

Student Model 1

Short Story Read the story. Evaluate it for organization.

Trick or Trickier

As soon as Jerry Flynn got home from school on Friday, his little brother started bugging him. “When are you going to come and meet the alien?” he demanded.

“Oh, Alan, give it up. There is no alien.” Jerry pried Alan’s fingers off his arm.

“There is! You promised you’d come,” Alan said tearfully. “He’s been asking Marv and me to bring our friends. He wants to meet more humans, so I promised him I’d bring you.”

He’s lonely, Jerry realized. He doesn’t have many friends. “All right. Where?”

Alan grabbed his hand and started pulling him toward the door. “Out by the swamp. His spaceship has been parked there for ages.”

As they started down the street, they passed Emily Duchamps washing her family’s car. “Emily!” Alan called. “Come with us.”

Emily turned off the hose and wiped her soapy hands on her jeans. “Where?”

“We’re going to see the alien!” Alan declared.

Jerry met Emily’s eyes and smirked while circling his ear with his finger. “Alan has a friend from a different galaxy. What’s his name anyway, Al?”

“He’s from this galaxy, just from a spiral arm far from ours. His name’s Mrrp.”

“Mrrp?” Emily asked. She laughed and started walking beside Alan. “Okay.”

As they headed for the swamp, which was about a mile away, Emily urged, “Tell me more about this Mrrp person, Alan.”

“He’s really nice and incredibly smart. He can repair any system on his ship.”

“Then why is he still here?” Jerry asked.

“He’s studying us. He calls it—” Alan paused to think “some kind of -ology.”

As they passed beyond the sumac trees that ringed the swamp, they saw a structure that looked like a classic flying saucer. Its top was shaped like a silver plate and its bottom like another, their convex sides facing each other, perched on three spindly legs.

Jerry felt his spine tingle with fear. “You don’t think--?” he whispered to Emily behind Alan’s back. She snorted and rolled her eyes.

A creature scuttled out of the spaceship and climbed down a spindly leg. It was all blue, with yellow antennae on its head. Jerry started to laugh.

“Alan, that’s what Marv wore for Halloween last year. Marv, get over here.”

When the blue creature hopped closer, Jerry realized its proportions weren’t quite human. “I’m not Marv,” it said. “But I did inspire his costume; unfortunately, he didn’t get the mouth right.” It opened its mouth, revealing two rows of sharp, pointy teeth.

Student Model 2

Short Story Read the story. Evaluate it for organization.

Things That Go Crash in the Night

Liz and her friends stopped giggling long enough for her parents to say goodbye.

“You girls are acting more like six than sixteen,” her mother said. “I wonder if it’s really safe to leave you on your own for the evening?” “We’ll be fine, Mom. Have a good time. Bye!”

“Hmm. We’ll be back by midnight, maybe before.” Her mother’s eyes drilled into Liz’s. “Call me if *anything* comes up. And girls, have fun—but NO BOYS.”

Liz burst out laughing again, as did Maya and Serena. They all crowded into the kitchen, giggling and teasing each other as they made microwave popcorn. They settled down in front of the TV with a stack of DVDs. The first movie they watched was fun, but the second one was boring. It was the same setup they’d seen a million times, where the main character was receiving threatening calls and the police called to say the stalker was calling from inside the house. Liz didn’t even realize she’d drifted off until she found herself hyperalert. *What is it?* she thought. *I must have heard something.* She listened intently, and sure enough, she heard a creak that sounded like a basement window opening. She grabbed Maya’s foot.

“You never sat here without your parents, watching a scary movie and letting your imagination run wild.” Maya stood up. “I’ll go see what it is. Got a flashlight?” Liz found one and handed it to her. *I wonder if I’m being a bad host,* she thought.

“Huh? What do you want?” Maya muttered, half asleep.

“Listen!” It sounded to Liz like footsteps across the basement floor.

“It’s nothing,” Maya said. “Old houses settle when the weather cools off at night.”

“I live in this house. I never heard it make those noises before.”

After getting a flashlight, Maya opened the basement door and headed down the stairs. “There’s nothing here!” she yelled. Liz was starting to relax when she heard a crash. Serena went from unconscious to standing in two seconds flat.

Maya’s flashlight was shining on a small table. “Don’t knock yourself out,” she said. “Seriously, put that thing down; you’re not going to need it against these intruders.”

Liz looked around for a weapon and found the brass fireplace poker. “I’m coming! I’ll fight him off!” She started down the stairs with Serena right behind her. The flashlight illuminated half a dozen chipmunks, swarming the basement as if they owned the place. Some were swinging from the tabletop, while others were investigating the giant ceramic pot they had apparently knocked over.

“We’ll be in trouble with your mom if any of them are boys,” Maya said.