

Come little children,
I'll take thee away,
Into a land of
enchantment.
Come little children,
the time's come to
play, here in my
garden of magic.

— Sarah Sanderson

GHOST WRITERS

THE WINNERS OF THIS YEAR'S HALLOWEEN STORY CONTEST

1st place

Elementary Division

"Play Time's Over, Monsters! Signed: Jack, the Killer of Monsters"

Once upon a time there lived a nice and sweet kid named Jack. He would always care for people until his parents died, and he was frightened because he thought the monsters were out to get him.

Everyone tried to help, but it never worked until one day he wanted revenge. He wanted to get the monsters. He went after them.

Jack's friends' names were Garrett, Drew, Logan, Sean, Noah, K.B. and John. All of them backed him up, and were ready on the day when every monster comes. The day his revenge will be done, October 31, 2014.

They didn't know what they had to take revenge upon. Then finally they knew

what the monster was.

It was the mother of all monsters! They knew that the monster scared people to death! Throughout the United States, Americans feared her the most.

Jack said, "Are you guys ready? Then let's destroy this monster. Hiyaahhhh!"

They all charged. The monster was fearsome. They couldn't get through the stupid monster's shell.

They knew they only had one option: to use a bazooka, but it didn't budge.

They were so confused, but they finally knew what it was. All the people that saw her, she kept sucking the fright out of them, and she grew more and more powerful.

They knew that the monster would only be scared if they weren't afraid, so they got to their senses and were ready.

They charged one last time and they were correct, the monster was afraid. They weakened the monster.

The weird monster was tough, but they could hurt her this time, so they kept on slashing and slashing.

After two days, they finally could defeat the monster.

There was one bad thing! Everyone was worn out and no one could move a muscle except for Jack!

He got on his feet and for some reason his friends gave him power. Jack thought to himself, that was why the monsters were so afraid of him.

Then he gave a huge cry; it wasn't tears. He just screamed for everyone to lend him strength. The whole world heard him and gave him power.

He knew that he had to destroy the monster for humanity to survive, but giving Jack that power also sent fear to the monster.

The great and ugly monster absorbed the fear and became evenly matched with Jack's power. They clashed head on with one another.

Jack fought for every living thing on Earth. The monster fought to destroy everything on Earth.



Jack Ballard, Age 9
The Donoho School

The monster killed millions of people before Jack, but the thing was that Jack was no ordinary person, and neither were his friends. They were not afraid of the monster.

They fought for two straight days. Finally, they were at their last breath, and Jack died by the monster's hand, and the monster destroyed the Earth, and monsters destroyed every human being.

Middle School Division

"The Basement"

It was Friday, Sept. 13, 1999. I had been working late at the hospital.

Yes, I was a doctor. I had just clocked out and made my way to the elevator, got in and noticed that there was a new button that said "basement."



Macy Dopson, Age 13
Wellborn High School

I had heard that there were some workers here putting in new elevators, and I didn't know we had a basement.

Anyway, back to the point. I wanted to check it out and see what was down there. I pressed the button, so down I went.

The door opened and I walked out and

noticed that the doctors kept old supplies down there.

I was new. I had only been here for a week. I had just learned how to get around this place.

I looked off to the distance and saw an orange light. It was so dark I couldn't see much. I started to walk toward it and heard the elevator go back up.

I kept walking, and looked back and noticed that I didn't see any elevator buttons. I wanted to find my way out.

As I was walking toward the orange light, I noticed the number 13 was all over the walls. I was getting freaked out.

The light didn't seem to get any closer.

I had forgotten I had my cellphone. I looked at my lockscreen and the wallpaper was a 13. Then, it died.

Maybe I can go back to the elevator ... I thought.

As I was running, I felt my feet sweep out from underneath me. I suddenly was looking at my clothes on the ground. I felt as if I was floating.

To this day, on the 13th of every month, that elevator gets sent down to the basement, and I watch people press that button and get lost and become one of me.

I'm now that orange light.

