

FIRST PLACE:

Kristine Tucker

Gateway Science Academy of St. Louis

7th grade

Teacher: Mrs. Savens

Secrets

My first thought when spotting the house was utter disgust. The house was covered in rotting ivy across the front and along the sides. The porch steps leading to the door with the peeling red paint were all but non-existent. Was anyone actually living there (surely not)? Maybe I could just rest there for awhile, and leave after exploring... When I entered the house for the first time I remember thinking how it almost looked lived in. There were couches pushed together to form an uncomfortable bed. There was a bathroom off the entry that had running water and electricity. I decided to take a nap, and then leave when I felt rested. I fell asleep almost immediately, and when I woke up, I jumped! There, sitting across from me, lay a boy (16 or 17), hands behind his back, feet up on a tool box, staring at me. After gathering myself, I stood up and dusted off my jeans. I looked into his hazel eyes and blushed, mumbling, “Sorry, I didn’t know anyone lived here.”

He chuckled and said, “I can understand that”. I smiled and sat back down. And then, out of nowhere, he said, “You know, it gets real lonely here, with no one to talk to.” I looked up,

“Do you live here?” I asked

He answered, “Yes, for the past two months.” We were quiet for what seemed like hours, and then I blurted out,

“I ran away from home, and don’t know what to do! “

” He stared at me “Well, I guess you can stay here tonight. I’m Cade.”

“Okay, thank you. I’m Kristine.” He stood up and walked to the kitchen, which is right off the hallway, with the bathroom and stairs leading to the basement. He tosses me a package of beef jerky. I grab it, and my stomach growls, as if on cue. I dig in. He walked to the bathroom

and closed the door behind him. I heard the shower being turned on. Only then did I let myself breathe; man, he was cute! He had short blonde hair, sweet hazel eyes, and was tall.

Ten minutes later, Cade came out, hair wet, wearing grey sweatpants and a red t-shirt, and sat down in the same spot as before. I looked at him.

“Why do you live here?”

He paused for a little too long, took a deep breath and spoke, “Well, my mom and two sisters died in a fire three months ago, so I just pay a few bucks a month to this lady in town, and she lets me live here.”

“I’m sorry, I shouldn’t have asked.” he half smiles and nods. I have this sudden urge to hug him, so I stand up, cross the room to him, sit down, then abruptly put my arms around him. We just sit there, his eyes an endless sea on a clear day. He studies the floor and then I see a single tear spill out of his eyes and down the side of his face. I take my thumbs and gently wipe it away. He looks into my eyes and asks “why did you run away?” I shrug suddenly feeling uncomfortable, but then I remember how much courage it must have taken him to tell me his story, his secret, his burden. Without looking away from his eyes I whisper “I don’t know, I really don’t know why I ran away.” And then it was my turn to cry and behold.

THIRD PLACE:

Michael Polito

Gateway Science Academy of St. Louis

7th grade

Teacher: Gwyndolyn Savens

Haunted House Mystery

“Dude, you have to go inside, you already said you would,” exclaimed Jack.

“Yeah I know, if I don’t come out in like fifteen minutes, get some help,” I told him.

“Alright man, hope you have fun in there,” Jack mocked me. He also laughed a little bit after he said that.

I headed toward the first step thinking to myself why I even decided to go into this stupid house. I took a step on the rotten wooden stair, crrreeeaak. I covered my ears from terrible creaking noise on each step. Right before I opened the door I looked into the window to see a doll staring at me. It gave me a shiver. I opened the door slightly and let go of the doorknob, and the door completely fell backwards and smashed on the floor.

I turned around and gave Jack thumbs up and a fake smile. He said, “Make this bet worth it, and just because I’m in a good mood if I don’t hear you scream I will give you five bucks.” I turned around and took a step into the house ignoring what he said. I looked around and found a group of light switches, I walked over to them. I flipped them all from left to right seeing what lights went on.

I took a step into the next room and it seemed like the living room. I looked out the window and saw Jack sitting on the sidewalk. I looked down on the windowsill and saw the doll looking at me. I backed up into a glass windowed case and turned around. It was completely filled with dolls, and they were all facing me. I headed into the next room. It was the kitchen, or what seemed like it.

