

Over the fence...

Crack! The ear splitting noise of a cricket ball slamming against a plastic bat cut through the silence of dawn. The ball flew through the air, straight over the fence and landed with a dull thud in the neighbour's backyard. My friend winced, then looked at me guiltily. I raised an eyebrow, "I remember you saying that you were amazing at cricket!" Before he could reply, a yell from my cantankerous neighbour projected over the fence, along with an angry growl.

We lunged for cover, out of sight, and slid along the fence in the shadows trying to be inconspicuous. My friend looked uncertain, then as soon as we reached the front garden, he said hurriedly, "Sorry, but I gotta go. See you at school!" I could see the guilt on his face as he left. However, I was still determined to retrieve my ball, even without assistance.

In our shed was the perfect thing that enables me to observe the neighbour's yard. I carried the blue milk ^{crate} carton over and placed it against the fence. The crate seemed sturdy and balanced, so I hoisted myself onto it and peered over. From my position, I could easily scan the yard. The few trees in the yard swayed calmly. Then my eyes widened.

In the centre of the yard lay a large mound of numerous tattered, slime-covered and chewed balls. They had belonged to many unfortunate children from around the neighbourhood. There, lordling amongst the chaos was a large snarling dog. Drool oozed down his jowls. The most heart-stopping feature about it was the giant set of sharp teeth, looking perfectly capable of ripping your arms off.

"Breakfast!" A gruff voice yelled from within the house. The dog leapt up and bounded inside. Without a second thought, I vaulted the fence and dashed towards my cricket ball. Got it! I turned to sprint back, when a deep-throated growl gave my feet wings. I flew back across the yard and scrambled over the fence, little squeaks of terror escaping my mouth. I heard the snap of jaws as I tumbled down into my yard. Dog: 246 balls. Boy: 1.

Written by Amber GIBSON

JUST IMAGINE

"Hey, wait up Annie!" I called, "We're coming up to the creepy shed!" She called back but it was all muffled and I didn't hear a word she said. I caught up to her but she had disappeared into the distance again in less than a minute. That wasn't so surprising given Annie is so much taller than me, but the fact that she is so much taller than me is, because she's my twin. We look almost identical but can't possibly be identical twins given the difference in our size.

Like most twins, there has always been great rivalry. Annie dances and I play guitar, but while she always wins trophies at her dance eisteddfods, I rarely even place. I try not to let it worry me, but I'd be lying if I said it didn't.

Later that night, after I'd finally fallen asleep reading my book, I awoke from a terrifying dream. Annie had been trapped in the creepy shed and no one knew where she was. I felt so guilty that I'd been so angry at Annie and wondered what I'd ever do without my twin. Sure we are great rivals, but we are also great friends.

Walking home the following day, nothing seemed out of the ordinary. That is, until we reached the creepy shed. My dream suddenly seemed so real, as a man was standing in the doorway of the shed. As Annie and I walked past he continued to watch us. Annie told me to hurry up but insisted she wasn't scared, so I decided it best not to tell her about my dream. Unlike Annie, I was terrified. I was even more alarmed, especially when once again the man was there day after day. Mostly, he just seemed to be minding his own business, but he always stopped to watch us pass.

The next week, I was unable to go to school. I had high temperatures and was sicker than I could ever remember. Annie was left to walk home from school on her own. But she never arrived home. At first I told myself that she was just mucking about, but my dream was constantly on my mind. I decided to tell mum about my dream and the man at the shed. At once, she flew from the house leaving me in the care of my older brothers.

As the minutes passed I waited longingly for their return until finally I heard the car pull up outside. I ran to the car forgetting I was sick to see Annie emerging with a terrible egg on her head and a bandaged ankle. I grabbed her and helped her into the house still trying to work out what had happened however it wasn't long before she told me that she had fallen over and that the man from the creepy shed had kindly helped her.

Liberty and Justice

"In the cause of Liberty and Justice"... this is what is engraved on the plaque placed upon my grave. I fought for the peace they live in; they don't know what I went through. I died believing I would be appreciated as a soldier of the army that brought the long relieving peace they enjoy. Oh, how my squadron would laugh to see me overshadowed by a biscuit sign.

Sure biscuits are great, I loved them, right down to the crispy end. How good would it be to savor the sweet taste of food, you don't know how much you love it until after its gone. Trust me, only too late, I realised it was the end of my dreams - I should have done what I always wanted to do.

