Jennetta, Lydia, and Corine were talking during lunch a week before Halloween and were discussing some good ideas about a party.

Lydia spoke up first. “Why don’t we invite people to my house and we can have a costume contest to see who has the best.”

Corine got excited and added, “AND we can have lots of food and music.”

The girls laughed and then Jennetta had the best idea of all, “Why don’t we have the party in the old McCormick house on the edge of town?”

Both Corine and Lydia screamed, “Don’t you know that it’s HAUNTED!”

Lydia continued, “Why do we have to have a party in a haunted house. That’s just TOO scary!”

Jennetta just laughed, “There’s no such thing as ghosts. It’s just a legend. It has never been proven, right?”

The two girls just looked at each other.

Lydia said, “Does a legend have to be proven? Isn’t it better to just leave it alone?”

Jennetta answered, “What a better way to disprove the legend than by having a party there. Then everyone will know the legend is not true.”

After talking for the rest of the lunch period, the three girls finally agreed to have the party at the old house, but the location would have to be a secret. Only their best friends
would know.

Over the next few days, the girls made their plans for the party during lunch. They were very excited about the idea, but Lydia and Corine were still very nervous. Jennetta kept telling them it would be okay.

Corine said, “I will bring the food and the drinks, but I think we need to tell our parents that the party is going to be at someone else’s house.”

Lydia agreed, “My parents are going to a movie that night, so you can tell your parents the party will be at my house. My older sister will be there, and my parents trust her.

“I’ll be responsible for the decorations. My folks had a party last year and we have two boxes of decorations I can bring,” Corine offered.

Jennetta said, “Cool, I will make the invitations out of the colored paper I got for Christmas last year.”

Lydia jumped up, “It’s settled then. We will have the party at the haunted house.”

Jennetta added, “AND it will be on Halloween! It can’t get better than that.”

This shocked the two girls.

Corine said, surprised, “I thought it was going to be on Friday, not Saturday. How are we going to be able to trick-or-treat if we are at a party?”

“You can eat your brother’s candy. He always gets a lot more than he can eat. You know that,” Jennetta answered.

“So, what do you plan to wear, Corine?” asked Lydia.

“My mother bought me a lot of make-up and we have decided that I’m going to be a zombie,” Corine answered laughing. “I’ve always wanted to be a zombie.”

Jennetta spoke up, “I was a vampiress last year, and my mom says I can use the same costume again, but I want to buy a mummy costume. I still have to talk to my mother about it. I’m not really sure what I’m going to be. I’m going to keep it a secret.”

“So, Lydia, what are you going to be?” Corine asked.

“A witch,” she answered.
“A witch? Haven’t you been a witch for the last two years?” Jennetta asked.
“It’s my thing. I change the costume a little every year. You’ll need to guess what is different,” Lydia smiled as she answered.
“We’ll have to wait until the last minute to let our friends know where we are going. Let’s put Lydia’s address on the invitations, then when they get there, we’ll walk over to the haunted house together,” Corine suggested. “She lives the closest.”
They all agreed that this was a good idea.
The morning of the party, on Halloween, the three girls went to the haunted house to clean it up. It was scary for them at first. The door was falling off its hinges and the floor was full of dust and dirt.

“This is not going to be easy!” Corine exclaimed. “This place is a bigger mess than I thought.”
The girls agreed.
“Where should we start?” asked Jennetta.
“Let’s start in the living room first,” suggested Lydia.
The girls got out the supplies they had brought with them and started the hard work of cleaning the room.
The place was a real mess. Nothing had been cleaned in many years. The furniture was old and looked like mice had been living in them.
When Lydia moved the couch away from the wall, she found an old picture stuck to the wall.
“Hey, look at this. Who do you think this person is?” asked Lydia.
The girls came over to look at the picture.
Lydia pulled the picture off the wall, so they could get a closer look at it.
It was a picture of a lady they didn’t know, and in the background of the picture was a shadow of a man in a grey suit. They had never seen him before.

Jennetta looked at the wall where the picture had been stuck. There was a hole in the wall that the picture had covered. There was something inside. Jennetta pulled it out very slowly trying not to destroy it.

It was a paper with a note on it and attached to the note was another picture of the same lady. Behind her was the same shadow, only closer to her.

They read the note together. It said, ‘I found this picture and tried to find the lady who is in it. I was not able to find her, but I did hear a story about a lady who was killed in this house and no one knows how she died. It is a mystery. The man in the picture may have been the one who killed her.

‘The legend says that on every Halloween she returns to the house. If you find this note, beware, she will return to get her revenge!

‘I fear that I will die before anyone finds my note, so I put it into the wall hoping to save someone else. I was not able to find the man. Please find him so I can no longer be scared.’

