
the night for it.

Hi, Charlie.

Hey.

What are you guys doing here?

She's waiting for you,
stupid.

I told your dad.

I'm so sorry.

It's okay. He was actually
kind of cool about it.

I was just worried.

About me?

No, I mean, about us?

- I mean, you were-

- Well, I was.

- Um, I mean, like-

- this is so stupid.

Look, you like her,

she likes you.
Just say it already.
Angela!
You're the one they always
call "goggles," right?
Yeah.
You're actually kind of cute
without your glasses.
Hey, brainiac!
I never said
I couldn't catch a football.
You did.
You guys actually
stuck it out, huh?
Yeah.
That was the bet, right?
And it's "Charlie,"
not brainiac
or dork or geek-boy!
- Yeah.
- Hey, shut up, Brent.
I'll remember that.
Come on, guys.
See you around, Charlie.
I can't believe it.
- He actually seemed-
- Nice.
I was going to say
"Magnanimous."
But then I thought
he might hear me
and come back and do that
hitting-us-on-every-syllable thing again.
Let's just go home.
Who's this?
- I don't know.
- Does he have a tag?
- What's his name?
- I don't see one.
How about "Salty"?
He sure acts
like he knows you, Charlie.
He's so cute!
What a good boy.

Can we go home now, please?
Come on, boy.
Thanks for coming back
for me.
Uh, Charlie
sort of made me do it.
Boy, when that old TV
came on by itself...
...or that fireball.
Man! That was the ugliest
ghost I've ever seen.
Dude, that was the only ghost
you've ever seen.
What are they talking about?
Just an old ghost story.
What did he mean when he said,
"thanks for coming back for me"?
Tell me, Charlie.
Really.
Did something happen
in that house last night?
Yeah.
I learned
who my real friends are.
And I don't care what Jake
or any of his friends
or anyone else says.
I'm Charlie Hamilton
and I like math
and science and "D&D"
and old monster movies.
And I think
that's pretty cool.
So do I.
Well, anyway, it must have
been pretty exciting.
Are you going to keep him?
Sure.
Unless someone else
comes to get him.
Good boy, come on!
Come on!