

SCARY STORIES

A Tribute to Terror

SAMPLE



Original Stories by

Curt Tuckfield

Drawings by Shane Hunt

WHY HELLO THERE!

The four stories included in this collection are a good representation of what you'll find in the full version of the book, which contains 34 stories and 60 illustrations.

We hope you enjoy this sample.

-Shane & Curt



Contents

SAMPLE STORIES

Ms. Ray 7 • Puppety Hands 10

The Time-Out Corner 16 • When I Wake Up 21





• *MS. RAY* •

Trisdina Ray lived alone in a giant Victorian mansion in the old part of town. She had no husband or family—only several cats. For a time, she was very ill, but her health had begun to improve.

One day, she met a salesman named Nolan who showed up at her doorstep. She invited him inside, and the two drank tea and chatted for hours. Nolan was a wonderful man, and he and Trisdina quickly fell in love. Soon they were married in a private ceremony in the backyard. The couple spent the entire winter intimately talking and making plans for their future. For the first time in Trisdina's life, it seemed as though she was not alone.

Then one night, Trisdina and Nolan were visited by a young girl who was peering through their icy window. She claimed that she did not know who she was or where she came from. The couple decided to adopt the girl, and they named her Destiny. In time, they grew to consider her their very own daughter.

As winter turned to spring, more and more people began to inexplicably show up at the house. They were often lost, lonely, or homeless, and all without names. Ms. Ray was generous and gave each of them a name and a permanent home in the sprawling mansion.

After many years, the house was filled with people constantly roaming about, needing food and attention.

Ms. Ray, who had received a sizable inheritance from her late father's oil stock, would always provide. But although she was no longer alone, she could not help but feel strangely depressed.

Trisdina's health had once again been declining. After a long period of feeling unwell, she finally went to see a doctor. He told her that she had an infection, a parasite called toxoplasmosis, that she must have contracted from her many cats. He told her all about the illness, and then he gave her a prescription and sent her on her way.

When she arrived home, she was welcomed by all the people that made up her new 'family.' But it didn't make her happy. Trisdina was despondent.

"I love you so much, Nolan," she told her husband. "But no matter how many people we bring into our home, I just feel as though . . . something is wrong. I feel empty and alone here. Completely alone."

Nolan shook his head in sympathy. "It must be the infection. Remember what the doctor said. He told you that the parasite can cause mental illness. Now that you're taking the medicine, you should start to feel better."

One evening, Ms. Trisdina Ray, who had just finished making supper, called for Nolan and Destiny to come and eat. They seemed to be outside somewhere. Soon the two came walking through the door. But when she looked up at them, the woman suddenly realized why

she had felt so alone. She could now see them for what they really were. Nolan and Destiny, and the dozens of other people who lived in her house, were nothing more than stray cats.

• PUPPETY HANDS •

Recent newlyweds Ralph and Sharon Burnett were on their honeymoon, and their evening was going perfectly. They shared drinks on the beach and enjoyed a romantic candle-lit dinner. But then, while strolling through a twisting outdoor marketplace, they somehow became lost. It was dark, most of the shops were closed up, and there was no one around to ask for directions.

"We'll find the way back to the main road, and then we'll be at the hotel in no time," said Ralph. They hurried through the streets looking for anything that seemed familiar.

When the couple turned a corner, they found themselves in an alleyway. There, standing before them, was an extremely tall and imposing man. Startled, the two stopped dead in their tracks.

"Oh, hello," said Sharon nervously.

The man didn't speak at first. Instead, he began to shiver and convulse as his eyes rolled back into his head. When they rolled forward, they became googly and ping-ponged up and down like a cartoon character's. Then he held up his hands. Upon each hand was a little puppet. One puppet was male, the other female.

"Say hello to the nice people!" the man said, giggling. The male puppet then came very close to the couple and looked them over. It was dressed in a little suit and a top hat. The puppet turned to its companion and then spoke in a strange and raspy voice.

"They look rather lost to me!"

The female puppet, who was wearing a polka dot dress, responded in an exaggerated English accent. "I agree! Rather unsure of where they are going or how to get there."

The giant man giggled again. "Dat's Mr. Windsor and Mrs. Cake! They REAL silly!" He seemed to be mentally challenged, although he had somehow made the puppets speak very clearly.

The newlyweds wondered if it was all just an act. Either way, Ralph turned to his wife and said, "I think we made a wrong turn," and the two quickly headed back in the other direction.