There was no signature, so the girls didn’t know who wrote it.

“Do you think this is true?” asked Lydia, shaken by the message. “Should we cancel our party”

Corine agreed, “Let’s just have the party at your house like the invitation says.”

“Are you two chickens?” Jennetta responded. “It’s just a silly note. Anyone could have written that and put it there just to scare people like us.”

Not wanting to be called chickens, it was agreed to keep the party at the house and to continue to clean.

After finishing the living room, they went to the kitchen, and on the table, they saw something that made them jump back. On a plate in the middle of the table was a half-eaten sandwich. It looked like it had been there for quite a long time. It had bugs crawling in it and green mold growing on it.
“Who do you think left that sandwich in here?” Jennetta asked, getting a little scared.
“I don’t care!” yelled Corine. “We need to get out of here, and fast!”
Lydia laughed at her when she screamed, but when the door behind them closed by itself, she screamed the loudest.
The girls hugged each other for a long time.
Finally, Jennetta decided to try to open the door.
“It’s locked!” she said.
They looked for another way out of the kitchen. To the left was another door. When they opened it, they walked into a small room; probably a pantry.
There was a light in the room, but it did not work. Then the door closed behind them locking them in. They tried to open the door, but it was stuck.
On the wall, something flashed at them. They jumped back and screamed.
Jennetta took her rag and started to clean the surface of the wall in front of them to see what had made the light. It was a mirror.
The mirror was so dirty they weren’t able see themselves at all. Jennetta continued to clean the glass, yet they still could not see their reflections.
Ghostly shadows appeared in the glass and then suddenly a face appeared in the mirror. It was the lady in the picture. She stared at them for a long time before she spoke to them.
The girls jumped back and tried to open the door, but it wouldn’t open. They hugged each other even tighter.
“What are you doing in my house!” the voice said. “Now that you are in my house you will never get out!”
Lydia, feeling brave, spoke up, “We only wanted to have a party here. We didn’t do anything to you. Get revenge on the person who did this to you, not us.”
“How do you know I want to get revenge?” the woman in the mirror asked.
Corine responded in a frightened voice, “We found your picture and a note in the wall.”
The lady made them an offer, “In order for me to not hurt you, you have today to find the man who killed me, or I will take my revenge out on you! If you want to have your party here, then you must do this for me.”

“How are we going to find him? Didn’t this happen a long time ago?” asked Jennetta.

“Yes, it happened many years ago, but if you look at the shadow in the picture, you will get a clue that will help you solve this mystery. Be careful, he is dangerous, but I can be even more dangerous than him when I am angry,” she answered. “Now go and I will give you more instructions later!”

When she was done, the image disappeared, and the door to the pantry flew open. The girls ran as fast as they could into the kitchen. The door to the living room was now open. They left the kitchen, through the living room, and ran out of the house, leaving their cleaning equipment behind.

They didn’t stop running until they got to Corine’s house. They ran up the stairs to her room, closing the door behind them. They huddled on the floor next to her bed, not knowing what to say or what to do.

“What should we do?” Lydia said through tears of fear.

While they sat on the floor, a face appeared in the mirror over Corine’s dresser. It was the lady from the haunted house.

The girls screamed!

She said, “Do not tell anyone about me. If you do, I will curse you and your families. This is NOT something you want to play with. I am very serious!

“You are wasting time by staying in this room. You MUST find the man in the picture if you are to avoid my anger. You can start by going to the corner of First Avenue and Main Street. Go to Al’s Newspaper Stand and buy one of his papers and look on page thirty-five for my instructions. Hurry, you don’t have much time left.”

Then the face disappeared as fast as it came.

The girls looked at each other in shock.

“No, you think we should go through with this?” Jennetta asked, not really sure what
they should do.

“What happens if we don’t? That is the real question,” Corine interjected. “I don’t want my family cursed. I suggest that we need to do this, and fast!”

“I guess we need to get going then. It will take us about ten minutes to get to the corner of First Avenue and Main Street,” Lydia said as she jumped up and headed for the door.

The girls followed her down the stairs and out of the house. Their bicycles were lying on the ground just outside the door. They jumped onto their bikes and rode as fast as they could to the place where they had been told to go.

When they got there, they had trouble finding the man selling newspapers. He wasn’t where she had told them to look. Then they realized they were on the wrong side of the street.

They waited for the light to change and then pushed their bikes as fast as they could to the other side of the road to buy the newspaper.

Jannetta looked in her purse but couldn’t find any money.

“Do either of you have fifty-cents to buy the paper with?” Jennetta asked.

After looking through their pockets they realized they had not brought any money.

