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Grade 8

Age 13

Merriwether Middle School



## Home Invasion

It was getting late. He should be in bed by now, but instead Greg was ordering a steak. He liked his steak very rare, so it didn't take long for the server to bring it out. He wolfed it down, and licked the juice off his lips. He leaned back and looked around. He was the only person in the restaurant besides the underpaid employees of the "Open 24/7" diner. He paid and walked to the door. As he left, he waved goodbye to the cashier. The teen sitting at the cash register, bored and tired, couldn't be bothered to care.

As Greg pulled into the driveway of his recently obtained and unreasonably expensive house, he did his nightly routine of promising himself that he would rent out the guest house, and wondering if his incredibly old and unreasonably expensive car could go just one more day without a wash. He had been doing this ever since he inherited the house from his late father. He had bought his car with the inheritance money, but that was his only big purchase. He never liked his father's lifestyle, especially because his dad used the job responsible for all his money as an excuse to not be there for him. His father had been the kind of person that thought money could buy happiness, and anything else his child might desire. And so, in an act of defiance, Greg got a job as a night watchman making a small salary, and donated the remainder

of the wealth to charity. He now lived a fairly normal life. Well, as normal as it could be considering his schedule...

Greg parked the car, hoping in vain that it would rain, even though the sky was clear. It looked like he really was going to have to clean the car. As he walked up to the door and put the key in the lock, he looked at the gargoyles perched up on the roof, their faces stuck forever in horrible grimaces. He shuddered at the sight of them, and decided at that moment that he would have them taken down at his earliest convenience. This likely meant never, but he didn't care. It made him feel better just thinking about it. He unlocked the door, walking into the gratuitously ornate entranceway, with double staircases that arched over the hall entrance. Greg, being tired, took the one on the right, and went upstairs to his room. He laid down and turned on the TV, sagging down in the soft mattress of his large bed. A puppet resembling a skeleton in a tattered tuxedo appeared on the tv. "I am the Puppet Master" he proclaimed, "and I have a doozy of a story tonight, no bones about it!" He cackled violently until his jaw fell off. He bent over and popped his jaw back in, saying "Sorry folks, that was a jaw dropper" Greg began drifting off as the puppet broke into a fit of cackles again. As other puppets appeared onscreen to act out a spooky tale, Greg had already fallen into a dreamless sleep.

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Greg was startled awake by a faint banging sound. He was momentarily confused, but then remembered that he had left the TV on. He sunk back into his bed, and within a few seconds was half asleep. Suddenly, he shot up again, awoken by a louder banging. It sounded like it was coming from downstairs. Greg got out of bed

quietly, worrying about what could be making the noises. He opened his door and crept silently downstairs. He saw the front door being violently shaken by deafening blows from the other side. Every blow reverberated through his skull. Suddenly, sleep was the last thing on his mind. He scanned the room for a barricade, his eyes landing on an end table by the door. Quickly, he grabbed it and violently shoved it against the door, realizing a second too late that the noise he made had alerted the intruder of his presence.

The banging stopped, and he heard the intruder run down the steps. He tried to think of where else the intruder could break in. *THE BACK DOOR!* He ran under the arch of the double staircase and turned out from the main hall, into the dining room, where he stopped and grabbed one of the many chairs from the table. As quietly as possible, he ran out of the dining room and down the hall to the back door. As he pushed the back of the chair under the intricate brass knob, he was careful to not make noise. He heard a soft metallic clank, followed by another, and then a soft thud... the intruder had scaled the wrought iron fence that surrounded the backyard! He expected the barricade to hold for a few minutes, so Greg flew back up the stairs and into his study, frantically grabbing the phone. He dialed 9-1-1, and hoped that someone would answer. No answer. He dialed again. Then he realized that it wasn't ringing. *The line had been cut!* Swearing under his breath, he tried to think of what else he could do, regretting having never purchased a cell phone. He heard the sound of the door being shaken from downstairs. *I need a weapon! Dad kept his antique Colt Walker in his trophy room.* He ran down the hall and into the trophy room, hearing the banging downstairs escalate. He snatched his father's vintage Colt Walker from its case. He took

the ammo and powder flask from the case and poured measures of the black powder into three of the cylinders and put the lead balls in on top. He unhooked the loading lever and fumbled with it, nearly dropping the gun as he seated the ball. He put the caps on the nipples in the back, worried that he hadn't loaded it correctly, but still fairly certain that he was doing it right. Suddenly, he realized that something was amiss... *The banging had stopped!* He waited a few minutes in terror, hoping that the intruder was gone. The silence allowed him to contemplate the horror of the situation, making him beg for something to break it. *Be careful what you wish for Greg*, he thought to himself. To his horror, he heard the splintering of wood coming from below. He swore again, and bolted down the stairs.

He looked on in terror as a jagged hole was being punched through the door. The metallic shine of an axe head gleamed between shards of splintered wood. The axe head vanished, and another hole appeared next to the first, larger this time. The rhythmic crack of the axe was a terrifying symphony. He realized that the intruder had probably taken the axe from the unlocked tool shed. *Heeeere's Johnny*, he thought to himself, as the axe brutally punched another hole in the mahogany door. He steadied himself and approached the door, his arms shaking so much that he could barely hold the gun. Another blow, then another; by now he could see the intruder readying his axe through the enlarging hole. The hinges screamed in anguish as one final blow smashed the door in half, the remaining half barely clinging to the hinges. Greg cocked the hammer back on the gun, steadied his hand, and fired at the intruder. The recoil sent the gun into his face, cutting his forehead. In surprise, he stumbled backward, nearly losing his balance. The man, left unscathed by the bullet, tossed the axe aside and

stepped through the shattered fragments of the door. Greg fired off another round at the intruder. The recoil wrenched the gun out of his hand, onto the floor. Greg made a grab for it, but hit it with his foot, knocking it across the floor, out of his reach. In a panic, he ran down the hall and through the entryway to the front door, nearly tripping in the process. He reached the door and grabbed the end table to shove it away. Suddenly, a sharp retort shattered his eardrums, and splinters exploded from beside his hand. He turned around and saw the intruder holding a revolver. The gleam of silver emanated from five of the chambers. In terror, Greg violently shoved the end table out from under the doorknob, as a second bullet punched a hole in the plaster beside his head. He turned the lock and fumbled with the knob, turned it again and tumbled outside.

He turned around to look at his assailant, expecting the sharp retort of a third shot. To his surprise, he saw the man holster his gun. Greg sighed in relief. Then he turned around and realized why the attack had stopped. He screamed as he dissolved in the rays of the rising sun.

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The Intruder stared down at the pile of ashes that was all that was left of the creature. He took off his ski mask and walked calmly out of the front gate and down the block to his car. He got into his car and turned the key, plopping the ski mask on the dashboard, and setting his bag in the passenger's seat. *Thank god I didn't have to use the wooden stake*, he thought to himself, *that always gets messy*. He stepped on the gas and rounded the street corner, disappearing off into the early morning sunrise.