For the next twenty minutes, Sharon and Ralph had a sneaking suspicion that someone was following them, though they were probably just on edge from the strange encounter in the alleyway.

When they arrived at their hotel, most of the lights were out, and there was no one at the front desk. They passed a newspaper stand as they walked through the lobby. Ralph remembered glancing at the local paper that morning. The headlines had described a series of mysterious murders in the area. Some tourists had been found stabbed, and others had been strangled. Ralph realized that he had been careless in wandering the dark alleyways with his new wife. Upon entering their room on the third floor, the couple were so exhausted from the day that they went straight to bed.

Sharon awoke in the night to a scratching noise coming from the front door. It lasted only a moment and



then stopped. She drifted back to sleep.

Sometime later she awoke again, this time to the sound of a door squeaking open and then shutting. At first, she figured that Ralph must have gotten up to use the bathroom or get a drink of water, but then she saw him sleeping next to her in bed. Alarmed, she shook him awake.

"Ralph! Ralph!" she whispered loudly. "There are some weird sounds coming from the front door!"

The man rubbed his eyes and grumbled. "Don't worry. I locked it. Just go back to sleep."

But Sharon could not leave the matter alone. "Honey, will you please just go check?"

After a few moments, Ralph rose reluctantly from the bed and went to the living room. He flipped on the lightswitch. There, before him, was the man with the puppets.

Ralph froze where he stood. The giant man instantly exploded toward him, and with one blow, Ralph was knocked unconscious.

When he finally came to, both he and his wife were on the floor of the kitchenette, their hands tied and mouths gagged. Sharon had tears in her eyes. Ralph had never felt so helpless.

Then, just like they had in the alleyway, the puppets spoke.

"Look at them, my dear!" exclaimed the male in a raspy voice. "They seem to be in a bit of a bind."

"I agree. There's no way out now!"

The giant man spoke and giggled. "Look at Mr. Wind-

sor. He REAL silly!" He danced around in joy, making the puppet hands open and close their little mouths.

"Look at ma puppety hands," he giggled. "Look at ma PUPPETY HANDS!"

As the man paraded madly around the room, Ralph tried desperately to untie the knot that held his hands together. The puppet man turned the other way, and the little puppets disappeared for a moment. When he faced the couple again, the puppet hands each held something that had not been there before. Mr. Windsor had a large knife. Mrs. Cake—a rope with a loop on the end.

The man was drooling and panting like an animal. He cried out, his voice higher now. "*Imma gunsta wans-ta getcha real good now!*"

The female puppet shrieked maniacally as it sprung forward, flinging the rope around Sharon's neck. Next to his wife, Ralph felt the knot loosen around his hands. He had untied it just in time to see Mr. Windsor lunge at him with the knife in its felt mouth. It hissed and screeched as it charged. Ralph dodged the little puppet and began wrestling with the man, the blade coming within inches of his throat. Fighting the puppet hand, he looked deep into its beady little eyes and saw that it was somehow alive.

In desperation, Ralph lowered his head and bit down hard on the hand, his teeth cutting through the felt material. The puppet man squealed like a hog, and the knife dropped to the floor. Ralph scooped it up. In one powerful swing, he hacked off the giant man's right

hand, the male puppet along with it. Then he swung again, completely severing the left. The female puppet fell to the ground with the hand still inside. The man screamed and spit and spun around in circles, blood gushing all over the place.

At that moment, the door burst open, and several police officers came charging into the room. Ralph dove to the floor and pulled his poor wife into a corner with him, covering her body with his own, just as several deafening shots were heard. Then it went quiet, and the next sound was that of a large body slumping to the ground.

The police quickly untied the woman and helped both victims to their feet. They had been following the puppet man all night, waiting to see if he really was who they suspected him to be.

As they escorted the traumatized newlyweds out the door, Ralph turned and looked back to see the bloody scene in the kitchen—a giant man's lifeless body and two severed hands. The little puppets were nowhere to be found.

• THE TIME-OUT CORNER •

On a cold January night, two brothers played with their toy trucks on the brown shag carpet in their living room. An old lamp cast a warm, yellowish glow on Paul, age three, and Lee, age seven. Downstairs in the basement, their parents were having a party with friends and showing slides from their most recent trip to the lake.

