

“Stalker much”

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PROSE, 3RD PLACE (Grades 7-9)

“Mom! I’m going to Luke’s house for the night!” Parker shouted up the stairs.

“Okay honey! Have fun!” Parker’s mom shouted down.

Parker raced out the door into his friend’s car. “Are you ready!?!” asked Luke.

“So ready!”

They drove away and met up with their friends outside of Target.

Parker and his friends ran into Target. They loved it there. Parker knew exactly where everything was, like where all the books, food and toys were. Parker had many friends, but for the Target sneak-in he only brought nine of his other friends. Parker had straight dark brown hair and blue eyes. He was average height and thin. Parker was your average high schooler.

Once they were inside Target they all ran to their spots. They had already picked them out a few days ago, and Parker had told them where to hide and where not to hide. He could be bossy at times. That’s why he had planned this whole thing by himself.

Parker had chosen his spot behind the paper towels. He made three little walls with the paper towels and climbed behind them. The paper towel mountain protected him from view. The Target employees announced on the loudspeaker that Target was closing. Parker texted his friends to see if they were in their spots. They all were.

The employees walked around Target looking for people who were still there, but they all had left. Parker heard loud footsteps coming towards him. He crossed his fingers hoping they wouldn't find him. He sat as still as he could, not making any noise. Then he heard footsteps again, but this time they were getting softer and softer. They were walking away from him. He was very happy they didn’t find him or his friends. Parker heard the door snatch shut. Then he waited for a while.

After 30 minutes they all came out of their hiding spots. Parker asked the other

boys what they wanted to do. Charlie replied, “We should all go and find different cool things and bring them back here.” All the boys nodded and they agreed to meet back in ten minutes.

Parker and the boys met back up and before they could look at what everyone got, Parker noticed Charlie wasn't there. Parker texted Charlie and asked him where he was, but he did not respond. He usually ALWAYS responded.

Parker was confused and then very soon after, nervous. ALL the boys started to get really nervous. Even if Charlie was pranking them, he would still text back. They decided to split up and try to find Charlie. They decided to meet back in another ten minutes and text every couple of minutes. Parker thought that Charlie would probably go to the food aisles or the TV aisles and had lost track of time. Parker ran past all the chips and all the rest of the food, but he wasn't there. Then he ran to the TV sections, but he wasn't there either.

Parker called Mike and Luke and Facetimed them. Mike said he couldn't find anyone or anything so far. Luke nodded his head in agreement. All of a sudden Mike and Luke screamed really loud, then the phone crashed against the ground and hung up. Parker thought, *What the heck is going on?* This time he really got nervous. He decided to text the other boys and have everyone meet back at the electronics and talk.

When they went to go and meet, another boy was gone. That meant four boys were missing. Parker said loudly in a nervous laugh, “I bet they're pranking us. Haha, so funny, you guys can come out now!” As he said this, the mannequin behind William that was dressed in full ski gear started to move. At first Parker thought his eyes were playing tricks on him, but then he saw the mannequin move forward quickly and grab Ben, but Ben jumped out of the way and ran towards the back of the store. As he turned the corner, they saw a hand covered with a black glove. Next they heard a scream. This time Parker really didn't think they were pranking him. This was one of scariest things he had ever witnessed.

Parker ran the other way and decided to hide. He went behind the paper towels where he hid when they first got to Target. Parker closed his eyes and hoped it was all a dream, that he would wake up soon. The lights all quickly turned off, as if they just got there.

Parker looked down at his phone, and there was a text from Charlie that said, “Come out, the employees left.” Parker was still confused, and it felt so surreal

he thought it was a dream. He ran out to look for Charlie, but it was pitch black and he couldn't see. He could hear footsteps all around him. Then someone quickly grabbed his shoulder. Parker fell down, and all the lights turned on, as he crouched on the ground. He begged, "Please don't hurt me!"

"Open your eyes, you baby, you're fine."

Parker opened his eyes slowly and saw his mom standing above him. He looked around to see all of his friends and their moms were there too. Parker said, "What's happening here, how did you know I was here?"

His mom responded, "Seriously?! You told me you were going to Luke's house, so I called up Luke's mom, and she said you weren't there, and Luke was coming to our house. I was worried about you, and one by one I called all your friends' mothers and heard all their kids were supposed to be at our house. I looked on my phone and used the app to see where you were. Turns out you were in Target, and after calling around, we all located you here. So we all gathered up some things, and we decided to have some fun with it."

"Stalker, much?" said Parker, but he quickly swallowed his words, knowing he was in big trouble.

Luckily Charlie's mom worked at Target, and they were able to get out without anyone else knowing. All the boys looked at each other before getting into their mothers' cars. They all knew they would not see each other for a while, since they would all be grounded.

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