I took one step and I stepped in a puddle. I was praying it wasn't blood, because if it were I would have ran out that instant. I looked down and it was just some murky water. I walked over to some cabinets and opened them. Nothing but some spider webs, luckily no spiders. I went over to the fridge and opened it. There was a doll in there and a plate covered with tinfoil. I took the plate out and set it on the table. I lifted some of the tinfoil and saw some fingers. I let go of the foil and ran towards the back of the house.

I stepped in the back room and there was a backdoor, opening and closing. I opened the door and almost took a step out before I realized there were no steps. I closed the door and headed for the hallway. The door started opening and closing again, I just ignored it and walked down the hall. There was a door at the end of the hallway, it was slightly open and there was a light beaming out.

I stepped slowly towards the door because I didn't know what would happen. I kept walking and walking. I arrived at the door. I put my hand on the doorknob, nothing happened. I opened the door. The light was blinding but I covered my eyes and walked in. Everything went black for five minutes. I opened my eyes and I was outside. "Dude you have to go inside, you already said you would," exclaimed Jack.

"What happened?" I whispered under my breath.

Isaiah Merchant

Gateway Science Academy of St.Louis

7th grade

Teacher: G Savens

House of Doom

The door squeaked noisily as David stepped inside. It was a cool November night. David came here on a dare and was told to bring something valuable back to win the bet. The fog outside had a sickening green glow. The wind battered the house like baseball player slugged homeruns. David was clutching his lucky Yankees cap while muttering to himself, "I can do this, I can do this, I just have to find the treasure." He wasn't really sure if he would find it, or even make it out of the mansion.

David searches the bottom floor for the treasure. He only finds old dusty silverware left by the long gone owners. "Shoot," he complains, "there's nothing here, I guess I have to keep searching."

Although he sounded confident, he was actually scared out of his wits. He is now questioning his judgment for taking up this stupid bet. David spots a dim light up the staircase. The eerie glow paralyzes David. He wonders what on Earth it could be. Since he got this far, he decided to keep going. He had nothing to lose and was desperate, desperate to get home. He wanted to see his family. He wanted to see all of his friends again. He puts on his lucky Yankees hat and proceeds up the stairs.

Creak. Thud Creak. Thud. Soft creaks and thuds came from David's feet as he advanced up the stairs. To David, the room felt like it was twisting. The air tasted bitter, almost as if it was blood. "Just keep going, only a few more steps," whimpered David.

It felt like hours have gone by before David got up the steps. He held his breath and cracked open the door to take a peek inside. He couldn't bear seeing what the treasure was.

David looked in the middle of the room. He saw a giant, dusty chest on the floor. He stared at the chest as if it was possessed. He slowly approached the chest and opened it. The chest

contained a small golden lamp. He thought it was beautiful, but it had a sinister aura radiating from it. There was also an enormous ruby on the handle.

David whispered, "Wow, I gotta show everyone this!" He started to rub the lamp as if a genie would come out. He tried to pop out the ruby, and then something suddenly happened. The lamp started to get hot. David dropped it when it started to singe his hands. When it hit the floor, it started smoking. Although the smoke was thick, he wasn't choking. The smoke suddenly changes from a gray-ish color to a bloody red. David's insides squirmed, and the hairs on his neck rose. He tried to scream but his voice had run away from him. The smoke had formed into a grotesque face. "Your greed has brought you to a terrible fate. Now you must exchange something you have for that ruby." The face bellows as it was advancing towards him.

"Stop! Don't come near me!" David shrieks. There was nothing there. The face had vanished. David takes a few very slow, deep breaths. "Whew, it was only a dream!"

By: Tyler Meyer

School: Gateway Science Academy of St. Louis

7th grade

Teacher: Savens

The Old House

"It's just a house just a house just a house" I whisper to myself.

"Dylan's a Chick-en" taunted Paul. "Today junior, I'm not getting any younger."

"I'm going I'm going you're the one who dared me anyway."

I reach my hand out in front of me and grab the cold rusty door knob. The door opened with a creek. The smell of blood hits me and my feet go cold. I slowly walk in; the first room is the living room. An old red carpet covers the creaky floor boards. The couch looks like it used to be white, but now it's more of a greyish green from mold and years of neglect. All smelling of mildew. A table lying in the middle of the room has holes in it from looks to be termites.

