



I have a '57 Chevy Impala in my room. It's two-tone blue with red-and-silver flame detailing on the sides and fins.

And I have a '92 Firebird V-8 with a twin-cam engine and black leather interior. And I have an '83 silver Camaro that I haven't finished putting together.

Yes, they're models. I've filled the bookshelves along my bedroom wall with model cars that I've built.

Dad says he's going to build shelves on the other wall to hold the new ones. But that would cover up my race car posters.

I don't want to do that. I love my car posters. One of them is even signed by Mario Andretti. If you're not into cars, I'd better explain that he's a very famous race car driver. In fact, he's a legend.

My name is Mitchell Moinian. I'm twelve, and I'm kind of a legend, too. That's because I know more about cars than anybody in my school.

Sometimes my friends Allan and Steve and I have a contest. We stand on the corner outside my house and see who can be the first to identify the cars that come by.

I win every time. I can identify cars with my eyes closed!

That's because I read stacks and stacks of car magazines. And when I'm not reading about cars or building models of cars, I like to draw cars.

Know what I dream about at night? That's right — I dream that I'm *driving* cars.

Anyway, I guess my story starts on a peaceful Saturday afternoon. It had rained all morning, and a few raindrops, blown by the wind, still tapped against my bedroom window.

I didn't care. I like the sound of rain when I'm inside working on a model. I leaned over my worktable, studying the diagrams for the silver Camaro.

It was pretty complicated. There were a million pieces to this one. I mean, you don't just glue slot A to tab B and call it a Camaro!

I had the chassis built. And I was carefully fitting together fiberglass parts to the body — when my brother, Todd, came bursting into the room, screaming his head off.

“Hey!” I jumped — and cracked a fender. The fiberglass split in my fist.

“You jerk!” I screamed. “Look what you made me do!”

Todd didn't even look down at the broken fender. "Hurry! Help me!" he cried. "You've got to come — quick!"

Todd is seven. He's not into cars. I don't know what he's into.

I guess he's into scaring himself. He's been very weird ever since we moved into this creepy old house last year.

We had a perfectly nice house back in Toledo. But Dad got a new job, and we had to move to Forrest Valley. And Mom and Dad bought this huge, old, broken-down heap.

The house leans over a high peak on the top of Hunter Hill. You can see our house from town in Forrest Valley below. Even from so far away, the house looks like a haunted house in a horror movie.

I think they bought this wreck because Dad likes to build and repair things. He watches all those "Fix Up Your Own House" shows on TV and says, "I can do that. I can do that."

Except he really can't.

As Mom says, "When it comes to being handy, he's all thumbs!"

Anyway, Todd has been acting really weird ever since we moved in. He is convinced the house is haunted. He's always seeing ghosts in every room.

He's always screaming and carrying on and freaking himself out. Do you believe it? The poor guy has to sleep with his lights on!

And now he stood trembling in my doorway, motioning frantically with both hands for me to follow him. He's so skinny and blond and pink. I had to laugh. The way he was twitching and shaking, he looked like a frightened bunny rabbit.

"Mitchell — hurry! Please!" he cried. "There's a ghost in my room!"

"Not again," I groaned. I dropped the broken fiberglass fender to the table and glared at my brother. "Todd, your *brain* is haunted. How many times do I have to tell you? There's no ghost in this house!"

"Please —" he pleaded.

"Have you been reading those scary books again?" I asked. "You know you're too young for them."

"No. Really. I'm not making it up this time," he insisted. He turned and gazed down the hall, quivering all over. "It — it's down there."

"Okay, okay," I muttered. I climbed to my feet, shaking my head. "You wrecked my Camaro fender. There'd better be a real ghost this time."

"There is," he murmured. "For real. In my closet. I saw it."

He stepped aside to let me pass. I peered down the long, dark hallway. Gray light washed in from the tiny window at the far end. Dad had started to put up ceiling lights. But he needed someone to help him with the wiring.

In the meantime, the long hall was always dark. And the ancient brown wallpaper on the walls, cracked and peeling, didn't make it any brighter.

The old floorboards creaked under our feet as I led the way to Todd's room.

"A ghost in my closet," Todd whispered. "I'm not making it up."

He stayed behind me, one hand clinging to the back of my T-shirt. I glanced over my shoulder. His bunny face twitched, blue eyes wide with fright.

Todd always was the weird one in the Moinian family. He doesn't even look like us. Mom, Dad, and I are all tall and dark, with brown eyes and brown hair.

I stopped at the doorway and peered into Todd's room. Gloomy gray light washed over the room from the rain-spotted window.

"Do you see it? Do you see it?" Todd eagerly whispered behind me, his fist still clinging to my shirt.

"Of course not —" I started.

But then my eyes moved to Todd's half-open closet door. And I saw the ghostly figure floating inside the closet.