As time went on, the boys began to feel more and more isolated from the others. The upstairs rooms and hallways were completely dark. Everything was dark except for the pool of light in the living room.

Paul, in his little one-piece pajama suit, suddenly stopped pushing the red fire engine and began rubbing his eyes and whining.

"What's wrong?" Lee asked his brother.

Paul replied, "I'm scared."

Lee wanted to tell his brother not to be afraid. He wanted to show that he wasn't a baby like Paul. But Lee was also afraid.

"I want Mommy," said Paul.

"You can't go downstairs," explained Lee. "We have to play up here until the slides are over."

Paul shook his head, frowning. "I don't care. I'm scared. I want Mommy and Daddy."

Lee tried to laugh. "What are you afraid of?"

Paul, still rubbing his eyes, reached out his little hand, pointing to the small nook in the living room that disappeared around the corner and into the

darkness. Hidden in the nook was an old back door that hardly anyone ever used. It was where the children were sent to sit when they were naughty or disobedient.

Lee's anxiety level climbed higher than before. He tried to hide it, but he felt it too—a strange presence. It was as though something was there with them, as though something was watching them. Something hiding around the corner in the darkened time-out room. Something that had just come in through the old back door.

No, thought Lee. Paul is just scared. I'm scared, too, but there's nothing there. It's all my imagination. I'm big now. I can't be like Paul.

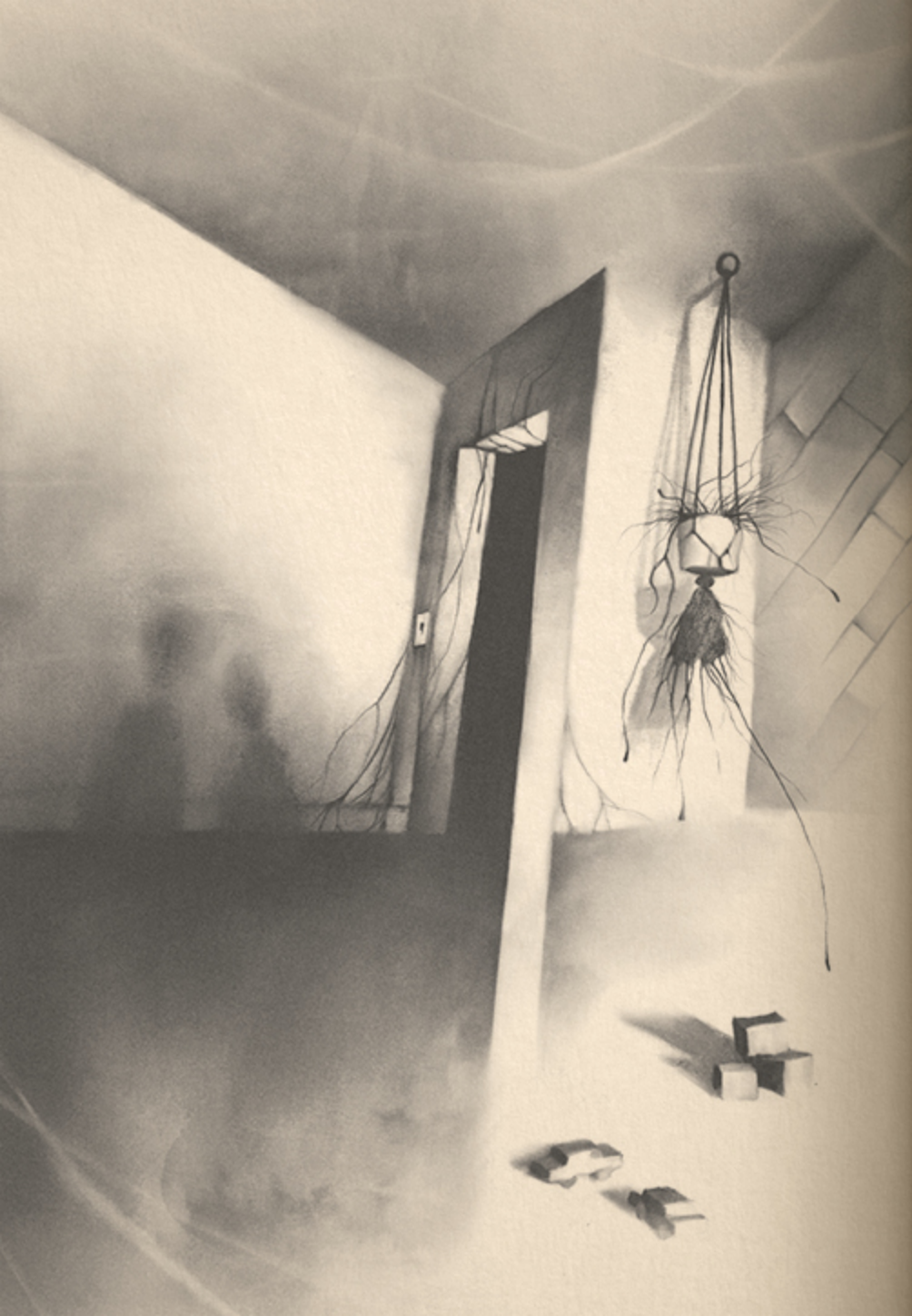
Just when Lee was about to tell his baby brother not to be afraid, that it was only his imagination, the lamp flashed, and the bulb went out. Now the only light was the faint, fuzzy glow coming from the basement, through the kitchen and down the hall.