There is a hall that goes on for what seems like forever, filled with black and white picture of what was probably the last family to live here. There was one picture that captures my eye. It looks like a family picture. The dad is wearing a white t-shirt and overall with his arm around the mom wearing a white and black polka-dot dress. She is holding their baby girl. In front of them is a young boy with jeans and no shirt. In the back ground there is an old car.

At the end of the hall there's the kitchen also smelling of mildew, but with a hint of lemon. I grab the slippery slimy handle of the refrigerator and pull it open. Out comes the terrible smell fo rotting food. I slam the door closed.

I would go upstairs, but they are all dry-rotted, I sigh with relief. One less part of the house I have to go to. So I start heading back down the hall, ready to leave. But I notice something that wasn't there the first time. The words "Help me" written on a door.

It was the basement door.

I slowly open the door. The basement is pitch black except for the light coming off a flashlight at the bottom of the stairs. I hear a faint a faint scream from the darkness of the basement. It was Paul.

I run down the stairs and pick up the flash light. I slowly look around and that's when I see it. It had the shape of a large man, but was like only a shadow. It turned and looked at me. I was frozen with fear. As it started walking toward me I heard Paul yelling at me to run. I did, but right in to the wall knocking me out.

When I woke up I was in the hospital with Paul standing over me.

By Peyton Otis

Gateway Science Academy

St. Louis, Missouri

Teacher: G Savens

PICKING DAISIES

“What is the best advice you have ever gotten?” I think, then it comes to me, it was the day after my father passed away.

“When my dad died last year Sunny came into my room and handed me three daisies.” It seems like it was yesterday as it is now clear in my mind. “Then she told me it will be just fine.” I can see her in my mind her walking out my room. Sunny was right, things will be just right.

“Wow, you sister is...” Bell was cut-off by the sound of the doorbell.

“It must be my mother coming home from the doctors” I said as I walked down the stairs. My mother looked worried.

“Hey, Miss Honey how was the doctor visit?” You could tell Belle knew something was wrong. There is a long pause.

“Everything is fine Sunny is growing like a five year old should be.” Mom’s voice is weary, sounding upset.

“Well I ought to get going ma’s probably making dinner right now. Have a nice day Miss Honey.” It’s getting late and I am hungry.

Mom didn’t talk until dinner, and she was in tears when she talked. “Okay, so y’all know Sunny’s sick right” mother sniffs. I’m not sure if I am ready to hear this. “Sunny has cancer. She will be on medication for a while and we are trying our best to fight it.” My heart stops, I run to my room, lock my door and collapse on my bed. I fall asleep after an hour of sobbing.

In the morning I wake and my hair is sticking to my face. Then I remember the terrible news. After half an hour I decide I cannot stay in my room forever so I get dressed and go down stairs. We all ate breakfast in silence.

After breakfast I go outside with my radio, paint and canvas. I started to paint the large field with the raggedy red barn on the side. The grass needs to be cut and there are daisies all over the field. “Hey” I hear a deep voice from behind me. I turn around, leaving my hair to flip and my dress to twirl. It is my friend Gale.

“Oh, hey.” I am not in the best mood to talk right now.

“How is life treating you Jules?” I search for an answer.

“I’m not doing so great right now Gale, Sunny has cancer.” Gale eyes tearing up.

“Well, I will catch up to you later Jules, sorry about the news.” His voice crackles, I can tell he is upset.

When Gale leaves I walk around front and see an ambulance. I run to the house and I see Sunny on a gurney. “Go get Maggie!” I run across the lawn and get our neighbor, Maggie.

“What is wrong?” Maggie says sounding worried.

“She’s not breathing!” I say in panic. When we get there mom and Sunny are gone.

“Hop in the car,” Maggie says. I sit in the front and Izzy, Cameron, and Belle squeeze in the backseat. We racing to the hospital.

We sit in the waiting room. A nurse walks in and says, “You may see her if you like.” My mom walks out, then I step in.

“Hey, Sunny are you OK?” I’m so nervous. Sunny leans toward her little table and grabs three daisies.

“It will be just fine” she said as she closed her eyes for the last time.

Daniel Bohn

Gateway Science Academy of St. Louis

7th grade

Teacher: G Savens

The Dare

“Cross my heart and hope to die ... stick a needle in my eye.”

