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# Freddie Pernortner

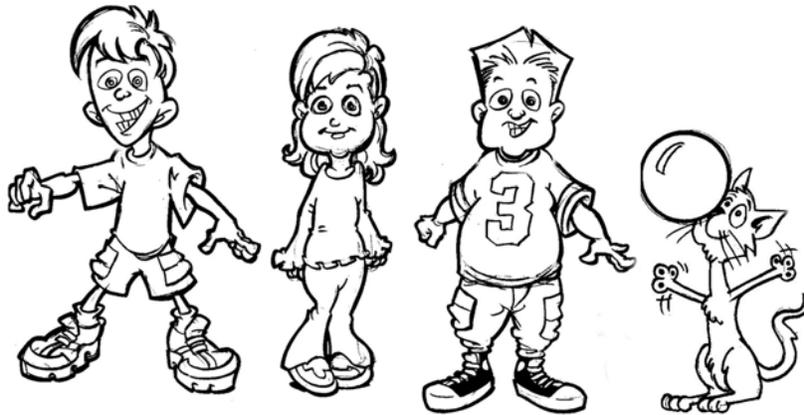
FEARLESS FIRST GRADER<sup>®</sup>

Freddie

Darla

Chipper

Mr. Chewy



**A HAUNTING WE WILL GO**  
BY JOHNATHAN RAND



# 1

This is the story of how Freddie Fernortner and his two best friends, Darla and Chipper, along with Freddie's cat Mr. Chewy, discovered a haunted house. It's a very spooky story, too, so you might want to have some lights on while you read it.

One day, Chipper told Freddie and Darla about a haunted house that wasn't far from where they lived.

"My dad told me all about it," Chipper explained. "He said that it's only a short

walk through the woods.”

“Is it really haunted?” Darla asked.

“Yep,” Chipper replied, nodding his head. “Dad says that it’s been haunted for a long, long time.”

“I’ll bet it’s scary!” Freddie said excitedly.

“That’s what my dad said,” Chipper piped. “Do you want to see if we can find it?”

Freddie didn’t hesitate. “Yeah!” he exclaimed.

“I don’t know,” Darla said warily. Her eyes grew wide. “There might be ghosts there.”

“We won’t go inside,” Freddie said. “Let’s just go and look. I’ll bet it’s really creepy looking.”

Darla thought about it for a minute. “Well,” she said, “I guess it would be okay

to just *look* at it.”

“It’s right over there, through the forest,” Chipper pointed. “Dad says it’ll only take a few minutes to get there. He says there’s even an old trail we can follow.”

The three couldn’t contain their excitement as they walked across the street, heading toward the deep, dark forest that was behind Chipper’s house. Mr. Chewy followed, chewing a wad of gum and blowing bubbles. When the cat was only a small kitten, Freddie taught him how to chew gum and blow bubbles. That’s how he got his name.

They walked around the house and found the old trail.

And they followed it.

Deep into the forest.

The thick branches above blocked out the sunlight, and the forest was very dark.

“This is spooky already,” Darla said,  
as she looked around.

And Darla was right.

The forest *was* very spooky.

But things were about to get spookier.

## 2

The thick branches above grew thicker, and the forest became even darker.

“Gee,” Chipper said. “I didn’t realize that the forest was so dark.”

“And this is the middle of the day,” Freddie said.

“I sure wouldn’t want to be in the forest at night,” Darla said with a shudder.

The three continued walking along the path, looking warily around. They noticed

different kinds of trees and shrubs.

“Look at that!” Freddie suddenly cried. He pointed toward the base of a tree only a few feet away. There, growing from the boggy ground, was a very large mushroom. It had a milky white stem, and a brown top covered with creamy spots.

“Wow!” Freddie said, as the three approached the mushroom. “I’ve never seen one so big in my whole life!”

