

The shrill scream can be heard from outside; rising and falling through several discrete tones before devolving into an incongruous babble of harmonic gargling. He listens with rapt interest as the digital tones make way for a static hiss as the loud modem connects with the server. Had this been a weeknight, he may have assumed the sound was an indication that Mrs. Prescott was sending some electronic mail, or that Mr. Prescott was looking up some multi-kilabyte scans from the latest issues of Playboy. This is Saturday night, however, which means that Mr. and Mrs. Prescott are spending the evening with their eccentric friends, **the Castevets**, leaving Sydney home alone.

It's the perfect time to strike, and that's why Billy's here.

He edges closer to the large picture window, being sure to stay out of the bright yellow glow of the nearby streetlamp. Luckily, the large oak tree out front is casting long shadows against the house, hiding Billy's tall, black-clad form. He peers inside and there she is, sitting in the computer chair, back to the window, eyes on the bright monitor, oblivious to his presence. The hairs on the back of his neck stand up for a moment. He's only fifteen feet from her, but she doesn't know he's there. There's a thrill to it, and Billy takes a deep breath to steady himself and smells the rubbery plastic of the mask. He wishes he could take it off and breath fresh air, but keeping his face hidden is a necessary precaution.

The light from the streetlamp is occluded for a moment, and Billy spins, only managing to see the swish of a black cloak as a figure passes by. Could it be him? he wonders, a hot fear rising within him like an **elevator filled with blood**. Whoever it is, they seem to be heading up the driveway towards the front of the house, around the corner from the very place that Billy now stands. He grips the knife hard in his right hand and begins moving slowly towards the corner of the house, passing cautiously in front of the large window.

There is a sharp knock, which sounds like a gunshot in the silence of the quiet suburban neighborhood, and Billy freezes at the center of the picture window. He watches Sydney as she spins in her seat, attention drawn by the knock at the door, but she doesn't go to answer it. She seems to be on edge. Frightened.

There's another knock. Billy is holding his breath, but doesn't realize it until Sydney turns to her left and sees him standing there just outside her window, white ghost mask over his face and brandishing a twelve-inch kitchen knife.

She screams and pushes herself wildly to her feet, knocking over the office chair as she does so. Billy lets out his breath and swears, stumbling backwards and running towards the back of the house in a blind panic. He loses sight of Sydney but he can hear her running

through the house to get away from him. Away from Ghostface. He imagines what she must be thinking in this moment. One stranger knocking at her door in the middle of the night. Another watching her from outside. She must be terrified, but at least she doesn't know that it's Billy under the mask. She doesn't, right?

He makes it to the backyard just as Sydney reaches the kitchen, which he can see through the glass of the patio door. She grabs the phone off the hook and puts it to her ear, perhaps making to call the police, but a dismayed look crosses her face and she lets the receiver drop. Billy wonders if there's something wrong with the phone for a moment, but then it clicks: the internet is on the same phone line. Nobody will be calling this house until the computer is disconnected.

A loud thud and the sound of breaking glass reaches Billy's ears, causing him to jump and drop the knife into the dewy grass. Sydney also hears it, and she darts out of view of the patio window, escaping into the dark recesses of the house, the phone's receiver swinging by its twisted cord. Billy quickly recovers the knife and jogs up to the patio door, peers inside, but then immediately jumps back. There, walking calmly into the kitchen, is Billy's double. Black cloak, contorted white face, and a large kitchen knife. It's Ghostface, and he's come to kill Billy's girlfriend.

His first instinct is to run, like he did when Sydney saw him, but it's apparent that Ghostface hasn't spotted him yet. The light in the kitchen is bright enough to render Billy invisible out in the dark backyard. The killer scans the kitchen, ghastly blank eyes roving this way and that. **Black eyes. The devil's eyes.**

Fear grips him. He's sweating, and he's breathing as if he's just run a marathon, but Ghostface walks out of the kitchen, tracing Sydney's steps. Though the door is closed, Billy can distinctly hear Ghostface say, "**Here, kitty, kitty,**" as he prowls into the next room.

Sydney. The thought of his girl snaps Billy out of it. He came here for a reason, after all. He's not wearing the same disguise as the killer just to be cute. He's here to protect the woman he loves.

