

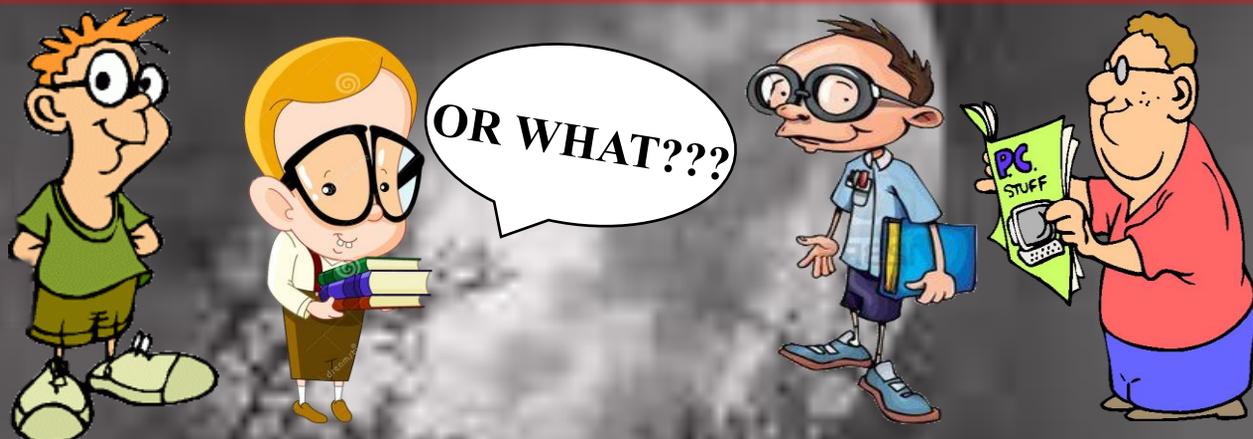
A Night They Will Never Forget

Once, there was a creepy old man called Marlin. He never talked to anybody. He never liked anybody. Nobody liked him either. He was cruel and always criticised everybody.

One night, he was walking casually down the stairs, he missed a step and fell right to the bottom, snapping his neck.

There was a full moon out the night he died which meant his soul couldn't go to heaven. He haunted the house ever since!





Last Halloween night, four nerdy friends decided to go out trick-or-treating around their neighbourhood. A group of teenagers were hanging around the street. They were known to cause trouble and always bullied younger kids. The teenagers came over to the nerds. The nerds tried to walk away but the teenagers wouldn't let them go.

“Go into the haunted house and steal something valuable and bring it back to us right away!” shouted the ringleader.

Alex, one of the nerds, piped up and asked “OR WHAT???”

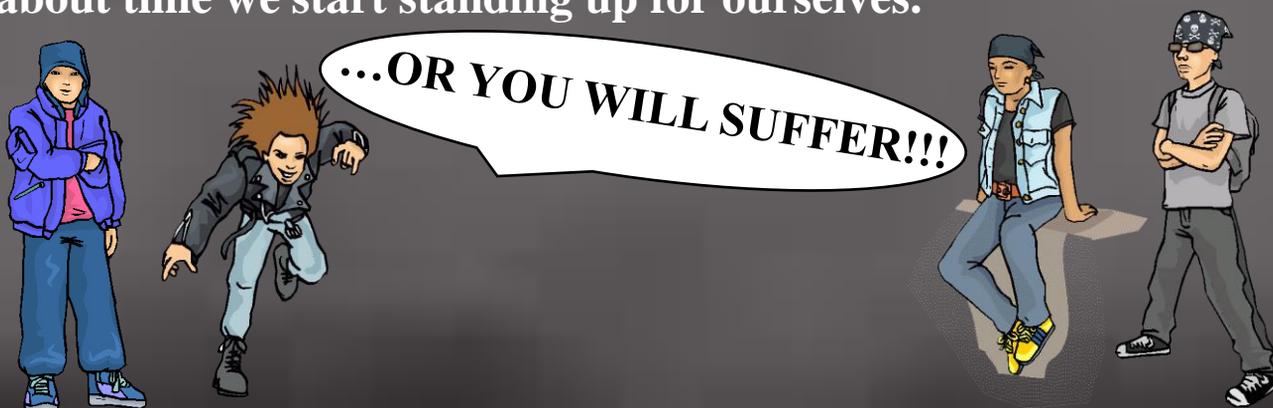
“Do what we say OR YOU WILL SUFFER!!!” yelled the ringleader.

The nerds were afraid of the bully's threat so they decided to do what they were told.

While they were making their way up to the haunted house, the other nerds started giving out to Alex for trying to be smart with the bullies and for making them even angrier.

“What were you thinking saying that, Alex? You could have gotten us beaten up.”

“Because I felt like it. OK!” answered Alex. “And because it's about time we start standing up for ourselves.”





Did you guys hear that???

I want to help you.



When they were inside the haunted house, Alex heard a quiet voice muttering something to him. “Did you guys hear that?” he asked the others. “No. What did it sound like?” “It sounded like an old man,” answered Alex.

Suddenly, a ghost appeared right in front of them. It was Marlin. “Don’t be frightened,” Marlin said. “I’m an old lonely ghost who made many mistakes when I was a man. I don’t want you making the same mistakes as I did. I want to help you. I know what those bullies have said to you but you are all very clever boys and I think you’ll be able to come up with a plan to outsmart those bullies.”

“Yeah,” said Alex, “let’s use our brains for good for once and try to think of a plan to get us out of this mess”.

Marlin told the nerds that he used to fire his nerf guns and pellet guns at anyone who came near his house because he wanted to frighten everyone away. “I still have them, if they’d be any good?”

“HELL YEAH!” roared the nerds.

“I also have a bag of fake money,” said Marlin.

“Great! We could use that to trick the bullies,” said Bob. “I could go back to the bullies and give them the bag of money and you could all hide, within firing distance of the bullies. Once they take the bag of money and I walk away, you could annihilate them!”

“Great idea boys!” said Marlin. “Bob, you go to the sitting room and get the bag of fake money. Jay, you go to the cupboard in the bedroom and get the pellet gun. John, you go with him and get a nerf gun. And Alex, you go and get a lots and lots of ammo.”



When they had gathered all the supplies, they left the haunted house and headed back to the bullies. Bob walked up to them to give them the fake money and the others nerds hid, without being spotted.

Bob handed the bag of money to the ringleader. The ringleader opened it and had a look inside.

“Hey, gimme a closer look at that,” said one of the other bullies. “This is old fashioned money. I know this because my granddad collects old money and this is the old \$1 bill. They tried to fool us! LET’S KILL THEM!”

Then, suddenly, the other nerds started shooting the bullies. They didn’t let go of the trigger until all the bullies had ran away and were completely out of sight.

When Alex went back to his house, he told his parents what had happened. Alex’s Mam was proud of him for standing up for himself.

“How did you think of such a good plan?” she asked.

“There was a kind ghost in the haunted house and he helped us to come up with the plan,” said Alex.

“Wait... you mean Marlin???” asked his Mam in shock. “He is your grandfather! I never told you about him because he was such a cruel man.”

“He must have changed a lot then because he was one of the nicest people I’ve ever met,” said Alex.

The next day, when all the nerds went back to school, everyone wanted to be friends with them because they had beaten the bullies. They were never called names or bullied again.



by Isaac O'Neill