

Goosebumps®

**NIGHT of the
LIVING DUMMY**

R.L. STINE

SCHOLASTIC INC.

**NEW YORK TORONTO LONDON AUCKLAND SYDNEY
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ISBN-13: 978-0-545-03517-0

ISBN-10: 0-545-03517-1

Goosebumps book series created by Parachute Press, Inc.

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12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 8 9 10 11 12 13/0

Printed in the U.S.A.
First printing, May 2008

“Behind the Screams” bonus material by Joshua Gee



“Mmmmm! Mmmm! Mmmmm!”

Kris Powell struggled to get her twin sister’s attention.

Lindy Powell glanced up from the book she was reading to see what the problem was. Instead of her sister’s pretty face, Lindy saw a round pink bubble nearly the size of Kris’s head.

“Nice one,” Lindy said without much enthusiasm. With a sudden move, she poked the bubble and popped it.

“Hey!” Kris cried as the pink bubble gum exploded onto her cheeks and chin.

Lindy laughed. “Gotcha.”

Kris angrily grabbed Lindy’s paperback and slammed it shut. “Whoops — lost your place!” she exclaimed. She knew her sister hated to lose her place in a book.

Lindy grabbed the book back with a scowl. Kris struggled to pull the pink gum off her face.

“That was the biggest bubble I ever blew,” she said angrily. The gum wasn’t coming off her chin.

“I’ve blown much bigger than that,” Lindy said with a superior sneer.

“I don’t *believe* you two,” their mother muttered, making her way into their bedroom and dropping a neatly folded pile of laundry at the foot of Kris’s bed. “You even compete over bubble gum?”

“We’re not competing,” Lindy muttered. She tossed back her blond ponytail and returned her eyes to her book.

Both girls had straight blond hair. But Lindy kept hers long, usually tying it behind her head or on one side in a ponytail. And Kris had hers cut very short.

It was a way for people to tell the twins apart, for they were nearly identical in every other way. Both had broad foreheads and round blue eyes. Both had dimples in their cheeks when they smiled. Both blushed easily, large pink circles forming on their pale cheeks.

Both thought their noses were a little too wide. Both wished they were a little taller. Lindy’s best friend, Alice, was nearly three inches taller, even though she hadn’t turned twelve yet.

“Did I get it all off?” Kris asked, rubbing her chin, which was red and sticky.

“Not all,” Lindy told her, glancing up. “There’s some in your hair.”

“Oh, great,” Kris muttered. She grabbed at her hair but couldn’t find any bubble gum.

“Gotcha again,” Lindy said, laughing. “You’re too easy!”

Kris uttered an angry growl. “Why are you always so mean to me?”

“Me? Mean?” Lindy looked up in wide-eyed innocence. “I’m an angel. Ask anyone.”

Exasperated, Kris turned back to her mother, who was stuffing socks into a dresser drawer. “Mom, when am I going to get my own room?”

“On the Twelfth of Never,” Mrs. Powell replied, grinning.

Kris groaned. “That’s what you always say.”

Her mother shrugged. “You know we don’t have a spare inch, Kris.” She turned to the bedroom window. Bright sunlight streamed through the filmy curtains. “It’s a beautiful day. What are you two doing inside?”

“Mom, we’re not little girls,” Lindy said, rolling her eyes. “We’re twelve. We’re too old to go out and play.”

“Did I get it all?” Kris asked again, still scraping pink patches of bubble gum off her chin.

“Leave it. It improves your complexion,” Lindy told her.

“I wish you girls would be nicer to each other,” Mrs. Powell said with a sigh.

They suddenly heard shrill barking coming from downstairs. “What’s Barky excited about now?”

Mrs. Powell fretted. The little black terrier was always barking about something. "Why not take Barky for a walk?"

"Don't feel like it," Lindy muttered, nose in her book.

"What about those beautiful new bikes you got for your birthday?" Mrs. Powell said, hands on hips. "Those bikes you just couldn't live without. You know, the ones that have been sitting in the garage since you got them."

"Okay, okay. You don't have to be sarcastic, Mom," Lindy said, closing her book. She stood up, stretched, and tossed the book onto her bed.

"You want to?" Kris asked Lindy.

"Want to what?"

"Go for a bike ride. We could ride to the playground, see if anyone's hanging out at school."

"You just want to see if Robby is there," Lindy said, making a face.

"So?" Kris said, blushing.

"Go on. Get some fresh air," Mrs. Powell urged. "I'll see you later. I'm off to the supermarket."

Kris peered into the dresser mirror. She had gotten most of the gum off. She brushed her short hair back with both hands. "Come on. Let's go out," she said. "Last one out is a rotten egg." She darted to the doorway, beating her sister by half a step.