Paul grabbed onto his older brother and began crying softly.

"Shhhhh" whispered Lee. "It's just the light. It burned out."

Lee's anxiety intensified. Something was happening. He felt an immediate need to take his brother downstairs to the grown-ups, but he was unable to move. The two could only sit there, motionless in the dark.

It was then that they heard it—a bizarre sound. A sound coming from the time-out area. There was



something there, hidden around the corner in the nook. Lee and Paul froze, paralyzed with fear. They both knew that the only thing they could do was to go to the basement. The adults could protect them from anything. The bad feeling would go away, and they would be safe if they could only find the strength to go to the basement. But they could not move.

Facing the time-out corner, the children's eyes slowly began to adjust to the darkness. For a time there was nothing there, and all was quiet.

But then, they saw it—a sight that instantly sucked the air out of their lungs and made their bodies freeze like ice.

There appeared a head. A head peering out from around the corner. But it was black and rectangular. A rectangle head with triangle eyes. A head with a long neck and metal eyebrows that were upturned in extreme anger. The whole thing began to vibrate in a blur, then retracted back behind the corner.

For a moment, there was only the sound of Lee making a tiny, involuntary whine. This was followed by several moments of deafening silence.

Then it happened. The entire horrifying thing exploded out from behind the wall and darted violently toward them. It lunged forward, reaching out with a long, black, clawlike appendage.

Without even realizing it, Lee had already grabbed his brother by the hand and was running faster than he ever had before, out of the living room and into the kitchen. But it was coming, following directly be-

hind, and moving at an incredible speed. A living machine—black and skeletal, with boxy, bulging sections. The boys shot down the hall, the hideous thing directly behind them. Lee pivoted left toward the steep steps to the basement. Paul was screaming and screaming.

At the top of the stairs, Lee could feel the thing reach out for them! In one desperate, frantic movement, Lee took his little brother by the waist and leapt all the way to the bottom, landing hard.

"DADDY!" screamed the boy as he and his brother wriggled frantically into the light of the slide projector. "HELP US!"

When the adults saw that the children had jumped all the way down the steps, saw the way they were screaming and crying hysterically, trying so desperately to get away from something upstairs, the men leapt to their feet and rushed up the stairs to find a possible intruder. They turned on all the lights, went through every room, looked in every closet and hiding place. They never found anything.

• WHEN I WAKE UP •

Eight-year-old Bradley awoke in the night from a terrible dream. Frightened, he got up and climbed the little ladder to the top bunk where his brother slept, then reached around in the dark to feel for his foot. But there was no one there.

Maybe he went to get a drink of water or go to the bathroom, the boy thought.

Bradley decided to go to the next room to sleep in the bed with his mother and father. He went down the hall and opened his parents' door a crack, then snuck inside and carefully tried to lay down without waking them. But there was no one there to snuggle up to. The bed and the room were empty. He went to the light and flipped the switch, but nothing happened. He crept to the kitchen and tried the lights. There seemed to be no power to the house at all.

Bradley peered through the curtained window to see if anyone was outside, but he could see nothing. There were no street lights on, and the neighborhood was covered in a thick, ominous fog.

After standing motionless for what seemed like an eternity, Bradley called out to his parents.

"Mom? Dad?"

But there was no reply. No sound of footsteps or voices anywhere. It was dead silent.