Before you get on an elevator and press that button, do you want to be a ghost like me?

High School Division

"Movie Night"

I had been invited to a slumber party by Daisy, a girl I had recently met. My family had moved to Anniston shortly after my mother died, and I was trying to make new friends. I barely knew Daisy, but she seemed to take a special interest in me.



Maryam Salame, Age 14
The Donoho School

I had been told not to go to the part of town where she lived, especially at night, but I made an exception out of desperation for a friend.

Expecting to find a party and new faces, I was surprised by how silent the house seemed. I knocked on the door and almost immediately the girl swung the pasty, yellow

door open with eagerness, but remained silent and motioned for me to come in.

Earlier, she had made it sound as though many of her friends would be there too, but it was just us. Her expressionless dog just stared at me and walked away. The whole thing felt off the moment I entered the door.

Daisy insisted we watch a scary movie. She said it was a home video, but I assumed she was joking. She brought me some tea that had a very strange aftertaste.

The movie started with a girl walking up to a yellow door to another girl's sleepover. When she entered the home, the exact situation that had happened to me with the dog, happened to her. The other girl in the movie insisted that she watched a scary movie and said it was a home movie. At this point in the movie, scary, suspenseful music started playing.

Daisy paused the movie, turned the TV off, and said, "I think that's enough, do you want to go to sleep now?"

"No! The movie was just getting good!" I said.

"Believe me," she said, "it gets a lot better. We can watch the rest in the morning."

It was 8:30, but I was beginning to feel heavy and weighed down. My eyelids felt thick and too heavy to hold open.

We laid blankets on her basement floor. When I lay down, I instantly fell asleep. I had a vivid dream that I was in that movie, and the movie kept playing exactly how that night was turning out.

I woke up startled and stumbled towards the basement steps. There was no sign of Daisy. I ran out the yellow, front door. I'll never forget how my heart was pounding so hard that it felt too large for my chest.

The next day, the whites of my eyes were the same color as that yellow door. What had been in that tea?

I was sitting at lunch with some kids from my grade. They started asking about why my eyes were such a strange yellow. I told them about my strange sleepover.

"Daisy?," one of them asked, sounding a little disturbed. "The only Daisy at this school was a girl who was supposed to graduate last year. She never made it. She had a bit of a problem."

2nd place

Elementary Division "La Llorona and the zombies"

One day during a math class, zombies attacked Ohatchee Elementary School. All the students started running and screaming.

Mrs. Jones fought the zombies off with a big protractor, and the fourth-grade teachers and students met in the big closet upstairs.

"We need to fight back!" whispered Mrs. Graben.

"But we have no weapons!" Mrs. West whispered back.

Ashton suggested, "There are knives in the kitchen."

Barbara suggested, "Mr. Kirby has strong chemicals in his cleaning closet!"

"We can drop old computers on them, the ones in the room across from Mrs. West," added Kaleb.

Mrs. G said, "Great idea kids, we need to get these

things! Ashton go with Jacob, Devin and Chris to the kitchen and get the knives. Barbara, take Ariel, Jordan and Jorda to Mr. Kirby's closet. Kaleb, you go with Emma and the rest of the students to get the computers and make a trap for the zombies."

When everyone was leaving the closet, they heard a scary, scary sound. It was like hearing someone cry out their heart. Everyone froze.

"What was that?" whispered several boys.

Mrs. Jones said, "Go! We need to get our traps set up!" Then they saw her.

At the end of the hall the children saw a woman. She had long scraggly hair and long sharp fingernails. Her dress was ripped and dirty. All the students ran away.

"Who is that!?" asked Mrs. Jones. "Oh no. NO! It's La Llorona!" said Mrs. Graben.

"Well, who is that? Why is she crying that way? Let's go help her! The zombies might get her!"

"NO! You can't help her! She's with the zombies! Barbara told me about her. La Llorona is a ghost. She killed herself after she killed her children. Now she walks, and kidnaps kids to take them to the river and drown them!"

