

Knock Knock

By

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Knock Knock
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Chapter 1

Adam held onto the backpack. It gently bounced up and down on his back as he ran up the street. He was heading for the big tree just up the road. He looked over his shoulder a few times to see if he was being followed. He was alone.

Finally, he could enjoy his freedom. This was the first day of the school holidays. And it was going to be awesome! The night was fresh and it smelled so good. It was a warm summer night and it was just so perfect.

He had begged his dad to let him go and visit Jake's so that he could give him his backpack. He even told him he might stay a little later to play online computer games.

He had just passed the road that led to Jake's place about fifty metres behind him. He slowed down as he came closer to the big tree near the sidewalk up ahead. It was dark under the tree's shadow. It looked like no one was there.

"Psst. Hey, you guys?"

"Shh. Quiet you idiot! You're going to let us get caught!" hissed Jake, Adam's friend from school.

Adam strained his eyes to try and see into the darkness. Jake suddenly appeared out of the shadows and grabbed Adam by the arms.

"Come here."

Adam tripped and nearly fell over as he was pulled into the shadow of the tree. Jake held him steady and stared into his eyes. Adam could see a glint of insanity in his eyes. The others at school thought he was crazy. Adam didn't believe that. He always saw the good in him. He believed that even someone like Jake could still be a good friend. And so they became friends.

"Did you bring it?" asked Jake, staring at the backpack.

"It's here. I made sure to check."

Jake grabbed the straps and took the backpack off of Adam. He knelt down and searched it.

"I didn't take a thing. It's all there," said Adam.

"Yeah, I know."

"Then why do you have to look?"

"Because."

"Hey Adam," said Peter, gently patting him on the shoulder, waiting to greet him.

Adam turned and looked at his short friend. "Hey, Pete." They did their secret handshake which included the snapping of fingers and a fist bump.

"You made it," he added.

"Ya, I know," said Peter with a giggle and a wide smile, "It's holidays and I'm here." He could hardly contain his excitement.

Adam tried to contain his own excitement too. But the thought of having to spend the first summer night with his friends from school was just too exciting. Plus, they were breaking the rules. They knew they were not supposed to be out on the streets at night and if they did, they had to be close to home.

"What did you tell your parents?"

"I told them I'm going to your place."

"What?" Adam laughed. He knew his short friend was a bit dull, but he did not mind him. He was a good friend and he was the youngest out of the three of them. He just wanted to be with the big boys.

"Okay, looks like it's all here," said Jake, shyly.

Adam turned to him and said, "Of course it is. I told you it was there."

"Ya, ya, I know. My dad is going to kill me if I don't take care of my video camera."

Jake stood up and turned to face Adam and Peter while checking the camera.

"Can I check?" asked Peter.

"No!" said Jake, slapping Peter's hand as he tried to touch the camera.

"Ow." Peter backed off, rubbing his hand while he went to stand next to Adam.

"Seriously, Jake?" said Adam.

Jake snorted and strapped his camera to his wrist. He ignored Adam and continued playing with his camera settings. "Okay, cool, it's working," he said without looking at his friends.

"That's cool," said Peter, pretending to be interested to ease the tension between Adam and Jake.

Adam looked at Peter and realized what he was doing. He smiled at his short friend.

"Okay, so look. We're going to go around the neighbourhood and do our thing," said Jake.

"Where do we start first?" asked Peter.

Jake looked up the street and said, "We'll start at Mrs. Wattle's house, then we go down the street."

"Okay," said Peter, giggling from excitement.

It made Jake regret having him with. He never seemed to get along with Peter. Maybe it was his girlish giggle that annoyed him or maybe it was just his face that begged him to punch it.

"Peter, just don't mess this up! If you get caught, that's your fault. I'm not going to get you," he said.

"Relax, Jake, it's just a game! Nobody's going to get caught. Just don't damage anything," said Adam.

Jake grunted to himself. Peter nodded his head with a wide smile.

"Okay, so you go first, Peter. I will record you while Adam will be our lookout."

"But what if somebody sees us?" asked Peter.

"Nobody would be out by now. We're in the quiet section of the neighbourhood."

"He's right, Pete. This area is dead anyway," said Adam.

"Okay." Peter started to bolt in the direction towards Mrs. Wattle's house.

"Wait, wait, Gawd," said Jake, trying to grab Peter. "Come back here."

"What?"

"We'll all go together, Pete," said Adam, shaking his head.

"Oh, okay. So let's go then," he replied.

Jake slung the backpack over his shoulders, shook his head at Peter and said,
"Okay, let's go."