The boy made his way through the house, anxiously checking each room. It was completely deserted.

Back in the kitchen, as the reality of being left alone

in the darkness with no explanation sunk in, Bradley's mind began playing tricks on him. It was then that he thought he saw something moving in the shadows near the refrigerator. Waves of terror coursed through him. He didn't know what to do. He froze and remained motionless in the dark.

After a long period of standing perfectly still, Bradley summoned the courage to rush to the front door and feel around the little hooks for the spare key to the family van. As he searched, there came a sound from behind like a chair being moved over the linoleum floor. At that moment, he found the key and immediately darted out the front door to the detached garage. Once inside, he could just barely make out the vehicle that was parked there as usual. He looked out and discovered that his father's brown sedan was also still parked in the driveway.

They didn't leave? he thought in a panic. I don't understand! Where are they? Where did they go? And what was that sound in the kitchen?

Bradley didn't feel safe. He knew that he couldn't go back into the house alone. He was sure he'd seen something in the darkness. So he climbed inside the back seat of the van and locked all the doors.

His mind was racing, imagining the worst. His family was dead, had abandoned him or simply disappeared. In the van, he began to feel more and more like he was being watched. He climbed under the bench seat and hid. Eventually, he fell asleep.

When Bradley awoke, he found he was in his bedroom on the bottom bunk.

It was all just a terrible dream, he thought.

He was so disturbed by the experience that he got up, climbed the little ladder to the top where his brother slept, and then reached around in the dark to feel his brother's foot. But there was no one there.

He ran to his parents' room. It was also empty. The house was completely deserted. The lights weren't working. The power seemed to be out.

Maybe I'm just dreaming. This must all be a bad dream. When I wake up, everything will be alright.

Bradley tiptoed through the dark toward the kitchen, and this time, he went straight to the phone to call 911. But when he lifted the receiver and put it to his ear, he discovered the line was completely dead. Only a strange buzzing sound could be heard on the other end. Immediately after hanging up, he thought he saw something in the darkness moving toward him.

In a desperate panic, Bradley bolted out the front door and ran down the street in his pajamas toward the neighbors' house. He repeatedly turned around to see if anything was following him. But nothing was there. The street lights were dark. There seemed to be no power in the area at all.

When he reached the house, the boy began pounding on the door. No one answered, so he knocked on all the windows and called out for help. But there was no response.

Bradley noticed bicycles lying in the front yard. He



decided to borrow the closest bike and head for his aunt and uncle's house, which was several miles away. He had never done anything like this before, but nothing like this had ever happened.

Bradley began pedaling frantically down the road. He could barely see anything in the darkness and the fog. There were no cars driving on the main roads, no lights on, no people anywhere. Maybe it was because it was so late at night.

He rode for over an hour on the dark, main roads, and the entire time saw no signs of other people. Bradley had never felt so lost and alone.

When he reached his aunt and uncle's house, the boy once again pounded on doors and windows. But there was no one home. He climbed the fence and crawled through the dog door on the side of the house. Once inside, he searched every room, hyperventilating, and in an utter panic. The rooms were all empty and so were the beds. The phone didn't work. The lights didn't work. He was completely alone.

Bradley was now hysterical and in tears, but he went silent when he once again began to feel as though something was watching him. He then saw something moving in the shadows and began to hear strange noises all around. He wanted to leave, to find a police station, somewhere, anywhere. He desperately needed to find people. But he did not know where to go.