He takes a deep breath and silently opens the patio door, stepping into the bright yellow light of the kitchen. Leaving the door open behind him, he listens to the deathly quiet of the house for a long moment and ascertains that Ghostface is currently walking up the creaking stairs towards the second level. Perfect.

First thing's first: Billy has to get the phones working again. After confirming the garbled hiss of the internet coming through the dangling phone receiver, he rushes out of the kitchen

and into the living room, noting the shards of glass at the nearby front door where Ghostface muscled his way in. He approaches the glowing, space-age hulk of the nineteen-inch CRT computer display, a strange website occupying all of the monitor's real-estate. The pattern of light and dark squares, and the rudimentary representations of chess pieces on-screen tells him that Sydney had just begun a game with a friend online.

A text box labeled "Tatum BFF" appears in the center of the screen, and Billy watches as a message from Sydney's best friend is typed out letter by letter. It reads, "Hey Syds! Your turn! Get your head out of the J&B and play!"

The bottle of Mr. Prescott's J&B Canadian whiskey is indeed sitting there to the left of the keyboard, cap lying next to the bottle as if Sydney had been taking pulls. Setting the knife down on the desk, he quickly replies to Tatum's message, saying, "Send help. Killer in the house." He hits return, but a large hourglass icon appears over the cursor and nothing more happens. Billy wiggles the mouse, but it isn't responding to his touch. He physically shakes the monitor. Nothing. Frustration rises inside him. He tries hitting the power button on the massive off-white computer tower, but there's absolutely no response. He knows that if he can't get help via Tatum, at very least he needs to sever the computer's internet connection so that he can use the phone to call the police.

Without another thought, he grabs the bottle of J&B and pours the contents into the computer's access panel, sending up sparks and shutting down the computer with a small puff of smoke.

"Cheating bitch," he says under his breath. Satisfied, he picks up the knife and turns to head back towards the kitchen and the telephone within. But it's too late.

Standing a mere ten feet away, backlit by the light of the kitchen, is the Ghostface killer, who immediately lunges towards him, large knife thrust forward.

Time slows for a moment, and Billy can't help but be disappointed by the fact that his plan had apparently not worked at all. By dressing as the killer's twin, he was hoping to confuse Ghostface into thinking that maybe he was on his side, as if to say "See, we're all knife-murderers here!" It relied on his hypothesis that out of all the kids that had been dressing up as the killer in the weeks leading up to Halloween, none of them had yet ended up dead. It seemed like a suit of armor that would protect him and confuse Ghostface long enough to let Sydney get away safely. So much for that idea.

All thought of self preservation flees him in this moment, and Billy comes back to the present with a firm grip on his knife and a fire in his belly. He screams a loud war cry and meets

the killer in the middle of the living room, burying his blade deep into Ghostface's taught, surprisingly small frame.

Billy's war-cry turns into a scream of agony as Ghostface's blade also finds its mark deep in his gut. The pain is like a massive weight that has suddenly planted itself on his stomach, rendering him motionless. He falters, loses his grip on his knife, and tumbles to the ground, clutching at his hot, gaping wound.

He's suddenly aware of another scream, this one high-pitched and feminine, and although Billy can't see her in this moment, he imagines that she has walked into the room to find two masked murderers collapsing in a bloody pile in the center of her living room. But no, the scream is too close, as if right on top of him.

Panic hits him harder than a **sledhammer to the head**, and he's now struggling to breath. Through the exertion and pain, he manages to pull off his ghost mask and gasps at the fresh air. A soft, muffled voice reaches his ears. "Billy?" she says. "You're the killer?"

No. Not that. Don't let it be true, he pleads to himself.

Unable to speak, Billy reaches over to the black-clad form lying next to him on the carpet and tugs at the white mask. It pulls away easily, and he drops it in shock as his eyes meet those of Sydney Prescott. It doesn't make any sense, and his mind whirs as he tries to justify why his girlfriend would be dressed like Ghostface. But then it all suddenly makes too much sense.

He manages to say, "Trying to trick the killer." He coughs and feels the blood soaking into the shag around him. "You too?"

She gasps for breath and responds, "Yeah. He doesn't kill his own kind."

He nods at this, then after a moment he smirks. "We're all knife-murderers here," he says.

She laughs.

Then a deep voice draws their attention to the third Ghostface standing in the door to the kitchen. "You guys are weird," he says simply, then walks out the patio door and into the night.