The three of them ran from out of the shadows with Jake in the lead and Peter behind him. They ran towards the first house on Jake's list.

Chapter 2

Peter checked over his shoulder a couple of times to make sure that Adam was nearby. He could not believe he was having so much fun with his friends.

They reached Mrs. Wattle's property across the road and hid behind her hedge.

"Okay, Peter, you go now. Adam will keep a lookout," said Jake.

Peter did not wait for Adam's signal. He quickly opened up the front gate of the property and walked up the steps that led to the front door.

Adam went around the side of the house and looked for any sign of movement. He could see Mrs. Wattle standing next to her husband through the lounge window curtains that were half drawn. He knew she was arguing with him just by the way that Mr. Wattle sat sulking in his chair.

Then he heard the knock on the front door. He could not believe that Peter had knocked without telling him he was going to do it. He quickly ran back towards Jake just as Peter was about to climb over the front gate.

Jake sniggered as he kept the camera on Peter who was struggling to climb over the gate.

"Uhm, help me."

Jake sniggered some more while filming.

"Shoosh," said Adam to him as he helped Peter climb over the gate.

They heard the door being opened just as Peter got off the gate. They all quickly scuttled away to hide behind the hedge. Jake sniggered as he pointed the camera lens over the top of the hedge.

"Shh, quiet," said Adam to him.

They watched as Mrs. Wattle stood confused in the doorway. She came out onto the front porch and stood looking into the street to see if anyone was there.

"Hello?" she called out.

Nobody answered.

Jake sniggered some more.

"Shut up," whispered Adam.

They heard Mr. Wattle call out to his wife from inside the house.

"What?" she half-screamed at him in her most annoying tone of voice.

Mr. Wattle muffled a reply to her.

"I don't know," she said in that same high-pitched annoying tone of voice.

"Probably some stupid kids."

Mrs. Wattle turned around and went back inside the house and closed the door behind her.

Jake started to laugh out loud this time. Peter joined in, watching Jake out of the corner of his eye to see if he had won his affection.

Even through the closed door, Adam could hear Mrs. Wattle vent her frustration out on her husband. Adam could almost hear Mr. Wattle's sigh of resignation.

"Oh, that was amazing!" said Jake, pointing the camera at himself while laughing.

Adam giggled along and looked at Peter, nodding his head at the young man's act of bravery.

"Awesome stuff," said Jake, looking in Peter's direction.

Peter took it that Jake appreciated his company even more and said, "So where to next?"

Jake gave him a surprised look and smiled, his eyes beaming as he took advantage of Peter's remark.

"Yeah, um, let's go, um, further down the road. Let's do it," he said.

"Wait, Jake, we can't," said Adam.

"Why not? The night's still young. I'm not going inside now. Neither are you. So let's do some more."

"Yeah," said Peter, slipping into Jake's trap.

Adam sighed and said, "What about my father? He'll soon find out that Peter lied and that we're not at your place."

"Don't be a chicken, man. We're on holiday. C'mon, let's go and knock some more."

Adam looked at Peter and saw the excitement on his face. What harm is there in knocking on the doors of a few more houses?

"Okay, as long as we stay away from Brutus. I don't want that dog to come out and attack us."

"Ja, sure. We won't even go there. C'mon, let's go," said Jake.

He stood up and Peter was quick to follow. They sneaked across the road towards the next house on Jake's list.

"C'mon," Peter called out to Adam as he followed Jake like a homesick puppy.

Adam got to his feet and reluctantly made his way towards them.

Chapter 3

Three houses later, Adam assumed that Jake had had enough. They were nearly caught by Pastor Jacobs, the owner of the fourth house on Jake's list. He knew that Jake was the one trying to cause trouble again. The pastor had been standing at his door, ready to go out to the late night store when he opened up the door, staring at a dumbstruck Peter standing on his porch.

"And what are you doing here?" he asked Peter.

Peter mumbled something that made no sense to the pastor at all. Jake could not contain himself and let out a small squeal as he laughed at Peter's misfortune.

"Who's there?" asked the pastor.

"Nobody, sir," said Jake in a strange tone of voice, sniggering.

"Who's that? Is this a prank again? Jake? Is that you? Jake, next time you go to church, I'll tell your father."

Jake quickly stopped his giggling. He shot up out from behind his hiding spot and started to run away down the street.

"Run!" he said to Peter.

Peter quickly turned and ran down the steps with Adam joining him from the street. They giggled as they ran away, happy that they had not been caught.