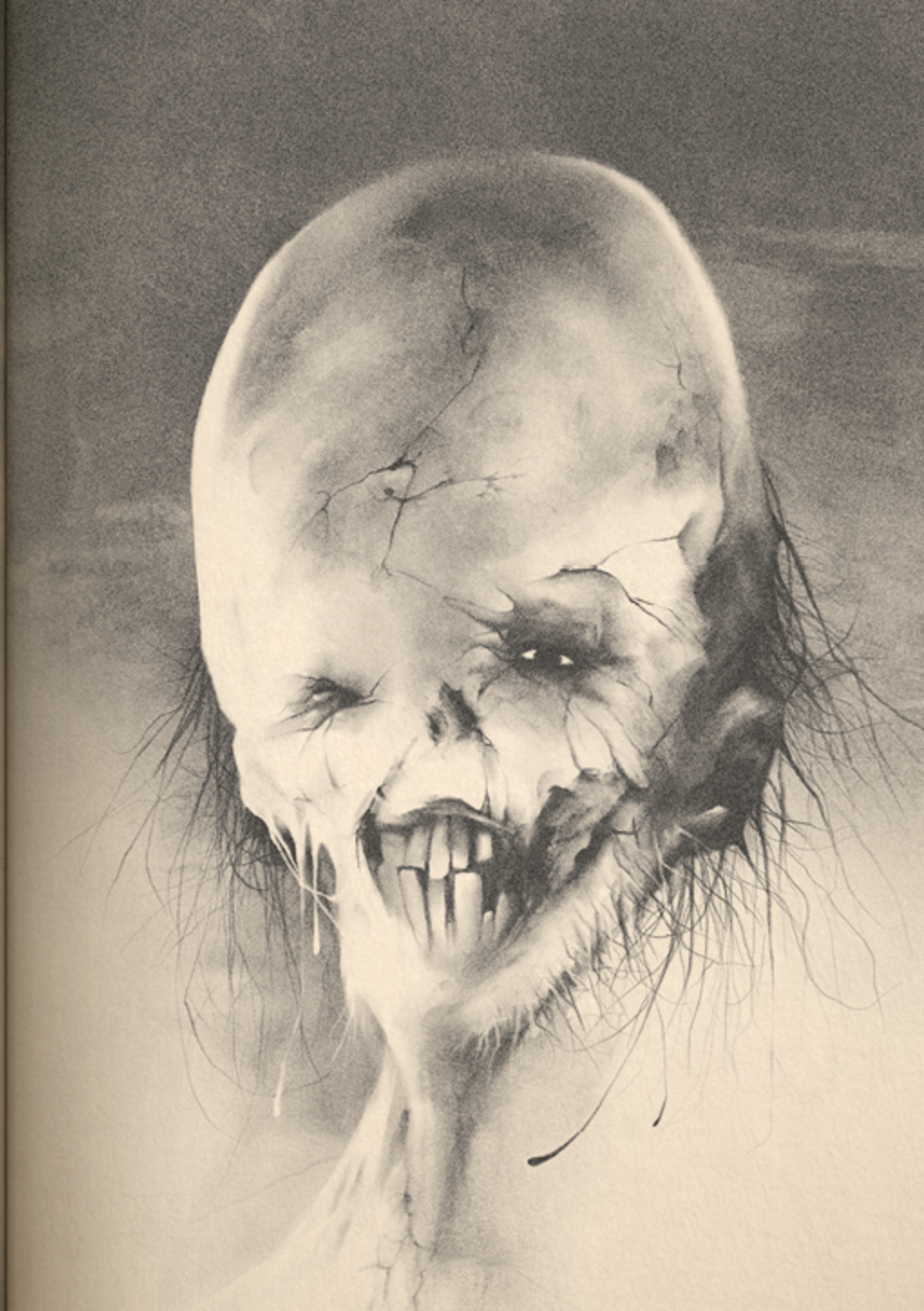
He eventually hid in a bottom cupboard and stayed there. He curled up in a ball, trembling in the pitch black, hiding from the buzzing and humming sounds

and from the moving shadows that were all around him. At some point, he fell asleep.

When Bradley awoke, he found himself back in his bunk bed at home. He listened for his brother's breathing. There was no sound whatsoever. He somehow already knew that he was completely alone in the house. Yet, he felt that from the darkness, someone or something was watching him, staring at him. There were strange sounds all around, although louder and more frightening than before. Something was moving in the darkness.

With tears now streaming down his face, Bradley could do nothing but cover himself with his blanket.

This is just a bad dream. Just a nightmare, he told himself. *When I wake up, everything will be alright.*







ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Curt Tuckfield has spent his life pursuing a seemingly endless series of passions and projects. These include composing and performing music, writing, sketch comedy, film, poetry, video games, rock climbing, tornadoes, religion, philosophy, synchromysticism, and the paranormal. He lives in Draper, Utah.

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SCARY STORIES

A Tribute to Terror

An all new collection of original stories and art that pays tribute to the work of Alvin Schwartz and Stephen Gammell.

What are people saying?:

"If you love Scary Stories To Tell in the Dark, check out A Tribute To Terror."

—*Forbes*

New stories. New art. Same spooky aesthetic."

—*Bloody Disgusting*

"Captures the heart and soul of the original series."

—*Horror Buzz*

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