

## Second Place Nonfiction, Ages 10-13

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### “How to Scare A Hypocrite”

“D’you think anyone’s still in there?” my brother asks Ethan quizzically.

“Oh yeah. Fred.” Ethan replies, in full seriousness. From behind the boys, I hear this very clearly. The hair stands up on the back of my neck. *Who would leave a soldier behind in a war bunker? Especially one here at Fort Miles!* You could say my eight-year-old thoughts weren’t exactly reasonable.

“Who’s *Fred*?” Aaron asks disbelievingly.

“Oh, he’s a soldier. He passed out and they left him. He was too fat to carry,” Ethan says. At this, my eyes widen. I couldn’t help but let out a little shriek at the thought of a decades-old skeleton still in the bunker, waiting to snatch up the little sister of a Boy Scout at a Boy Scout picnic.

“Oh, hi Hannah,” Ethan and Aaron say in sync. Aaron gets an evil look on his face. “I dare you to go up and look in the window.”

“W-wha-what? The... bunker? What about...Fred?” I ask shakily.

“Yeah. Duh, he’s there. I double dog dare you,” Aaron says.

I couldn’t decline a double-dog-dare; no one could at that age. I nodded and started forward. The looming black doors were casting a shadow over my small, shaking figure. The rust on the doors was a sinister auburn, and the green weeds sprouting up from the cracked concrete are no consolation, despite the promise of life. I persevered, staring forward. As I keep walking, my heart began pounding. I pictured a bleached-white skeleton staring at me.

Panic made me paranoid, and I knew that that couldn’t be true. First, there were two layers of doors, and second, they don’t leave anyone behind. Plus, Lewes was so close they could’ve got a truck to carry out fat Fred. Despite reason, I was terrified. Thoughts of my best friend’s scary stories came to mind. As I faced the doors, three feet away, I stood up on my tippy-toes. All I saw was a black ceiling through the cracked glass. By that time, my willpower was crumbling. Then...it failed. I turned on my heel, running. I ran past Aaron and Ethan, tore past the bushes and ran up to the wood stairs. The stairs led up to the wood balcony above the bunker.

I stood up there, catching my breath and recuperating. Walking to the edge of the balcony, I leaned over the railing to see Aaron and Ethan take a few steps closer to bunker. Aaron lagged back a couple steps, just behind Ethan. I craned my neck farther to see Ethan on his tippy-toes, peering into the impossible blackness of the bunker window.

Aaron gets the all-to-familiar familiar evil look on his face, silently stepped forward, and put his hand on Ethan's shoulder.

“Hi, I'm Fred.” Aaron said simply. Ethan's face morphed into terror and he ran away, screaming, up the balcony. He stopped a few feet from me, weak from terror and still catching his breath. I saw him, terrified of his own scary story that petrified me, and I laughed and laughed. He soon joined the laughter, and we plotted our revenge on my older brother.

\*Names have been changed