"These damn kids," the pastor said to himself, shaking his head as he watched them running down the street before they disappeared down the road.

Jake stopped at the end of the road to catch his breath. He sat down on the sidewalk and lay down on the cool pavement. His heavy breathing showed just how out of shape he was. Adam looked at Peter and they both giggled. They had nearly gotten into so much trouble.

"I got it all on camera," said Jake to them, giggling along.

They giggled some more as they caught their breath. After what seemed like half an hour, Adam looked at his watch and saw that it was way past his curfew. He had to get back home.

"Oh no," he said.

"What?" piped Jake.

"I'm going home now, guys. I'm going to get into so much trouble."

"No, it's too early," said Jake.

"Peter," said Adam, "Both our parents are going to ground us for staying out late and for lying to them."

"No, we can't go now. We've just got one more house to go to."

"What are you talking about, Jake?" asked Adam.

Jake looked up the road and said, "Look, we still have to cross off one more house on the list."

"What 'list', Jake? What is this? I thought we were just going to record us doing a few pranks on some houses. Not a list."

"Wait, check this out. There is one more house. I promise."

"What?"

"Adam," said Peter. "It's just one more house. We can do it."

Adam looked at Peter and said, "No, Pete. We're already in trouble. No more."

"Oh, don't be a chicken," said Jake.

Adam's blood started to boil. He was never one for violence, but he was not scared to take Jake on. He could see now why the other children at school considered him a bully.

Jake could see the look of anger in Adam's eyes. He knew he had to change his approach.

"Look," said Jake to Peter, "It's just one more house."

"Which one?" asked Peter.

"There," said Jake, pointing at the dark house situated right at the end of the road.

"No, no, no. Pete, you're not doing it," said Adam.

Peter gulped and tried to be brave.

"It's not that bad," he said.

"Are you stupid, Pete? That place is haunted. Everyone knows not to go there," said Adam.

"So what if it's haunted?" asked Jake.

"Are you crazy? Did you not hear what your brother, Chris, told you about that place?"

Jake dismissed Adam's remark with a flick of his wrist. "Chris is crazy. He's just trying to scare us. I know he goes there sometimes with his friends and they hang out there in that house. It's abandoned."

"How sure are you of that?"

"Because Chris goes there and drinks there with his friends. My dad would kill him if he caught him drinking in public. He just doesn't want us to know of his drinking spot."

"I'm not worried about that. I'm worried about the-"

"What? You're worried about the murder story he told us about?"

"Yes."

Jake laughed and said, "He's just trying to scare us."

"I heard about it too," said Peter, almost in a whisper.

"Just, just, wait, this is stupid. Just think about how cool it would be when we show the others in school that we went and knocked on the door of the abandoned, scary house," said Jake. "I'll have it on camera."

Adam knew it would be a big deal for all of them at school, but he did not like this idea.

"Ya, that would be cool," said Peter, still less brave than before.

"C'mon, Adam. Don't back out now. Are you scared?"

Adam gave Jake a stern look and said, "I'm not. I just don't think it's safe."

"Pff, you're scared."

"I'm not!"

"Then show it. Let's go and knock on that door."

Adam looked at Jake and then at Peter.

Jake turned to Peter before Adam tried to say something to him and said, "If you go and knock on that door, I'll give you one of my slabs of chocolate." He then proceeded to take out a slab of chocolate from his backpack and showed it to Peter. Peter's eyes glowed.

"You're sick, Jake," said Adam.

Jake scoffed at him and said, "What are we waiting for? Let's do this. C'mon, Peter."

Peter started to shuffle towards the scary house as Jake led the way.

Adam stood still in an act of disobedience to Jake's idea, but Peter kept looking back to make sure he came along. It softened his heart.

Adam sighed and said, "Wait up. My dad's going to kill me anyway."

Jake smirked as Adam joined them.

Chapter 4

They walked in silence along the sidewalk up to the entrance of the dark house. There was no gate.

Adam looked at the house and remembered Jake's older brother, Chris, telling him that it was an abandoned house because there was a murder case involving the original owners killing six of their own children while they were sleeping. Once the police came, the community banded together to force the original owners to move out. They soon left, leaving a creepy looking house behind. A few home buyers came around to look at it after investors furnished it up to a decent standard, but nobody wanted to buy it. They all said that they felt uncomfortable in the house. And now it was abandoned and an eye-sore for the community.

Adam could not believe that Jake was forcing Peter to go and knock on the front door of this house.

"Okay, let's do this. The camera is on and I don't have much battery left," said Jake. He looked at Peter and said, "C'mon now, I'll be right here. Just go and knock on the door."