The bins, the rubbish bins, oh the horrible smell of rubbish filling the air, every day I wake to the smell of the putrid bins.

What is this grave? A symbol of the dead? A place for all lost dreams?

It is amazing how they don't care about the four-year war that raged through the valleys of China to the hills of Germany against the Turks. Every time there is thunder I shudder, as my memories of bombs dropped by the enemy, those horrible nasty rotten days in the trenches with the enemy advancing on every side and no food but rotten meat, fill my mind.

As I look around I see other graves standing great and proud upon their mighty podium, so tall for the world to see. They seem to remember only the great stories, the ones that played an interesting role in the war (mind you, not all were important). What about us, average soldiers, the normal ones that showed up and did what was asked. I lived the life of a soldier; this is my story after I died of how no living person will ever imagine that we ghosts still feel hunger disappointment and dream just like the humans, the race that still fights.

Nothing has been learned.....

THE LOSS OF MY PRECIOUS FRISBEE

My mouth fell open, my neck craned back and I watched, as if in slow motion as my Frisbee flew over the fence. Immediately a word flew from my mouth, a word I will not repeat in case you repeat this and get punished by some evil teacher or parent. I sat and thought, realising I could either save another \$15 and buy a replacement or take it back for free! Because I am, what I like to call, a bargain hunter I took option two.

During my pondering, I had forgotten one vital thing - to look over the fence! I sped to my shed and heard the groan from the huge wooden door as I tore it open and whipped out a small bucket. I flipped the bucket upside down and stood on it, enabling me to peer over our brown picket fence. I held my mouth shut, allowing no words to escape, and stared at my rich neighbour, who was laying on his sun bed merely two metres away. I gulped. He wore nothing but a furry white dressing gown and was halfway through a facial. Luckily two pieces of cucumber lay loosely over his eyes shielding him from anything but green.

I climbed over the fence and planted my feet loosely on the ground. I sneaked passed my neighbour and shuddered as a bull terrier stared me down. I realized I would only need to take a few short steps to reach my... Frisbee? My eyes showed pure terror as I realized my Frisbee wasn't here. My Frisbee must have cleared two yards. Dammit!

I attempted, without success, to escape the bull terrier noiselessly. My neighbour shot up angrily as he heard my scream. I bolted out the fence and ran into the other house where, sure enough, my Frisbee lay harmlessly on the ground. I cursed as I picked it up and walked grumpily through my gate. I chucked the Frisbee to my friend, who sat laughing like a honking seal.

"Sorry," he chuckled and I punched him.

The Griff Hotel

My shadow followed me as I walked down the lonely road. The cold air of dusk felt fresh on my face as I was going on a short walk to end my day. When the sun set after a hard day of labour my shadow left and I was alone in these streets of mystery. Every noise sparked an alarm inside me.

A sudden crash and the sound of a car engine broke the silence. I turned around to see a white van, which had driven into a telegraph pole, parked, coincidentally a few houses down from where I was standing. Three menacing looking men came out to inspect the damage on the vehicle. Looking a little closer at it, I realised that the van was big, maybe even big enough to fit a person inside of it.

I quickly pushed the thought out of my head, but it kept on nagging me sitting at the back of my mind.

As the street lights managed to flicker on, white light washed over the road. The colourless scheme of the neighbourhood was more noticeable as my shadow returned to my side.

As I walked aimlessly down the path, the thought of being followed once again flashed through my mind. Stopping at the corner parallel to where the Griff Hotel stood, a small hotel that was in need of a new paint job, I glanced over my shoulder to see the now familiar vehicle lurking in the shadows of one of the neighbourhoods many pointless buildings. Panic surged through my body, and before I even knew it, I had set myself at a steady pace for a jog around the block, or really any direction not going towards my supposed abductors. The tall buildings seemed to scrutinise my every move. My steady footsteps echoed throughout the various streets.

Suddenly I found myself stopping at the same intersection as I had been standing at moments before. My heart rate started to slow down, until I saw the men emerging from that same white van. Frozen with fear, I couldn't do anything but watch them.

Holding boxes and looking very secretive, the men walked a few houses down until they reached the Griff Hotel. A man came out from the same building to greet them and after having exchanged a quick greeting, he let them in. In less than a minute, the men came out from the building, got into the van and drove off. Watching it drive off I noticed the van had "DELIVERY SERVICE" printed on the side of it. Realising that I had been paranoid over nothing, I continued walking in the dim light.