



WWW.AMERICANCHILLERS.COM

1

“Rachel . . . can you believe they’re going to let us see it first?” David asked me in a whisper.

David Rydell is my next door neighbor, and he sits right behind me in class.

I shook my head. “No,” I replied quietly. “It’s going to be the coolest school field trip that we’ve ever been on!”

It was September, and school had just started. I was glad to be back. Oh, I was sorry summer was over, but it was great to see a lot of my friends that I hadn’t seen since June, when school let out for summer break.

And what a summer it had been! My brother, Derek, and I visited our grandparents in South Carolina. It’s usually a lot of fun, but a really crazy

thing happened: we were attacked by gigantic sea creatures! We barely escaped with our lives, and my grandparents' home was completely destroyed.

I'm sure glad *that's* over with! I mean . . . I like a little adventure, but battling huge beasts from the sea isn't my idea of fun.

However, visiting a wax museum? Now *there* was something I could get into.

My name is Rachel Baker, and I live in Seattle, Washington. My family has lived here forever. I have grandparents that live here, and my great grandparents, too.

And it's a great place to live. There's a lot to see and do in Seattle. Of course, Seattle is known for getting a lot of rain, but it doesn't *always* rain here. In fact, there are a lot more places in America that get more rain than we do. But there's a lot of mist and fog in Seattle, so people think that we get more rain. Not true.

And Seattle is also known for the Space Needle, which is a six hundred twenty foot tall rocket-styled building. It was built in 1962 for the World's Fair.

A lot of people are familiar with Mount St. Helens, too, which is an active volcano. It's only a couple hours' drive from Seattle.

If it sounds like I know a lot about Seattle, you're right. In fact, everyone in our class knows a lot about our city. You see, our school had a knowledge contest. Everyone in our class—the entire school, even—took a test to see how much they knew about our city. It was a lot of fun. The class that had the best test scores won a field trip.

And not just *any* field trip.

A trip to a *real* wax museum!

Well, my class *won!*

But the really cool part was that we would get to visit the wax museum before it was even open to the public! Our school principal had made special arrangements with the arts council to allow us to spend a whole Saturday seeing the wax figures and exploring the museum. Sounds fun, right?

Wrong.

Well, sure . . . it *sounded* fun.

But it wasn't going to be.

And if I thought that being attacked by sea creatures in South Carolina was scary, it was *nothing* compared to what was about to happen at the wax museum.

9

I was up early—before six—on that particular Saturday. David was up even earlier, and he came to the door with his backpack, ready to go.

“Come on in,” I said. “Mom is making my lunch, and I have to finish my cereal.”

David took a seat in the living room. “It seems like I’ve been waiting for this day forever!” he said.

I sat down at the kitchen table to finish my breakfast. “Me, too,” I said. “I can’t believe our class won the contest.”

“By an inch,” David said.

And he was right. Mrs. Tupper, our teacher, said that we scored ninety-seven percent . . . one percent

higher than the students in Mr. Birch's class. Talk about close!

"I hope the gift store will be open," I said. "It would be cool to have a souvenir from a wax museum."

"Yeah," David agreed. "Like a little wax Frankenstein. That would be great!"

"Here's your lunch, Rachel," Mom said, placing a brown paper bag on the table. "Don't forget to put it in your backpack."

"Thanks, Mom," I said.

I finished my cereal, then I finished packing my backpack. Actually, there wasn't much that I needed to bring with me. The new wax museum was only on the other side of the city.

But we'd be there all day. Everyone was instructed to bring a lunch . . . and then we were all going out for pizza after the field trip. I also brought an umbrella and ten dollars that I'd saved, just in case the gift store was open.

"Ready?" David asked as he stood up.

"Ready," I replied, putting on my sweatshirt.

"You two have fun," Mom said, and she bent down and gave me a kiss on the cheek.

"We will, Mrs. Baker," David said with a big grin. "Today is going to be a blast! I just *know* it!"

Our school is only a few blocks away, and we walked there together to meet up with the rest of our classmates. From there, we would take a school bus to the museum.

The ride to the museum was boring. Although everyone was excited, it was still really early. Lots of kids slept on the bus.

Not David and me. We sat together and talked about what we might see in the wax museum. I'd never been to one before, but I saw some pictures in a library book. The pictures were wax sculptures—people—and they were really cool looking. Some of them looked so lifelike that I thought they were real.

“I hope we see a wax vampire,” David said as the bus hit a bump. “You know . . . like Count Dracula or something.”

“Or a werewolf!” I exclaimed. “That would be awesome!”

Finally, we arrived at the wax museum. The bus pulled into a big, open parking lot.

“Gee, this place is empty,” David said, looking out the window at the barren lot.

“It's supposed to be,” I said. “The wax museum isn't open yet. We'll be the only ones here. Just us and the wax figures.”

As the bus stopped, everyone got up. Half the class was still groggy and sleepy.

“Okay everyone,” Mrs. Tupper said. “Don’t forget to stick together for the tour. Afterwards, you’ll be allowed to buddy-up and explore the museum in groups.”