Peter looked at the house. It suddenly dawned on him that it might not be a good idea to knock on the front door.

"What are you waiting for, idiot? The battery won't last."

Peter looked at Adam for encouragement.

Jake gave Adam a little shove on the back, nearly causing Adam to trip over his own feet. "Go with him. Nobody's there," he said to Adam.

Adam regained his footing and balled up his fist. He turned around and saw that Jake was pointing the camera at him. This was his sick game – bullying others to do his bidding.

"Adam?" whispered Peter.

Adam wanted to punch Jake, but Peter needed him more. He turned around and joined Peter as they walked towards the steps of the front porch. Jake followed a short distance behind them. The light of the camera lit the way for them.

Peter stopped in front of the steps, uncertain.

"Well, go on," whispered Jake.

Peter looked at the camera before ascending the steps up to the porch. He stood there and looked at the door for a few seconds. Suddenly, he walked up to the door and stood in front of it, his hand poised to knock on it.

Adam and Jake held their breath, surprised at Peter's surge of courage.

Peter gave two, quick knocks before turning around to run towards Jake and Adam. He pushed them out of the way as he ran right past them. Both Jake and Adam suddenly came out of their state of shock and bolted after him. They followed him as Peter skidded around the property wall of the next door house. They reached him and

joined him as they watched the front door of the scary house to see what would happen. It remained close.

Half a minute later, they lost interest and came to the conclusion that they survived the ordeal. They could now show their friends at school that they knocked on the door of the scary house and they survived it. They had it on camera. Jake was already boasting about it.

"This is why you don't mess with us. We're crazy, y'all. We're crazy," he said into the camera.

Adam heaved a sigh of relief and patted Peter on the shoulder a good couple of times.

"You're brave, Pete. You're brave."

Peter smiled without making much fuss about it.

"I'm going to post this as soon as I get home," said Jake into the camera. He pointed it at Peter and said, "Man, this dude right here, he's the man. He's my pal, Peter."

Peter's face lit up. He could not believe his luck. He had finally earned Jake's respect.

"C'mon, say you're a bad boy to the people," said Jake to Peter as he put his arm around his shoulder.

Peter beamed and said, "I'm a bad boy, whoo-hoo. Yeah, you don't wanna mess with me. I'm a bad boy."

Jake laughed.

Adam found it funny too, although, it did make him a little uneasy. He knew what Jake was capable of.

Just then, the front door of the abandoned house slowly opened up.

Their laughter died down and they stared at the front door. They could not see anyone in the doorway and they were not going to take that chance. They quickly ducked behind the wall and remained as quiet as possible.

Chapter 5

"Did you see that?" said Peter.

"What's happening?" asked Adam, looking at the open front door.

Jake pointed the camera to the front door.

"Hello?" said Adam.

"Hey, shoosh, are you crazy? Do you want us to get into trouble?" said Jake.

"Why's that front door open? Is someone inside?" asked Adam.

"Hey, I don't know. Maybe Peter opened it."

"Me?"

"Yeah, you could've knocked hard and opened it up by accident."

"I didn't knock hard," said Peter, defensively.

"Would you be quiet," said Adam. "Let's just go home. This is weird."

"No, wait," said Jake. "We can't just leave. Let's, let's just think this through."

"Think about what, Jake? There's someone in that house and they're going to catch us. I'm not getting into trouble."

"Peter, I will show you there's no-one there. Come with me, I will show you," said Jake.

Peter stuttered a few words.

"Hey, leave him out of this."

"I'm going to go check it out. C'mon, Peter, let's go. We're going to be famous at school."

Jake unzipped his backpack and took out a small torch and switched it on. He gave it to Peter. He looked at Adam for a second.

"You will thank me later. This is going to make you famous," he said as he handed him a small torch too.

Adam took the torch from him. He wanted to scream out in frustration, but his curiosity got the better of him.

Jake grabbed Peter by the arm and said, "Come on."

Adam followed behind them as they reached the steps of the front door.

"Hello?" said Adam.

"Would you shut up?" said Jake.

"No, I won't. There's someone in there."

"Then shine your damn torch to see for yourself. There's no one here," replied Jake.

Adam pointed his beam of light at the entrance and saw that there was nobody there. The place looked even darker inside.

Jake held onto Peter's arm and pulled him along as they ascended the stairs towards the open entrance.

"Are you crazy?" hissed Adam.

"No, I'm brave. Peter and I are brave. Aren't we, pal?"

Peter gingerly nodded his head at Adam.

