

They discovered the first one in the cupboard. Actually, in the trash can in the cupboard. That's when they called me in. I'm Sheriff Lawrinsky, and I am very curious about this case. You see, we found three skeletons in that house - more of the Skeleton murders, I'm afraid - and we also found a transcript in the upstairs room that points to ants as the culprits. Now, before you throw this away, I strongly suggest you read it as the evidence, against all impossibility, keeps pointing toward ants as the culprits. Here is the transcript:

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On Monday, I woke up to the sound of knocking on the door. It was a day off from school and I had planned to waste it by sleeping late and playing video games all day. Then, on Tuesday, I would stumble into math class after staying up until 3:49, mumble something about monkeys and homework, and then fall asleep on my desk, subsequently failing the big math test I was supposed to have studied for. Unfortunately, this *idiot* had spoiled my plans by knocking on my door at about 8:30.

"Who is it?" I grumped.

The reply from outside was from an unfamiliar voice. What he said was "Exterminator."

"I don't care what religion you are, I'm trying to sleep," I yawned.

"Extermination isn't a religion, it's a profession," he said, a bit angrily.

"If you want to burgle us, the spare money is in another room somewhere."

My Dad butted in. "Son, I have three things to tell you. First, you never tell a burglar where we keep the money. Second, this man is an exterminator. Third-"

"I know he's an exterminator. As I already said, I don't care what religion he is. Now what's the third thing?"

"Third, it would be nice if you didn't scream when he came in, and extermination is for getting rid of bugs."

"Oh." I thought for a few seconds, and then asked, "Why would I scream?"

"Because this man is butt ugly."

The door than creaked open slowly, and into the room stepped...

An ugly man. Well, who do you think stepped in? Dracula? Frankenstein? Your mom? Of course it was an ugly man. Next time you see things that go ..., keep in mind that it doesn't necessarily mean something bad is going to happen.

Anyway, into the room stepped an ugly man. He said, "Clearout, boy. I got work to do, an' I don't like company."

By afternoon, I was sick of waiting to play video games. I knocked on my door and there was no answer. I went in and saw that there was nothing left of the exterminator. Nothing but the exterminator's bones. And they were still inside his clothes.

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I freaked. I mean, it's not every day that you open a door and see that your exterminator has turned into a skeleton. I had to tell my Dad. So I rushed downstairs. I couldn't find him even though I looked everywhere. Then I heard a knock on the door. It was Dad.

"Dad! The exterminator is a skeleton. You have got to come look! It's very bad. It-"

"Son, I'm sure there's a perfectly logical explanation for this. Now lead me up to your room, and let me look at this."

We went up to my room. Dad opened the door, saw the skeleton, and screamed. When he recovered, he looked in and then, in a brave move, went inside.

He said, "Son, I hate to say this."

"Uh-huh," I replied.

"I really hate to say this."

"Uh-huh,"

"But it looks as though..."

'Yes?' I thought.

"...the exterminator was a fake who stole our money. He brought an extra suit, put it on a skeleton, and got out."

I almost laughed out loud. The answer was so obvious! I mean, how could I have thought he had been eaten by something? This was obviously a fake skeleton and the exterminator had to have stolen our money. I mean, nothing could pick bones *that* clean.

"I think I'll take this downstairs and throw it away, okay?"

"Okay, Dad."

"Huh, boy, it sure is heavy for a fake skeleton," he remarked as he carried it down the stairs. And as I watched, I thought I saw some ants scurry off the skeleton. But it must have been my imagination. Right?

The day continued like I had planned. I played video games until it was midnight, watched a scary movie, and went to bed. It was no trouble because my dad works as a night watchman, so I get to stay up as late as I like. He had stayed awake all day to make sure there was somebody there to greet the exterminator.

Tuesday went as planned, too. I did say that monkeys peed on my homework, I did fall asleep on my desk, and, of course, I flunked the math test I didn't study for. It was a good thing we were studying nouns in English. I absorbed enough to know that a noun is a *purse* in place of things. How that will ever help me on an essay, I don't know.

I actually managed to get one right on the science pop quiz. That got me a score of 20%. It was my second best score on the day. My best was bringing my own lunch.

In gym we played dodgeball. I caught every ball thrown at me, but with my face. That got me a black eye and a bloody nose.

In history, we studied some war of some year that somebody must care about. I don't. I wasn't the only one falling asleep. Everyone in the back and side rows was asleep as well.

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In music, I learned that the triangle is important. It's important because if you toss it into the tuba, the tuba goes HONK HONK POOT TONG ROIK and the tuba player falls into the drummer, and the drummer throws his drumstick at the trumpet player, causing him to smack the bass player, starting a huge fight, and then the principal comes in and gets dragged into the fight, giving the teacher a black eye, and then all of the teachers rush in with their classes, and we all get sent home early.

That's when I saw another skeleton leaning over the sink.

It is very scary to open the door of your house and see a skeleton leaning over your sink. It is even scarier when the skeleton is wearing your Dad's clothes. The skeleton looked a little like Dad, too, and I was a little scared. I went upstairs and tried to do my homework, but I couldn't concentrate. I decided to go downstairs and watch TV. Just as I turned it on, I heard a voice say, "And now, we go to our reporter, David Fishbone, for a report on the so-called 'Skeleton Murders.'"

David Fishbone said, "Well, folks, it's happened again. Once more, a body has disappeared, leaving nothing but a skeleton at the crime scene. This is a disaster, but there was an eyewitness to the crime. Here's little Andrea Lonesome to tell us what she saw."

The little girl was crying, but I still heard her say, "It was tewibwe! I was pwaing on the swide, and mommy was watching me, and then wots' and wots' and wotsa ants came out of the gwound and ate her! It was tewibiwe! I want my mommy back!"

"Folks, we do want information on these murders," said Fishbone. "However, making up stories about ants will not help the police with the case. Remember, if you have any information on the skeleton murders, call 911. Back to you, Sandy."

Sandy Throatcross came on the screen, but I just sat there stunned. Was it possible? Was my dad the skeleton? Had he and the exterminator been eaten by monster ants? It seemed crazy, but it was the only explanation I could think of. Maybe ants were attacking. Maybe there had been a spill of toxic waste on an anthill. Maybe the whole world was in danger!

Then again, maybe I need to be put in a straitjacket and stop playing video games and watching scary movies until 3 a.m.

Dad didn't come home on Wednesday. There was another report on the skeleton murders today. Now I'm beginning to think that there is something out there. Something very bad. Killing, eating, and repeating. Until it is satisfied. And it will never be satisfied. (For some reason, I keep thinking of Hollywood as I write this.)

It is Thursday, but I am still in bed. I will not go out. I know that if I do, I will be eaten by the ants. They are scheming creatures, much smarter than I thought. They could be anywhere. I just know that there is nowhere to hide. The best thing to do is just wait for the end.

Oh, there's the doorbell. Maybe it's a package. Maybe it's the ants. Maybe it's my

dad. Maybe this is all a dream. Better go open the door.

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I am not sure if this is nonfiction, or something written for a creative writing class. I do realize, though, that the three skeletons discovered support the ideas expressed in this document. And this has made me a little suspicious of my ant problem...