

Cliffhanger Story by Lyndon Neufeld – Grade 5

I could feel the moist carpet under my feet. How did it get wet, I wondered. I looked up just in time to see my friend Lola trip over her shoelaces. I burst out laughing.

“That wasn’t funny,” Lola said, annoyed.

“Yes, that was,” I responded. Lola didn’t argue.

We were currently being escorted by mall cops from the future. They’re supposed to keep us safe with “futuristic laser bananas” although I often question if bringing them on this trip was a good idea. We were currently walking through what appeared to be endless corridors of yellow wallpaper. I had lost track of how many days we had been in here. There never appeared to be an end.

“I got something,” A mall cop shouted. Everyone looked his way. I saw what he was looking at. It appeared to be a chair with a book on it. Nobody knew what to do.

“Are you going to read it or not?” I said.

“Hold on, there might be…” Before the mall cop could finish his sentence, I ran in front of him and grabbed the book.

“What are you doing?!” he shouted, obviously enraged.

“What do you think I’m doing?” I shot back. “I’m going to read it,”

“It could have been deadly,” The mall cop protested.

“Well, I’m still here, aren’t I?” The mall cop looked like he was going to say something then changed his mind at the very last moment.

“Well, what does it say?” asked Lola. She was always curious. I opened the book and started to read the page when I had a creepy feeling. In the hallway we just came from, standing in the darkness, was a pair of eyes staring at me. I screamed and jumped back in fear. Lola immediately rushed to my side while the mall cops were trying to figure out what scared me so badly. “Are you alright?” asked Lola.

“Does it look like I’m alright?” I asked rhetorically.

Before Lola could answer, the lead mall cop spoke up. “What exactly did you see?”

“I saw a pair of eyes in the hallway over there,” I responded, pointing in that direction. The lead mall cop signaled for the other mall cops to investigate. We waited. Silence filled the room. Silence can be quiet but also loud. I waited eagerly, hoping for them to solve the problem.

“We got nothing,” said a mall cop over the radio. The lead mall cop looked at me in a way that meant don’t ever waste my time again. Just then, some music started playing. It was the type of music that would play whenever you wound up a Jack-n-the-box. However, instead of sounding jolly, the music had an eerie tone to it. I instantly started crawling back into a corner. I flipped open the book hoping to find answers.

“What does it say?” asked Lola.

I began to read the first couple of pages. “*Do not be fooled, when your eyes see eyes your eyes are true. The chair or stool is quite eerie as something happened on it too,*” I recited the first line. I started to feel a little cold. Not like, *It's too cold in here*, but more like when you watch a horror movie cold.

“What do you think that means?” Lola asked.

“I don’t know and I don’t intend to find out.” The music suddenly grew louder. I immediately went against my word and started reading again. “*Do not make loud noises or it will hear. Then you will be very scared. If you are reading this book where it was found, you better get out of there now,*” As the music grew louder, I began to read faster. “*You can run, but you can’t hide, you can try to take it or you can die. One flicker means brace, and two means to stay alive. If you see three flickers, you will lose your life.*” Like they were on cue the lights flickered once. “We have to get out of here,” I said. The ground started shaking like crazy. The music grew louder and faster by the second. The lights flickered twice. I looked at Lola and caught her eye. Then we both burst out running. All of a sudden, the ground stopped shaking and the music stopped. Then the lights flickered. One, two, three times. Then all of a sudden, *Boing!* The sound of a spring going off. We didn’t stop running. We didn’t look back, just forward. The lights started flickering like crazy. I wondered what that meant.

“Do you still have the book?” Lola asked.

“Yeah,” I respond.

Then out of nowhere, there was a scream. It was a human scream. This scream was then followed by lasers firing. The sound was deafening. We kept running. Lola screamed something but I couldn’t hear her. I risked a glance back. A bunch of mall cops were lying on the ground howling in pain. I had looked back just in time to see the last of them fall to the ground. Then my eyes met another pair of eyes. It was the same pair of eyes I saw in the hallway earlier, or maybe it wasn’t. I stopped running. The thing took one step toward me, then two. I saw that it wasn’t

alone. Appearing from the shadows were three more, then five, then seven. And before I knew it there were at least twenty.

I started running again. I looked ahead and saw a lamp providing light. And there was Lola. She was using the light to repel the creature things. "Hurry up!" she yelled, then immediately regretted it. All of the creatures turned toward me. Behind Lola, there appeared to be a power generator. Lola met my gaze and tried to turn on the power generator.

"Anytime now would be nice. I'm totally not about to die," I said.

"I'm trying," she responded.

"Apparently not enough," I shot back. This probably wasn't the best way to talk to someone trying to save your life. I was about to get eaten or whatever, then to my surprise Lola smacked the power generator in rage and the lights flickered back on to life. All of the creatures suddenly disappeared.

The lights immediately started flickering again as if they were on the verge of turning off. They were. As they turned off, I dove for Lola. I was suddenly surrounded by the creatures again. I landed in the light. One attempted to grab me but it was like some invisible force was keeping them at bay. I looked at them. My eyes then got locked onto theirs. I couldn't look away. I had to put my hand in front of my eyes before they could do what they were about to do.

I completely forgot Lola was right next to me. I didn't warn her. "That was a close one right Lola?" I asked. There was no response. "Lola?" I looked up at Lola she was staring off into space. Then realization flooded my mind. "Lola!" I screamed. Then tackled her to the ground. I rolled over onto my back, exhausted. I looked up at Lola again. She was standing up looking at me. There was a smile on her face. "Lola, what--" I began. She put her finger to her lip. Her smile was eerie. It was creepy. It was not a friendly smile. I was too late. "Lola, wait..." Lola then reached over to the lamp and grabbed the string that turns the lamp on and off. The lamp was currently on. It was the only thing keeping Lola and me safe. "Lola, wait..." Then she pulled the string, plunging us into darkness.