Those words were written on the wall in what looked dried blood. Just below the words was a doll. It was a small baby doll with no hair. It had (green eyes would be practical) one green eye. Plunged deeply in its other eye socket was a rusty syringe.

Why did I think it was wise to come in here? I should have just risked being called a chicken. No. I will stay in this house all night no matter how many whispers rasp, “Look behind you!”

Wait, what? I spun around and squeaked. Standing in the doorway was a large man with a surgical mask over his face. He was carrying a cleaver. He brought it down on my head and disappeared. Oh, it was just a ghost.

After realizing it was a ghost, I flew down the stairs and slipped on the rug. I’m such a klutz. I got back up, reached for the knob, and stopped. I slid the rug away and realized what I slipped on. Under the faded mat was a trapdoor.

Darn my curiosity. I opened the door and walked down the dusty steps. Huh, an underground operating room. Probably used for operations during storms. In front of me lay an operating table. A skeleton was strapped down to it. There was a surgeon’s mask on the skeleton’s face. The ghost!

I charged upstairs, slamming the trapdoor shut behind me. I clutched the knob and froze. If I give up now then I’ll loss the dare. i don’t want to be called a chicken especially in front of Melissa. Darn it!

I dragged the rug back into place, and I walked into the study. Maybe I can sleep through this. I sat down on the sofa and began to read. Pretty soon I fell asleep and was awoken by voices. The whispers screeched in an eerie chorus. “Tony,” they screeched.

I launched the book across the room and yelled, “Would you shut up! I’m trying to sleep!”

Name: Allie Conrad

Language Arts Teacher: Mrs. Savens

Grade: 7th

School: Gateway Science Academy of St. Louis

Title: What happened to Britney?

What happened to Britney?

“Dear Maya,

I have a secret. You know that old house on Buckingham drive? Well, remember when you guys made me go in there? And remember how I never came out? Well, here is what happened to me after you guys left.

On October 31st, 2007 Maya, Mason, Claire, and I went trick-or-treating. Then we passed that old house. *The* old house, the one with it’s shingles falling off, with litter in the yard, and the trees toilet papered from so far back our grandparents probably did it. Well, my friends dared me to go in there and to go inside.

“Go on Britney! Don’t be a wimp!” They had mocked. I was young, stupid, and loved to be popular. Guess I should have realized the danger it posed.

As I walked up those creaky, wooden, rotten stairs a breeze rolls in and thunder clashes. That’s when I finally get to the front door. It’s made of the same old wood as the stairs, and has this knocker that looks like it’s made of decayed flesh. I’m scared as can be. The creepiest part is though there is a human hand on the door knob. And if I around I’ll probably find the body. I really didn’t want to go in but I didn’t want to seem cowardly, so I opened the creaky door slowly and peered inside.

There is nothing. The lights are off, but when lightning flashes I can make out old timey couches and chairs. I carefully step inside, and turn the lights on right as the door slams closed. As I whirl around I have the strongest feeling that I’m being watched. There is this old lady guarding the door . She looked *really* old wrinkles everywhere, and snow white hair. I mean this lady could be from the 1820s! But the weirdest part is that she is pale white like a ghost. And that is very uncommon for San Diego.

When I see her I don’t do anything. For if I move I’ll scream.

“I have a secret my sweetie. This house is magic! Once you walk in you never walk out!” she cackles. That’s when I do scream.

“You see sweetie tons of girls just like you walk in but they never walk out! Nobody leaves this house till I die! All those blond hair, blue eyed beauties never get to live their lives. Just like I didn’t get to live mine!” Thunder clashes as she circles around me

“But why would you do this? I have a perfect life ahead of me! It’s going to be amazing!” I yell.

“You all get to suffer just like me!” lightning flashes right before I pass out.

When I wake up I’m in this strange room, but I have a feeling this is where I’m going to live until she dies. Well, I got to go help everyone plan to rebel. I guess this is goodbye.

Your best friend ever,

Britney Powers”

“So grandma Maya do you think this is your best friend? Could this be your Britney?”

“Oh sweetie yes it is her. I remember now. We all dared her to go inside, but when the police came we all ran. From then on she was on her own.

“Oh grandma I’m so sorry!”

“Casey it’s not your fault, but you did help a lot. You were more help than the police. I think now I can be at rest knowing what happened to Britney.”

“Okay, thanks grandma. Goodnight.”

“Goodnight sweetie.”