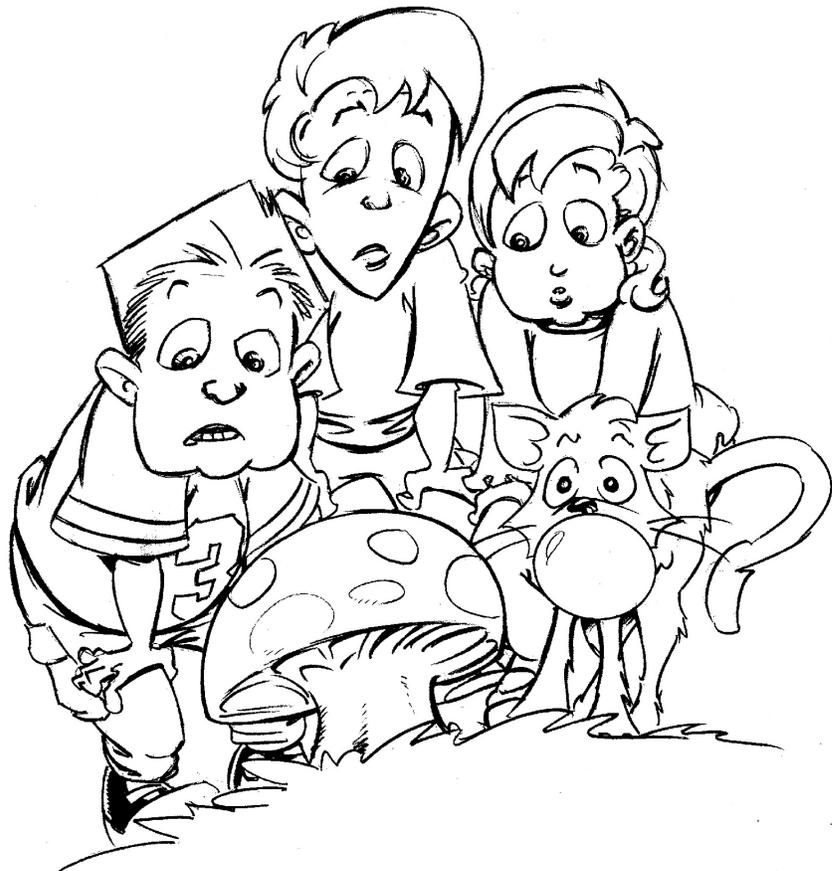
Freddie, Chipper, and Darla crouched down to see the mushroom better. Mr. Chewy sat on the ground, chewing his gum.

“I’m going to touch it,” Freddie said.

“Eeeewww!” Darla said with a grimace. “I bet it feels icky.”

Freddie reached out and gently touched the soft top of the mushroom, being very careful so he didn’t injure it.

“It’s soft,” he said, “and a little slimy.”



Mr. Chewy sat up, walked over to the mushroom, and sniffed a few times.

Chipper reached out his hand and felt the mushroom. “You’re right, Freddie,” he said. “It *is* a little slimy.”

“Gross!” Darla said.

“Touch it, Darla,” Freddie said. “It won’t bite you.”

“I’m not going to touch it,” Darla said, shaking her head.

“You big chicken,” Chipper said.

“I’m not chicken,” Darla said. “I just think it’s icky. I don’t want icky stuff on my fingers.”

Freddie was about to stand up, when he noticed something near the mushroom.

“Holy cow!” he suddenly exclaimed.

He pointed.

Chipper looked.

Darla looked.

They gasped.

In the weeds, partially hidden, a pair of beady eyes glared back at them.

And, without warning, the creature attacked!

# 3

“Aaaaahhh!” Freddie screamed, and he fell backward.

“Ooooooohhh!” Chipper cried, and he lost his balance and tumbled to the ground.

“Eeeeeek!” Darla shrieked. She, too, fell to the ground. Mr. Chewy jumped so fast he almost spit out his gum.

It didn’t take long, however, for the three first graders and the cat to leap to

their feet.

“It’s a monster!” Chipper cried.

“It’s a creature!” Darla exclaimed.

Freddie stood at a safe distance, looking at the thing that had suddenly leapt from its hiding place.

“It’s . . . it’s . . . it’s only a toad!” he stammered. He took a step forward and knelt down. “Look at him!” he said. “That’s the biggest toad I’ve ever seen!”

Chipper and Darla let out relieved sighs, and they walked up to Freddie and knelt down.

“You’re right!” Chipper said. “That thing is gigantic!”

“Maybe that mushroom belongs to him,” Darla said. “You know . . . so he has a place to go when it rains.”

“It might be his chair,” Chipper said. “I read somewhere that mushrooms are

also called 'toadstools'."

"I'll bet you're right," Freddie said.  
"I'll bet the toad uses it as his chair."

Chipper reached out to touch the toad, but the toad wasn't going to have any part of it. It turned, and with one giant leap, bounded into the brush, and vanished.



“That was cool,” Freddie said, standing up. “I wonder what else we’ll find in the forest.”

“I just want to find the haunted house,” Chipper said. “I want to see a real, live ghost!”

“Ghosts aren’t alive,” Darla said. “That’s why they’re called ‘ghosts’.”

“I don’t think there is such a thing as ghosts,” Freddie said.

“Uh-huh,” Darla said, nodding her head. “My cousin says that there is a ghost that lives in his basement. He says he feeds him marshmallows.”

“Marshmallows?!?!” Chipper exclaimed. “That’s the silliest thing I’ve ever heard! Ghosts don’t eat marshmallows!”

“This ghost does,” Darla insisted, bobbing her head. “And my cousin doesn’t make things up.”

Chipper shook his head. He'd never heard of a ghost that ate marshmallows.

Of course, he had no idea what ghosts ate, if they ate anything at all.

But he was sure that they didn't eat marshmallows.

"Come on," Freddie urged. "Let's keep going. The haunted house can't be far."

And Freddie was right. The three first graders didn't know it at the time, but they were only moments away from finding it.

The haunted house.

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