“That’ll be fun,” I said.

“Yeah,” David agreed as we shuffled along the aisle with other students, making our way toward the front of the bus. “It’ll be a lot of fun exploring on our own.”

We got off the bus and walked across the parking lot. It was cold and windy, and the sky was iron-gray. Other students were waking up a little more, and I could feel a tingle of excitement as we got closer and closer to the door.

But I also felt something else:

Fear.

I felt a small pang of fear knotting in my belly.

Why?

It was only a wax museum, filled with wax figures.

What was there to be afraid of?

Plenty . . . as David and I were about to find out.

3

Walking into the wax museum was like walking into a big, dark room. The front doors were all glass, and they opened into a lobby. To the right were several ticket windows with ‘closed’ signs draped in front of them. To the left was a glass-walled gift store. There were no lights on inside the store, but we could see shelves and racks of gift items in the shadows. Like the ticket windows, there was a big ‘closed’ sign in front. Next to the sign was a wax sculpture of a man wearing old clothing. He wore a tall, black hat. The sculpture looked like he was from the 1800s.

“Rats,” David said, pointing to the closed sign. “I was really hoping the gift store would be open.”

“Well, we can still take pictures,” I said.

“Yeah, that’ll be cool,” David said.

But there was something else that was strange.

There was nobody else around.

Nobody.

The only people there were the twenty-one students in my class, and Mrs. Tupper, who was busy counting heads to make sure that we were all there.

“Eighteen, nineteen, twenty, twenty-one,” she finished. “Good. We’re all here. Now, I’d like everyone’s attention.”

My classmates quieted, and we all looked at Mrs. Tupper.

“While we’re here, we all need to remember a few things,” she instructed. “First of all, the director of the wax museum has been good enough to allow our class, and our class alone, to preview the museum. Do not touch the wax figures or any other displays that you see. Does everyone understand?”

We all nodded and agreed.

“Good. I’ve promised the director that we’ll all be on our best behavior”

Mrs. Tupper continued with her instructions, but it was hard to pay attention. I guess that I was just so excited to see everything.

And then, while Mrs. Tupper was speaking, something caught my attention out of the corner of my eye.

A movement.

I looked over toward the gift store.

No, I thought. Rachel, you're imagining things.

“ . . . and many of the things you see will surprise you,” Mrs. Tupper was saying.

There!

Something moved again. I turned and looked toward the gift store.

The wax figure—the sculpture of the man wearing old clothing—was gone!

4

“David!” I whispered as quietly as I could. Mrs. Tupper was still talking, and I didn’t want to get into trouble.

David leaned closer, but he kept his eyes forward, watching our teacher. *“What?”* he whispered.

“That wax figure moved!” I hissed. *“It was there a minute ago, but now it’s gone!”*

“Quit kidding around,” he said.

I glanced over my shoulder, just to make sure that I wasn’t imagining things.

The wax figure wasn’t there.

I turned back to David, and leaned toward him.
“I’m not imagining things,” I insisted. *“Take a look.
That wax figure is gone!”*

“Miss Baker?” Mrs. Tupper said sternly.

Gulp.

“Yes, Mrs. Tupper?” I replied sheepishly.

“Is there something you’d like to share with the class?”

“Uh, um . . . I just . . . I—”

Everyone was looking at me now, and I felt silly. My tongue felt like it was all knotted up.

“It’s just that . . . well, when we came in here, there was a wax figure standing by the gift store,” I said. “And now it’s gone.”

I turned and pointed, and received the shock of my life.

The wax figure hadn’t moved at all! He was standing in the exact same spot, in the very same position that he had been!

Something really weird was going on.

“He looks like he’s still there to me,” Mrs. Tupper said.

Around me, my classmates were rolling their eyes and snickering. Amber Caplin frowned and gave me a

nasty look. Amber has never liked me, and I don't know why. I've never done anything to her.

"Quit goofing around," she snapped quietly. *"You're going to get us all in trouble."*

I was going to say something, but I decided not to. I didn't want Mrs. Tupper mad at me.

"... as I was saying," Mrs. Tupper continued, and while she spoke, I turned slowly and glanced over my shoulder.

The wax man was still there, frozen in place.

Rachel, I thought, *you are cracking up.*

I returned my attention to Mrs. Tupper.

"... and if the day goes well and everyone follows directions, we'll all go out for pizza before returning to the school."

Everyone began to chatter, and Mrs. Tupper raised her hands to silence us. "Remember," she said, "that's *only* if everyone follows directions."

I turned and looked behind me.

The wax figure was still there.

I shook my head, not knowing how I could have imagined such a thing.

Sheesh, I thought. *Wax figures can't move on their own.*

“The boys’ restroom is over there,” Mrs. Tupper said, pointing, “and the girls’ is over there. We’ll take just a few minutes, and then begin the tour.”

The chattering and giggling started again as our class broke up. David wandered off, but I wanted to check something.

I wanted to see the wax man up close.