“We don’t have any money. I left mine in my room at home,” Corine said sadly.

Jennetta offered, “Let’s do rock – paper – scissors to decide who is going to get the money.”

They said together, “ONE, TWO, THREE!”

Corine lost. She had paper and the other two had scissors.
“Oh man, I always lose,” Corine said as she got onto her bike and road off to her house.

While she was gone, the two girls who stayed behind tried to look at a newspaper, but the man caught them and asked for fifty-cents. So, they just waited.

Finally, Corine arrived with the money. She was breathing really hard.

“Here…. is ..... the ..... money,” she could barely speak.

Jennetta gave the man fifty-cents. He gave them a paper from behind the counter, and Lydia quickly opened it up to page thirty-five.

A yellow piece of paper fell out. There was a message that said:

‘To Jennetta, Corine and Lydia.’

It went on to say, ‘If you are reading this, then you are trying to find the man who killed me. You are on the right track. The next move you should do is to go the Community Book Store and give this article to the owner. He will tell you the next thing you are to do.’

“Do you know where the Community Book Store is?” Jennetta asked her friends.

“Nope,” was the answer.

Turning to Al, the owner of the newspaper stand, Lydia asked him, “Do you know how to get to the Community Book Store?”

“Yeah, I know where it is, do you need directions?” he asked.

“Yes, that would be very helpful, “Lydia answered.

“Take First Avenue to Maple Street, turn right and go to Rural Drive. Turn left and the store is on the right-hand side of the road. You can’t miss it,” the owner gave them the directions they asked for.

They got onto their bicycles and did as they were told. It was farther than they thought, so they had to hurry because there was no time to waste since they were already late because they didn’t have any money to buy the newspaper.
It took fifteen minutes to get to the store. They parked their bikes in the bike rack in front of the store and walked in. They saw a man standing in the doorway.

He spoke up, “Are you the girls who are supposed to get something from my store?”

The girls were surprised by his question.

“Yeah, that would be us,” Jennetta responded, showing him the article from the paper.

“I have something for you. Come in and follow me to the back of the store,” the man said to them.

The girls entered the store. It was full of books stacked in piles on tables everywhere. There was a path between the tables that only one person at a time could follow.

When they got to the back of the store, he reached into a drawer of his desk and took out an envelope.

“I was given this to give to you. I have no idea what is in it, nor do I know the person who gave it to me,” the man said, as he handed the envelope to Lydia.

She tore it open and inside was a blue paper. On it were the next instructions.

It said, ‘Make sure you do not lose the papers you are given! You will need them later. Go to the MacComb’s Pet Store. Your next clue will be there.’

The girls looked at each other in surprise.

“That’s back where we just came from. Is this lady trying to kill us?” Corine said in frustration.
The girls left the store, got onto their bikes, and headed to the pet store. They knew exactly where to go this time. Jennetta’s parents had bought a puppy there last year.

They rode their bikes as hard as they could, but it still took fifteen minutes to get there. When they got to the pet store they were very tired.

Panting, Corine had her hands on her knees, “I think I’m going to die! This is so hard.”

Jennetta put her hand on Corine’s shoulder, “Remember, if we don’t do this we are goners. We can’t quit now. We have to keep going!”

After putting their bikes against the wall, they entered the pet store. This time no one met them at the door, in fact, it seemed like no one was there at all.

They began to search the store for a clue.

“I can’t find anything. How about you guys?” Jennetta yelled over to Corine and Lydia.

“Nope, nothing here either,” Corine answered.

Just then, someone came into the store.

“What are you doing in here? Who said you could wander around my store. Get out! NOW”! the lady said pointing to the door. “I don’t open for another fifteen minutes.”

“Corine saw a red piece of paper taped on the side of the door the same size as the yellow and blue ones she had in her backpack. She quickly grabbed it as she ran out the door after her friends.

Once outside, Corine whispered, “Look what I found. I think it’s a clue.”

The girls looked at the paper, and sure enough, it had directions to their next destination.
Written on it, it said, ‘Go to the park and look for the fountain that has water coming from the mouth of a fish.’

“The park! Do you know how far it is to the park?” Corine complained.

“It doesn’t matter. We have to get the next clue if we are going to solve this mystery and save ourselves,” Lydia answered Corine while getting her bike from the wall.

The three girls rode as quickly as they could toward the park. This is where children like to play when the weather is nice. They knew exactly which fountain to go to. Unfortunately, it was on the far side of the park.

It took almost ten minutes to get to the fountain. They looked and looked for the paper but could not find it.

“Where did this come from?” she asked as she looked around.

The only place it could have come from was from the tall tree next to the fountain, but no one was there.

