

# FRIGHT TIME

3 Spine-tingling Tales  
for Young Readers

- TERROR TOWN
- MEDAL OF HORROR
- KID WILLIE'S GHOST



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# TERROR TOWN

by Jack Kelley

## 1

**W**atch out for the hermit, Matt!" It was the last thing my brother Rory said. "Don't let him get you!"

He laughed his idiot laugh and climbed on the bus. He was going off to skateboard camp, and he couldn't pass up the chance to try and scare me one more time.

I would be taking over Rory's paper route for the next two weeks. The last house I had to deliver to was the dingy old shack where this hermit lived.

"He has a long scraggly beard and brown

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teeth and yellow eyes," Rory told me. "His fingers are like claws. And he eats people."

"Get out of here," I said. "I'm not afraid."

"Sure, Matt," he said. "Just like you weren't afraid of Suzy No-Toes."

"That was when I was little."

He wouldn't let me live that down. He was always kidding me by going "Bawk! Bawk! Bawk!"

Anybody can get scared telling spooky stories around a camp fire when you're only ten. But I was twelve now. I was going to prove I was no chicken.

Actually, I was looking forward to covering his paper route. It was my first real job. It meant I'd make forty dollars, which was pretty cool. Later in the summer I was going to the state fair with my friend Amy, who lived up the road. The money would sure come in handy.

I started out that first morning riding my bike with a basket full of papers on each side of the back wheel. I'd gone around the route a few times with Rory before he left, so I knew where I had to leave off all those copies of the *Titusville Sentinel*.

It's important to get the paper delivered early. People want to read it at breakfast. If it's not

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there on time, they call your house or the newspaper office and start complaining: Where's my paper?

I mean early. It's pitch dark when you start and the sun is only just coming up by the time you're done.

It's weird out before dawn. Foggy and misty and very, very quiet. The town is empty. No cars, no people. Very weird. Sometimes you see things and you're not sure what they are. Like, cabbages somebody is growing in their garden look like people's heads.

The first house on the route was Mrs. Glavin's. In real life you don't throw the papers onto the customers' porches the way paperboys do in the movies. Usually there's a tube attached to the house. Or you slide it inside the storm door.

It was dark as night when I took the paper around to the back where Mrs. Glavin wanted it. Her husband had died the year before. She lived there all alone. She was nice to kids. On Halloween she gave out the best candy treats in town.

Just as I opened the screen door to drop her paper, I stopped. I had the feeling that somebody was watching me.

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I looked up. It was Mrs. Glavin. Or was it? Her face was almost pressed against the glass of the inside door. I could just see her in the dark. She looked strange. Her eyes weren't there. Just dark holes. She didn't say anything. She didn't move.

The way she was staring made me feel funny. Okay, more than funny. Scared.

She hasn't had her coffee yet, I said to myself as I went back around and climbed onto my bike. Dad always said that: "I'm not human in the morning till I've had my coffee."

I laughed. Mrs. Glavin wasn't human—she hadn't had her coffee. My laugh echoed from across the street. It sounded hollow.

I went on to deliver papers to the other houses on the route. I didn't think any more about Mrs. Glavin. To tell the truth, my brain was occupied with that hermit. I hoped I wouldn't turn chicken when I got to his house. Rory was just joking with me, but you know how your mind can run away with you. It's always happening to me.

One funny thing happened along the way. The Rowlands get two papers, one for Mr. Rowlands and one for Mrs. Rowlands. They were always fighting about who got which section first. So