The students were going to get weapons. Ashton got knives from the kitchen. Barbara and her group got chemicals from Mr. Kirby's closet. And Kaleb's group set up the heavy old computers in the staircase. They were ready.

The teachers and students found the zombies in one of the classrooms upstairs. They were messing stuff up.

The zombies turned around and they saw the students. The zombies attacked!

The students and teachers fought the zombies. Some chopped zombies with knives. Some burned them with chemicals, and Kaleb's team led the zombies to the stairs and they dropped the computers on the zombies' heads.

The students and teachers won!

"Where's the crying lady ghost?" asked Ashton.

Barbara said, "The zombies died, so La Llorona can't stay. Zombies give power to her."

After the fight, they helped clean the school. Then they all went home. Their moms asked what happened, but none of the students responded.

Middle School Division "Suicide in the Lake"

My name is Taylor. I'm 18 years old and I live with my dad and my stepmother.

My birth mother disappeared when I was 6.

I have a younger brother named Jacob. He is the son of my stepmother. He is 14 years old.

My dad is a police officer. My family and I live in small town. If someone dies or goes missing, everybody knows about it.

Two investigators came to visit our family to figure out what happened when my mother disappeared. They kept asking us about the lake beside our house. They thought that my mother committed suicide in the lake.



Mya Keel, Age 12
The Donoho School

They even thought that my mother was depressed. My mother was not depressed. She was a loving mother. She would not leave me and my dad behind.

I remember her fishing on the dock the day she disappeared. My dad was at work and I was at home reading my favorite book. I looked out the window and I saw my mom fishing.

About 10 minutes later I looked out the window and I didn't see my mom.

I called her phone. She never leaves her phone behind. I heard her phone ring out on the dock where she sat down to fish.

I called the police.

They never found her.

Yesterday, on June 22, my brother was swimming some laps in the lake behind my house. After my mom disappeared, the lake has made me concerned. I was watching to make sure he would be OK.

I was going inside to get some lemonade, then I heard a splashing noise and a cry for help. It was my stepbrother crying for help.

It looked like he was drowning. It is impossible for my brother to drown he was a excellent swimmer.

I hopped in the lake to help my brother. It was too late. He had drowned.

I called my dad home from work. He kept saying it was his fault. I really didn't understand what he meant by that, but I was too upset about my stepbrother that I didn't want to ask.

The investigators came by our house again to see what happened to my stepbrother. They thought it was suicide like my mom. My stepbrother would not kill himself. He is too kind and too nice to do that to him and his mother.

I asked my dad last night about my mom and my stepbrother. He said it was his fault. I asked how. Then he told me.

When he was a boy, he was a bully to a younger kid. In

the same lake that my mom and my brother died in, my dad killed that little boy.

After he told me, he went outside and got in the lake. He shouted out, "Take me and stop hurting my family. I'm sorry!"

The head of a boy that my dad killed appeared in the water. He grabbed my dad's ankles and pulled him under. I never saw my dad again.

High School Division "I Am"

I am what hides outside of your house at night, waiting for you to come out so I can strike.

I am what you keep your children shielded from.

I am what keeps them awake at night.

I am what they think is hiding under their bed, but really I am hiding under yours.

I am the reason you lock your doors at night.

I am the reason you keep a gun by your side and a guard dog by the front door.

I am the reason you have a security alarm, but will the police arrive in time?

I am the same nightmare you have every night.

I am what you fear, but you fear to admit it.

Run all you want, hide all you want, I am always with you.



Leighton McCrimmon,
Age 15
Oxford High School

You think the police will catch me? I leave no witness, because the only witness is you. I dispose of my evidence, you're not my first and you won't be my last.

No need to glance over your shoulder, no need to call for help. Everyone knows of me and what I am capable of, they will turn a blind eye and plug their ears.

I am nothing like you've seen in a horror movie. I am

going to make major news headlines. I am going to be the cause of an enforced curfew. But not even that will save you.

The danger mainly lies in your home, where you're alone, or even better; I catch you when you're with your family. I have no remorse and I don't hold back.