“This is freaking me out,” Lydia commented.

Corine noticed the letter ‘T’ on the back of the paper.
“Why is there a letter on the back?” she asked.

Jennetta noticed a letter on the backs of the other papers.

“Maybe, this is part of the clue?” Lydia surmised.

“Let’s see we have R, P, A, and T’,” Lydia read the letters.

“PRAT?” asked Corine.

“No silly, PART. Can’t you see?” Jennetta responded

“PART? Could that be PARTY?” Lydia guessed.

“Why would you say PARTY?” Corine asked, very confused.

“I don’t know. It was just the first thing that came to my mind.

“What is the next clue?” Jennetta asked Corine who was still holding the green paper.

Written on the paper, ‘Go back to where you started. Go back to your house.’

“What!? We rode all this way just to go back to my house?” Lydia exclaimed.

“OK, let’s get going. We don’t have much time.” Jennetta said as she got onto her bike once again.

It took almost twenty minutes to get back to Lydia’s house. They dropped their bikes in the yard and ran to her room. On the mirror was a purple paper they had not seen before.

‘Return to my mirror at the house and I will give you the last clue to find the man who killed me. If you do not do this, I will kill all of you!’

They screamed.

“Back to the haunted house? You have to be kidding. I’m exhausted,” Corine said as she sat on the bed.

Jennetta took the paper off the mirror and on the back was the letter ‘Y’.

“You were right! It is PARTY!” Corine yelled to Lydia. “I think there is something suspicious about all of this. Why would we go all over town to only go back to the house where we were going to have our party?”
“That’s it!” said Jennetta. “There is really going to be a party at the house. Let’s go and find out who did all of this. I want to wring their necks, grrrrrr.”

It was now almost dark. The girls went back to the old house and when they opened the door, the man they had been looking for was standing in the doorway.

The girls jumped back in surprise.

In a strange voice he asked, “Welcome to my house. What can I do for you?”

“We were told to find you. Now that we have found you, what are we supposed to do?” asked Jennetta.

“Come in. I have something to show you,” he answered.

Behind him were the people from the places they had gotten the papers from, as well as the lady in the picture.

Then from the kitchen came their parents and they saw their friends who they had invited to the party standing in the room as well. The place was clean and there were decorations on the walls.

“SURPRISE!” they yelled.

The girls were NOT surprised at all. They were so tired, they didn’t even care.

Their parents had heard about the party and wanted to play a joke on them. They talked to their friends and planned the whole thing.
VOCABULARY *(Match the word to its definition)*

1. haunted house ____
   a. unclear image, dark shape
2. legend ____
   b. to scare one
3. invitations ____
   c. a story about something great
4. hinges ____
   d. a place where ghosts live
5. stuck ____
   e. place to put things in a desk
6. background ____
   f. letter inviting one to a party
7. shadow ____
   g. the place behind something
8. zombie ____
   h. what a door swings open on
9. drawer ____
   i. walking dead people
10. freaking one out____
    j. attached to, glued

TRUE OR FALSE

1. The girls were going to have a Halloween party.  
   T / F
2. The first place they went was to the pet store.  
   T / F
3. There was half eaten sandwich in the kitchen.  
   T / F
4. The girls took the bus to the newspaper stand.  
   T / F
5. Corine wanted to be a mummy.  
   T / F
6. The woman in the pet store told them to get out.  
   T / F
7. There was a green paper in the mouth of the fountain fish.  
   T / F
8. The letters spelled out ‘PARTY’.  
   T / F
9. The woman in the mirror answered the door.  
   T / F
10. The girls were excited about being at the party.  
    T / F
MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. The first clue was at? _____
   a) the bookstore
   b) the newspaper stand
   c) park
   d) pet store

2. Who went back to get the money? _____
   a) all of them
   b) Jennetta
   c) Corine
   d) Lydia

3. How much did the newspaper cost? _____
   a) 25 cents
   b) 75 cents
   c) One dollar
   d) 50 cents

4. Who told them to get out their store? _____
   a) Al the newspaper man
   b) the man at the bookstore
   c) the fish at the fountain
   d) the lady at the pet store
COMPREHENSION: (Write a complete sentence to answer the question.)

1. Where did the girls want to have the party?

________________________________

2. Who was going to make the invitations?

________________________________

3. What did the girls do in the haunted house on Halloween morning?

________________________________

4. What did Lydia find in the wall?

________________________________

5. Who did they see in the mirror?

________________________________

6. Who were they supposed find?

________________________________

7. How did the girls get to each of the places on the cards?

________________________________

8. What color was that paper at the park?

________________________________

9. Where did they find the last paper?

________________________________

10. Who surprised them at the haunted house?

________________________________