I walked over and stood near the tall figure. His skin was a little shiny, like plastic. He had black hair and a mustache, which looked very real.

I stepped closer, inspecting the figure’s hand. It was the same color as human skin, except it looked glossy.

I reached my hand out, then looked around.

No one was watching. I knew that Mrs. Tupper said not to touch anything, but, maybe, just this once, to satisfy my curiosity

Slowly, I reached closer. My index finger was almost touching the figure’s hand.

I looked around again. Some students were peering through the windows of the gift shop, and a few more were taking turns at the drinking fountain.

I turned my attention again to the ominous figure looming over me. The man was staring past me, gazing into nothing. His eyes were frozen balls of wax.

Cold and lifeless.
My finger touched the back of his hand.
Suddenly the figure sprang to life! His cold hand
grasped my wrist, and held on tightly.
And then I was screaming, screaming as loud as I
could.

5

Everything was a blur as I leapt away, breaking from the man's grasp so quickly that I almost fell over backward. Several of my classmates stopped what they were doing.

"Whoah!" someone exclaimed. "You're a real dude!"

"Right you are," the wax figure said, reaching up and removing his black hat. He took a bow. "I am Mr. Lakley, the museum director."

My classmates began to gather around, marveling at Mr. Lakley.

"You look like you're made out of wax!" David piped.

“Yeah, you fooled all of us,” someone said.

“Just a little fun to begin our day,” Mr. Lakley said. “I made myself up to look like a wax figure to show you how lifelike the figures are. You’ll be amazed when you see them.”

“But . . . but you disappeared!” I exclaimed. “You were there one minute, and gone the next!”

“I thought I heard my office phone ringing,” Mr. Lakley replied. “I just went around the corner to check, then I returned to this spot.”

“Well, you sure freaked me out,” I said.

“I didn’t mean to scare you,” Mr. Lakley said to me. “But I *do* want to remind everyone to please keep your hands away from the wax figures. Many hours of hard work have gone into crafting each and every one, and they are very valuable.”

“How valuable?” Amber asked. “Like . . . millions of dollars?”

Mr. Lakley laughed and shook his head. “No,” he chuckled, “not quite *that* valuable. But they are very, very expensive. Irreplaceable, in fact.”

“What does ‘irreplaceable’ mean?” one of my classmates asked.

Mrs. Tupper spoke. “It means they can’t be replaced,” she said. “That is why it is such a privilege

for our class to be allowed to tour the museum all by ourselves.”

“We’ll begin the tour in just a few minutes,” Mr. Lakley said. “I’m going to remove this make-up in my office, and I’ll be right back.”

Mr. Lakley turned and walked off, and the heels of his shoes clack-clacked on the wood floor.

The crowd of students dispersed, and more chattering arose. I got in line at the drinking fountain, and David walked up behind me.

“That was funny,” he said, grinning. “I was just walking out of the bathroom when I saw him grab you. You should have seen the look on your face!”

“He really freaked me out,” I said. “He looked like a wax figure . . . but then again, he looked so real.”

“That’s because he *is* real,” David replied.

I took a drink from the fountain while David slipped the backpack from his shoulder. “I’m not going to haul this around all day,” he said, and he walked across the hall and set his pack down on the floor next to the gift shop, leaning it against the glass window.

That was a good idea. My backpack carried only my lunch and a small umbrella, but I didn’t want to have to carry it around everywhere. I slung the pack off

my shoulder and dropped it next to David's . . . and that's when I saw it.

A face.

Someone moved in the gift shop!

I only saw him for a moment, but it looked like the face of a man. When he saw me looking, he ducked down behind a shelf.

"Did . . . did you see that?" I asked David.

"See what?" he replied, turning toward me. He'd been looking the other way.

"I thought I saw someone in there," I said.

"You're imagining things," David said.

"No, I'm not," I replied, shaking my head. "I didn't imagine the museum director moving, and he turned out to be real."

David and I peered through the glass. All I could make out were dark shadows of shelves and racks.

But there was no movement.

"I guess it was nothing," I admitted. "I'm just jittery."

"How are you, Jittery," David smirked, holding out his hand. "I'm David."

I shook my head and rolled my eyes. David was always joking around like that.

The clack-clacking of shoes could be heard in the distance, coming closer. We turned to see Mr. Lakley approaching. He was wearing a different suit, a newer one, and he looked a lot different than he did a few minutes ago.

“Everyone ready?” he said cheerily.

Cries of “yep!” and “you bet!” could be heard as we gathered around.

“Wonderful!” Mr. Lakley said. “The tour is about to begin.”

“This is so cool!” David exclaimed. “This is going to be the tour of a lifetime!”

David was right. It was going to be the tour of a lifetime.

But it would also be a different kind of tour altogether.

Our tour of the wax museum would soon turn into a tour of terror

We hope you enjoyed this
preview! To order this
book, call toll-free:
1-888-420-4244
or visit
www.americanchillers.com

WWW.AMERICANCHILLERS.COM