As they burst out the back door, with Barky yipping shrilly behind them, the afternoon sun

was high in a cloudless sky. The air was still and dry. It felt more like summer than spring.

Both girls were wearing shorts and sleeveless T-shirts. Lindy bent to pull open the garage door, then stopped. The house next door caught her eye.

“Look — they’ve got the walls up,” she told Kris, pointing across their backyard.

“That new house is going up so quickly. It’s amazing,” Kris said, following her sister’s gaze.

The builders had knocked down the old house during the winter. The new concrete foundation had been put down in March. Lindy and Kris had walked around on it when no workers were there, trying to figure out where the different rooms would go.

And now the walls had been built. The construction suddenly looked like a real house, rising up in the midst of tall stacks of lumber, a big mound of red-brown dirt, a pile of concrete blocks, and an assortment of power saws, tools, and machinery.

“No one’s working today,” Lindy said.

They took a few steps toward the new house. “Who do you think will move in?” Kris wondered. “Maybe some great-looking guy our age. Maybe great-looking twin guys!”

“Yuck!” Lindy made a disgusted face. “Twin guys? How drippy can you get! I can’t believe you and I are in the same family.”

Kris was used to Lindy’s sarcasm. Both girls liked being twins and hated being twins at

the same time. Because they shared nearly everything — their looks, their clothing, their room — they were closer than most sisters ever get.

But because they were so much alike, they also managed to drive each other crazy a lot of the time.

“No one’s around. Let’s check out the new house,” Lindy said.

Kris followed her across the yard. A squirrel, halfway up the wide trunk of a maple tree, watched them warily.

They made their way through an opening in the low shrubs that divided the two yards. Then, walking past the stacks of lumber and the tall mound of dirt, they climbed the concrete stoop.

A sheet of heavy plastic had been nailed over the opening where the front door would go. Kris pulled one end of the plastic up, and they slipped into the house.

It was dark and cool inside and had a fresh wood smell. The plaster walls were up but hadn’t been painted.

“Careful,” Lindy warned. “Nails.” She pointed to the large nails scattered over the floor. “If you step on one, you’ll get lockjaw and die.”

“You wish,” Kris said.

“I don’t want you to die,” Lindy replied. “Just get lockjaw.” She snickered.

“Ha-ha,” Kris said sarcastically. “This must be the living room,” she said, making her way carefully across the front room to the fireplace against the back wall.

“A cathedral ceiling,” Lindy said, staring up at the dark, exposed wooden beams above their heads. “Neat.”

“This is bigger than our living room,” Kris remarked, peering out the large picture window to the street.

“It smells great,” Lindy said, taking a deep breath. “All the sawdust. It smells so piney.”

They made their way through the hall and explored the kitchen. “Are those wires on?” Kris asked, pointing to a cluster of black electrical wires suspended from the ceiling beams.

“Why don’t you touch one and find out?” Lindy suggested.

“You first,” Kris shot back.

“The kitchen isn’t very big,” Lindy said, bending down to stare into the holes where the kitchen cabinets would go.

She stood up and was about to suggest they check out the upstairs when she heard a sound. “Huh?” Her eyes widened in surprise. “Is someone in here?”

Kris froze in the middle of the kitchen.

They both listened.

Silence.

Then they heard soft, rapid footsteps. Close by. Inside the house.

“Let’s go!” Lindy whispered.

Kris was already ducking under the plastic, heading out the doorway opening. She leaped off the back stoop and started running toward their backyard.

Lindy stopped at the bottom of the stoop and turned back to the new house. “Hey — look!” she called.

A squirrel came flying out a side window. It landed on the dirt with all four feet moving and scrambled toward the maple tree in the Powells’ yard.

Lindy laughed. “Just a dumb squirrel.”

Kris stopped near the low shrubs. “You sure?” She hesitated, watching the windows of the new house. “That was a pretty loud squirrel.”

When she turned back from the house, she was surprised to find that Lindy had disappeared.

“Hey — where’d you go?”

“Over here,” Lindy called. “I see something!”

It took Kris a while to locate her sister. Lindy was half hidden behind a large black Dumpster at the far end of the yard.

Kris shielded her eyes with one hand to see better. Lindy was bent over the side of the Dumpster. She appeared to be rummaging through some trash.

“What’s in there?” Kris called.

Lindy was tossing things around and didn't seem to hear her.

"What *is* it?" Kris called, taking a few reluctant steps toward the Dumpster.

Lindy didn't reply.

Then, slowly, she pulled something out. She started to hold it up. Its arms and legs dangled down limply. Kris could see a head with brown hair.

A head? Arms and legs?

"Oh, no!" Kris cried aloud, raising her hands to her face in horror.