Will your guns and dogs and alarms save you? Do you truly feel safe?

You will never be safe. You are in a world with 'me,' hiding in every dark corner, waiting to corner you.

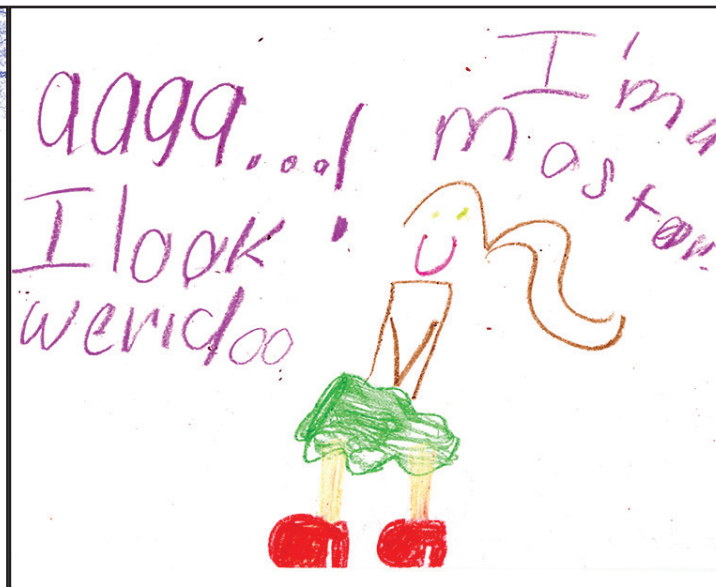
My eyes are always kept on you; I follow you everywhere you go. I'm watching you read this as your heart pounds nervously.

Tonight could be your last, I can get you when you're asleep, I can get you right now if I want. You will never know.

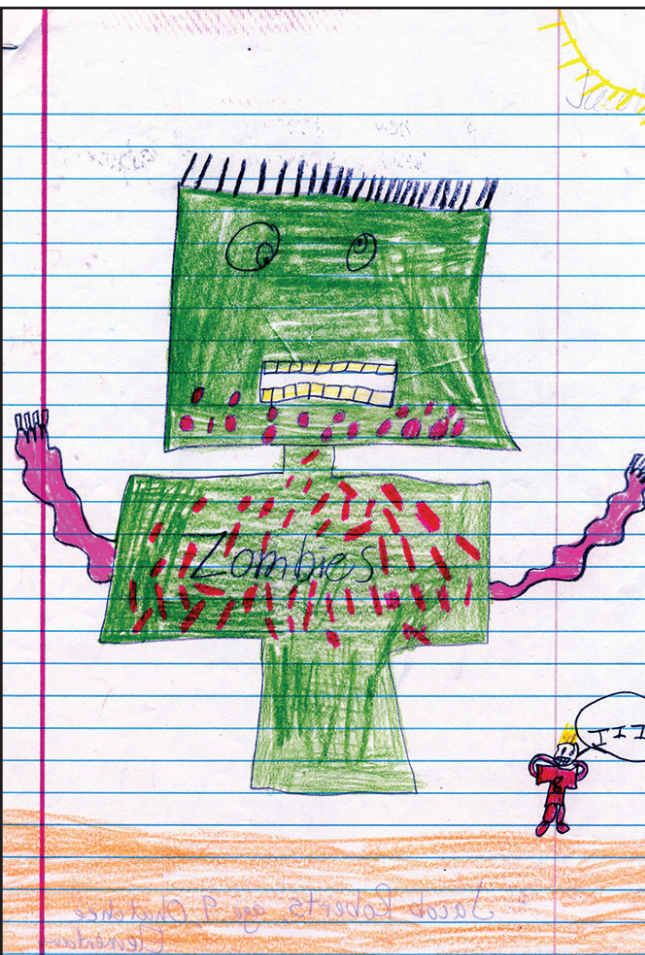
I am not your neighbor nor am I that kid you picked on in school.

