

CHAPTER 2

I Want to Drink *Your* Blood

I found Simon in the Bat House. This wasn't a real bat house. It's this climber in Simon's backyard that we fixed up and called the Bat House. That was back when we were little kids. That was the summer Simon moved in behind my house. Pretty soon, we became best friends. We called ourselves the Bats. We had a secret code and a secret handshake and stuff. I guess all that would have been really lame but we caught some crooks a couple of times. Then we got our picture in the

newspaper. We were in the paper four times, if you really want to know. The last time was just last month. Some creep was selling drugs near our school. Simon and I caught him. Anyhow, we're still the Bats and we hang out at the Bat House.

Simon stuck his head out of the Bat House. "Are you okay?" he asked.

"No. I'm not okay," I told him. "I've got a fat lip. I have to spend a week staying late after school. And my cruddy friend didn't help me out."

"Sorry. You know I don't like blood."

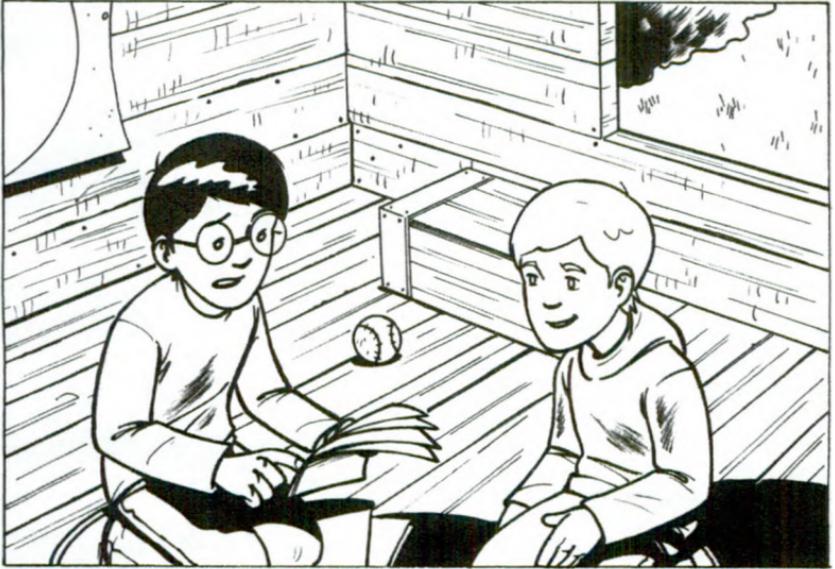
I gave him a dirty look. Then I gave him my idea. "Well, don't worry, Simon, my man. I know how you can make it up to me." I told him about Ellen's birthday party. "And you're going to help me put it all together," I said.

"Sounds like fun!" Simon said.

"Fun?! Are you nuts?! There's going to be ten dopey girls there. We have to find stuff for them to do."

"No problem, Sam. I just read something about Halloween parties. I've got lots of ideas."

I rolled my eyes. Simon made a face. Then he



told me his ideas.

“We set up a haunted house in your basement,” Simon began. We blindfold the kids and then lead them around to different spots. At each spot, we make them touch stuff and tell them what they’re touching. Like we say that peeled grapes are eyeballs. We say cold spaghetti is ghoulish guts and chicken bones are ribs and . . .”

He would have gone on but I got the picture. And then I could picture all Ellen’s dopey little

friends. They'd be screaming and crying.

"Sounds good to me," I told him.

I didn't know if Simon's plan would sound good to my mom. Then again, she was the one who put me in charge. What she didn't know wouldn't hurt her.

Simon and I had until Saturday to get ready.

First, we cleared out the basement. Then we hung lots of spooky stuff — you know, skeletons that glow in the dark, bats in the air, that kind of stuff. Then, on the day of the party, we set up a bunch of tables. We got out all the things we wanted the girls to touch. I decided to dress up as a monster and jump out every now and then. What's Halloween without a good scream or two?

The girls all arrived after lunch on Saturday. Maybe that wasn't a good thing, I thought. I was sure a couple of them were going to lose their lunch.

Bonus!

I put on some spooky music in the basement. Then I went up and put on my monster outfit.

Simon was wearing a Count Dracula costume. He told Ellen to bring her friends downstairs.

“Von’t you come in, beautiful ladies,” Simon said in his best vampire voice. “Do not be afraid of my castle. I want to be your friend. Heh, heh, heh.”

He put blindfolds on the girls and led them around to the tables.

“This is blood,” he said. One girl stuck her hand in ketchup. “I drink blood. Heh, heh, heh! I want to drink *your* blood. Heh, heh, heh!”

She screamed. Way to go, Simon!

“This is a brain,” he said. Another kid touched a cauliflower.

I jumped up from behind a chair and let out a scream.

All the little girls screamed right back. Then they ran upstairs.

We waited.

“Hey, Ellen!” I shouted. “Get your gutless little friends down here!”

But the only person who came downstairs was my mother.



“What’s going on?” she demanded. “Why are all the girls crying?”

Then she looked around and figured it out.

“Sam, what’s all this scary stuff? You were supposed to play Pass the Pumpkin. You were supposed to play pin the hat on the witch. I mean, these girls are only six years old!”

“So?” I said to her. “Halloween is supposed to be scary.”

I could see my mom was ready to let out a scream herself. Simon and I hurried upstairs first.

We tried to calm the girls down. We got out the cake and ice cream and tried to get them to sing “Happy Birthday”. But the girls were still crying. A couple of them just wanted to leave. Some of them had phoned home and were waiting at the door.

Then Ellen walked right up and kicked me in the shin again.

“You creep!” she yelled. “You’re going to pay for this!”

I didn’t know it then, but she was right.