"Pete, you don't have to," said Adam.

Jake pulled him along before Adam could talk him out of it. They both entered the house and looked behind the door to see if anyone was hiding there. There was no one.

"That's weird. The door opened itself," said Jake.

"What?" said Adam, concerned.

"Ugh, what's that smell?" asked Peter.

"What smell?" said Adam, still worried about the door mysteriously opening itself.

He quickly ascended the steps to join them, trying to be brave. His heart was pounding in his chest. He knew that this was a bad idea to enter the place. He wanted to go home, but his legs kept taking him into the unknown.

As soon as Adam entered the house, he smelled what Jake and Peter were going on about. He nearly vomited. The air smelled of human body waste and alcohol. He stood with Jake and Peter near the doorway and tried to stifle his nauseating coughs. They all did the same. Once they calmed themselves down, they surveyed the house with their torch beams. The place was empty. The floor was strewn with rubbish and broken bottle pieces. Graffiti was smeared over the walls even up to the ceiling. They moved further into the house and found themselves in the lounge area. The fireplace was filled with burnt plastic bags, burnt wood, and ash. Everything about this place made Adam's hair stand on end.

"Wow, would you look at this place?" said Adam in a low voice. "So this is where your brother brings his chicks? He's classy, Jake."

"Shut up!" Jake hissed.

"We know what's inside now," said Adam, trying to convince Peter. "Let's get out of here."

"Would you relax? Jeez, you really are scared," said Jake.

"I'm not!" said Adam, defensively.

"Whatever."

They heard a dull thud coming from upstairs and they all quickly pointed their flashlights at the staircase and the ceiling where they heard the thud.

"Someone's here," said Peter, scared.

"Hello?" said Adam, loudly.

"Nobody's here," hissed Jake.

"You just heard that sound. Someone's here. What if they're dangerous, huh?" snapped Adam.

"Maybe it's my stupid brother playing a prank on us," said Jake, uncertain.

"How do you know?" said Adam, defensively.

Jake shrugged his shoulders.

"Hey, Chris, if you're up there, I'm calling the police," said Adam.

Jake rolled his eyes and shook his head. There was no reply. The place was as silent as before.

"See? Nothing. Maybe it was a cat," said Jake.

"It doesn't matter. We should not be here."

"Whatever. I'm going to go check it out," said Jake, holding onto Peter.

Adam grabbed him by the arm.

"Leave me, you loser," said Jake, pulling his arm free.

"I don't want to go there," said Peter to Jake, who had forgotten that he was clinging on to him.

"Gawd, you guys are lame. You'll all feel so stupid when you realize it was just a cat or even a rat that you heard."

"C'mon!" said Jake as he yanked Peter towards him so that they could ascend the stairs together. Adam looked at the front door and back at Peter who was being dragged up the staircase. He wanted to leave this place, but he could not leave his friend behind.

"Adam," Peter called out as he struggled with Jake who was much stronger and bigger than him. Jake held onto the wooden staircase rail and held onto Peter's arm. He was not going to let go. Peter was beginning to cry.

"Stop it, you baby!" said Jake.

"Hey, leave him, Jake."

"No!"

"I'm warning you," said Adam, clenching his fists.

"What you going to do? You're too scared to check out this place."

"I'm not!"

"Then show me! Or else I'm going to take him with me."

Adam wanted to punch Jake so badly, but he knew Jake was physically stronger than him.

"Okay," said Adam, relaxing his fist. "I'll come. But we only go upstairs and come right back down here. You got that?"

Jake looked at Adam, knowing he could not trust him.

"Okay," he said, holding on to Peter. "You go first then."

Adam swallowed his fear. He looked at the dark staircase and shone his light up the stairs. It seemed to go on forever.

"I knew it. You're a chicken," hissed Jake.

"Shut up!"

"Go on then."

Adam could hear his heart beating against his chest. He drew in a deep breath and walked up to the staircase. He looked at Jake.

"Go ahead," Jake urged.

Adam took one step and the staircase squeaked. He turned around and looked at Jake and Peter. They came up right behind him. Jake had the camera pointed up the staircase, past Adam's face.

"Hey, watch where you're pointing that thing," said Adam, blinded by the light.

"Just go ahead and stop complaining."

"Then don't point it in my face."

"I'm pointing it at the stairs, idiot. I can't see," said Jake.

Adam turned around and pointed his torch up the staircase. It was still dark.

"Move it!" hissed Jake.

"Shut up. I'm moving," replied Adam.

He drew in a breath and slowly took another step while pointing his torch at the dark staircase.

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