The main question that will drive you insane is — who am I?

ghost gallery



Christa Brown, Age 10, Ohatchee Elementary



Jacob Roberts, Age 9, Ohatchee Elementary



Emma Christopher, Age 9, Ohatchee Elementary



Lily Thompson, Age 9, Ohatchee Elementary



Jorda Crook, Age 9, Ohatchee Elementary



Madalyn Osborne, Oxford Elementary



ghost gallery



Haden McDuffie, Age 9, Ohatchee Elementary



Rebecca Gaddy, Age 9, Ohatchee Elementary

HONORABLE MENTION

- Isabella Pollard, age 8, Ranburne Elementary School, "The Jackelo"
- Emily Newton, age 6, DeArmanville Elementary School, "The Vampire Horse and the Mummy"
- Solanya Spaulding, age 12, Sacred Heart Catholic School, "Dead"
- John Cater, age 13, The Donoho School, "Trick or Treat?"
- Tianjalyse Coleman, age 15, Anniston High School, "Extraction from 'The Satcher Stories: Chronicle One: Mary Satcher'"
- Chandler Collins, age 16, Anniston, The Donoho School, "3:04 a.m."

ONLINE EXTRAS

- Honorable Mention stories
- Gallery of kids' spooky drawings Online at AnnistonStar.com

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3rd place

Elementary Division "Chemical Double Z"

Once upon a time there were two scientists. They each had one son. Their names were Kaiden and Brent. The scientists' kids were best friends. It was Bring Your Kid to Work Day. The two scientists had recently made a chemical called Chemical Double Z. It turned normal things into monsters, even food.

The kids had snacks. Their snack was potato chips. Kaiden spilled his chips. The kids thought Chemical Double Z was a cleaner, and used it on the chips. They threw it away.

Twenty years passed, and the kids are now 29. There were random people from Kaiden and

Brent's family missing.

They thought it was a prank, but the next day they found a letter from their dads. The letter read: "Kids the stuff you thought was cleaner when y'all were 9 — it was actually a mutant chemical that turns normal things into monsters. Y'all will have to kill the chip monster."

The boys looked at each other and ran to get bazookas and gear. They made sure they brought their mouths. Just in case.

Then they looked at the letter again and they saw this: "P.S. The monster lives in the creepy attic, also there are obstacles, he is expecting y'all."

They ran to the attic and saw a spider. They have a fear of spiders. "Aghhh!" they screamed. "Kill it, Kaiden," said Brent.

"I don't want spider guts on my shoe," said Kaiden. "Well, what will we do?" said Kaiden. "There is an old flip-flop," said Brent. "Grab it," said Kaiden.

"OK," said Brent. "I got it," said Brent. The only thing Kaiden could hear was, "Whap, bam, splatter!"

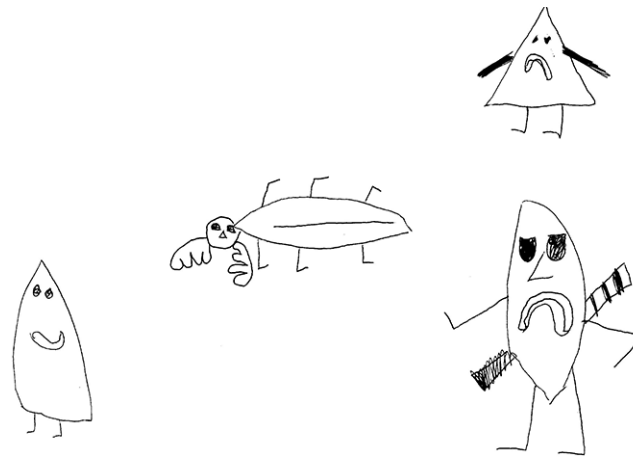
They walked some more and suddenly they stopped and heard, "Crunch, crunch, crunch." They looked in the door and there sat the horrible, deadly, ugly chip monster.

It swiped their bazookas. They froze and hugged each other. They opened their mouths and ate it. They gained 50 pounds each.

