

FRIGHT TIME

3 Spine-tingling Tales for Young Readers

- DON'T BREATHE
- OVERNIGHT-MARE
- IT'S IN THE ATTIC



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DON'T BREATHE

by Roy Nemerson

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I let out a gasp.

Suddenly everyone was staring at me. “What was that?” the coach asked, and he looked really scared.

I tried to say something. But all I could do was gasp again.

“He has asthma,” a classmate called out. “He needs his inhalator. Fast!”

“His inhalator!” yelled the coach. “Where is it?”

I couldn’t answer. I was gasping every two or three seconds now. I dropped to my knees, and pointed toward the locker room area.

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“It must be in his locker!” one of the kids called out. “We’ll get it!” Two of the boys dashed off toward the locker area as the other kids all gathered around.

“Okay, give him space, give him air!” the coach said.

Air! There was plenty of air. The problem was getting it into my lungs. Especially after just having done twenty push ups. Ever since I was three years old I had been having attacks of asthma.

The attacks could be controlled by my breath-inhalator. It was a little plastic device that I placed into my mouth. I’d press down on it, and it would open up the passages and let me breathe normally again.

The boys had returned with my inhalator. Everyone watched as I pressed on the button and breathed in the misty spray. In two or three seconds I began to breathe normally again. My wheezing stopped.

“I’m okay, thanks,” I said, as I stood up. Everyone was staring at me like they had seen a ghost.

“Sorry if I scared you,” I said. “It looks and sounds a lot worse than it really is. I’m fine.”

“What do you mean?” the coach said, trying to stay calm. “If we couldn’t get your inhalator, you

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might have passed out, or worse!”

“I never travel anywhere without it,” I said. “So it’s never a problem.”

The coach looked at me, and nodded. “You’ve got courage, Ricky. And I admire your spirit. But health and safety come before everything else. And no one told me I was getting a gym student who had asthma. You shouldn’t have been doing those push-ups.”

I felt my cheeks turning red again, but this time with anger and frustration. People were always treating me like I was weak or something. But I wasn’t! I had the asthma under control.

“Really, it was nothing,” I said. “You saw, I did the twenty push ups and some of the other kids couldn’t. And they don’t have asthma.”

“Sorry, son,” said the coach, shaking his head. “We can’t take any chances. From now on, no more strenuous activity for you without approval or permission from the school doctor.”

“It’s not fair!” I said to my mother, who was busy getting dinner.

“They’re just doing what they think’s best for you, Ricky. You can still play baseball and tennis and the other sports. You just have to take it

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easy on the pushups and things like that.”

“I thought it’d be different in junior high,” I said. “That they wouldn’t treat me like a baby once I was in the seventh grade.”

“They’re not,” she said. “They just want to be careful. The doctors say your condition’s better, but there’s no point taking chances now.”

“It’s no big deal!” I pleaded. “I’m getting fewer attacks, I’ve always got my inhalator with me, the whole thing’s over in a few seconds!”

“Ricky, don’t get yourself all worked up,” Mom said, frowning at me. “That’s a good way to give yourself another attack.”

It just wasn’t fair, I thought, as I stared glumly out the kitchen window. A squirrel was busy burying a nut in the ground in our backyard. Winters came early in this part of New England, and the animals knew when it was time to prepare. I sighed. It looked like it was going to be a long winter for me, too.

“Pack your bags, family!” boomed out a voice behind me.

I whirled around. Mom and I both stared at Dad, who was standing in the kitchen doorway. He was smiling broadly.

“We’re moving to Florida!”