"Wait, didn't the chip monster eat our family?" said Kaiden. "Yeah," said Brent.

"Yuck, I am gonna puke," said Brent.

"Good thing we brought our mouths," they said with relief.



Middle School Division "Candy Bandits"

On the day before Halloween, my brother and I went to find the best-shaped pumpkin we could find.

After we found the perfect pumpkin, we took it home and began carving a face. Then we started removing the seeds and the long stringy stuff.

On Halloween, we made a good haul with lots of candy.

That night, my brother and I went to sleep. Later that night I woke up, hearing a funny scratching noise in my candy bag.

I thought it was my brother, so I hollered at him, "GET OUT of my candy!"

His reply was, "I'm not in your candy! Go back to sleep."

The following morning, there were candy wrappers everywhere on the floor. I could see pumpkin seeds on the floor.

My brother said, "They look different from the ones we got last night."

The trail led to the trash can where we threw the seeds. We could hear rustling in the empty candy wrappers.

We inspected real closely and there was movement in the candy wrappers.

We picked up the candy wrappers to see what was underneath. To our surprise, we found funny-looking seed creatures devouring our candy.

They looked like pumpkin seeds with legs, eyes and a large mouth. All eating my candy.

I named them Candy Bandits.

So beware, Halloween can be a scary time for your candy. Eat or be eaten.

Be sure to check your pumpkins for Candy Bandits, or else they'll steal your candy.



Jordan Kenney, Age 12
Weaver High School

High School Division "Hide and Scream"

I stand, my back pressed against the tall and possibly ancient hedge.

He is coming. I can smell his sulfurous odor filling the air.

He called out to me, "I'm getting closer, I'll find you."



Pearl Simmons, Age 14
The Donoho School

I flinch, before running away. Two more hours, just two more hours. If I can make it that long, then, maybe, I'll be allowed to leave.

"I'm changing the rules," he calls it out, so eerily, so gently. The lights go out. I run faster. Faster. Faster. I have to get out. He can't catch me. No. No. No. No. Faster. Faster. He's laughing. "You summoned

me," he says, "You brought me back. Now you get to play my game." I trip.

The shadows are leaping at me. I get up, and try to keep moving on my shaking legs. One more hour. One hour left.

I smell him again. I run faster. I can't breathe. I'm slowing down. No! I have to get out. I have to escape. He's laughing again. He's getting closer. Closer. Closer. I see a corner turn it. He laughs. I scream. It's a dead end. I'm trapped. No!

Thirty minutes left. I smell him again. Then I smell something else. The smell of burning. People are screaming. No. No. It's getting hotter. He's laughing. I see him, towering over the maze.

"You can't escape!" he laughs at me. "I'll find you. I'll have your soul!" I back up farther, against the hedge. I go through it.

I start running again, the maze is shifting, it's working against me. Ten minutes. I find a clearing. There's a carousel. It's playing music. I freeze. I used to ride this carousel all the time when I was younger, how? How did it get to this place?

The music sounds wrong somehow. I feel my feet moving. It would be so easy, just to forget. I think of my brother, my family. They're on the carousel. My feet keep moving. I get closer and get on. My mind starts to drift, and a strange smell enters my nostrils. I'm laughing with my family. Something's off. Their eyes. They're different.

I run off the carousel. He's laughing again. I glance at my watch. Fifteen seconds. He grabs my ankle. Fourteen seconds. I struggle. Thirteen seconds. He laughs. Twelve seconds. I scream. Eleven seconds. I kick him. Ten seconds. His mouth opens. Nine seconds. I escape his grip on my ankle. Eight seconds. I get up. Seven seconds. I run away from him. Six seconds. He screams. Five seconds. I see a doorway open. Four seconds. Almost there. Three seconds. He yells. Two seconds. "Your soul will be mine!" One second. I can't hear him anymore.

I'm finally home. I walk to the bathroom, as calmly as I can muster. I go in, and I shower, glad to be home.



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