

Our Dad is in Atlantis

by

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Characters

Big Brother : an eleven year old boy

Little Brother : an eight year old boy

Place

Mexico

Time

The present

Stuff about the countryside

<: Forty-two, Forty-three.

>: It's so hot!

<: Forty-four cows.

>: Why are you doing that?

<: What?

>: Counting cows. Counting cows is stupid. Stop it.

<: I've never seen so many cows in my whole life.

>: I hate cows. Stop counting cows.

<: All right. I'll count horses.

>: Don't count horses. Don't count sheep, or goats, or anything. Don't count animals. I hate farm animals.

<: ...

>: ...

<: You think Grandma has horses?

>: It's so hot here.

- <: You told me she has chickens. If she has chickens, maybe she also has a horse.
- >: Are you sure you can't open that window?
- <: You saw yourself it's stuck.
- >: One thing I hate about the country, is the heat. Your clothes stick to your body. And everything smells bad.
- <: You think Grandma will let us ride her horses?
- >: Grandma doesn't have horses.
- <: How do you know?
- >: The only thing she has is a chicken coop which always stinks like chicken turds.
- <: Maybe she does have a horse. Maybe a small one.
- >: You don't even remember Grandma. That's why you're so happy. When you see her again, you'll realize how truly horrible a human being can be.
- <: She can't be that bad.

>: Dad says she used to hit her kids with the Bible whenever they didn't want to go to mass or when they misbehaved. Later she would make them pray the Our Father. That Bible was as heavy as a rock. He says once she split open Uncle Rodrigo's head and they were pretty sure he started leaking brain juice.

<: I don't think she's going to treat us bad, after all we're her guests.

>: Guests. What do you think we're doing, taking a vacation?

<: Of course we're taking a vacation.

>: We're not taking a vacation.

<: Yes we are.

>: In our entire lives, we've never taken a vacation.

<: There's a first time for everything right? That's what people say.

>: Oh yeah? And why now? In the middle of the school year?

<: If Grandma has a little horse, I'm going to ride it everyday. I'll feed him alfalfa and we'll be best friends, watch.

>: I already told you, we're not going on vacation.

<: What difference will that make to the horse?

>: Enough about farm animals.

<: ...

>: ...

<: If we're not going on vacation, then why are we going to Grandma's house?

>: You really are dumb.

<: I'm going to tell Dad you're calling me names again.

>: Go ahead, bother him. See what happens. He meant it when he said he wanted us to sit down and keep our seat belts on.

<: How come you keep saying we aren't going on vacation?

>: ...

<: ...

>: Dad is going to drop us off there.

<: With Grandma?

>: I heard him talking with her on the phone. He said stuff like, "It'll just be a month, Mother", "I guarantee they won't give you any problems"

<: Where's he going?

>: I don't know. But he can't take us with him. That's for sure.

- <: You're lying. I'm going to ask him and you'll see it's not true.
- >: Why do you think he made us pack all of our clothes?
- <: Dad would never do that. He wouldn't leave us behind.
- >: Why do you think we got on this bus when it's so full? Dad is in a hurry to drop us off at Grandma's.
- <: Why is he in a hurry?
- >: ...
- <: Is it true Dad is scared of Grandma?
- >: Of course. She used to force them to believe in God by hitting them on the head with a Bible.
- <: I don't want Grandma to make me leak brain juices with her Bible.
- >: I shouldn't have told you anything.
- <: I thought Dad was going to stay with us.
- >: We'll have to put up with the stink of chicken turds for a whole month.
- <: It's just going to be one month then?
- >: Maybe you should go back to counting cows.

Stuff about terror

<: I don't like this house.

>: You never like anything.

<: It smells old... Don't you think it smells old?

>: What'd you expect? Grandma is old and everything she has in her house is old. Old stuff has to smell old.

<: The furniture has to be a thousand years old. Look at that dresser and that mirror. They have cobwebs they're so old.

>: You've been complaining since we got here. You haven't done anything but whine.

<: I haven't whined.

>: If you didn't want to stay you should have told Dad.

<: This bed is hard. I'm sure nobody's used it. Ever. I want to leave.

>: You want Grandma to come in here and beat you with her Bible and make you pray? Have you forgotten what I told you about Grandma and her Bible?

>: ...

<: ...

- <: I don't like this house.
- >: Just go to sleep already.
- <: I can't sleep if you don't turn off the light. You know that.
- >: How do you want me to read with the light turned off? Huh genius?
- <: Grandma said we have to be up at six. Did you hear what I said?... If I don't wake up on time it's going to be your fault. I don't want her to hit me with her Bible so hard that I start leaking brain juice. If you make me oversleep, I'll tell her you're the one she should beat.
- >: I'm right in the middle of the most exciting part.
- <: You've already read that book a thousand times.
- >: This is the first time I'm reading it.
- <: Don't try to hide it. I can see it through the mirror. It's that same book about vampires. You've read that book more than five thousand times.
- >: So?
- <: I'll tell grandma you're not letting me sleep.
- >: You always whine. That's why me and my friends never took you with us to the train tracks. None of us wanted to hang out with whiny kids.

- <: Juan told me all you guys did was throw rocks at the empty train cars... I don't want to throw rocks at a bunch of stupid train cars.
- >: Juan is as stupid as you are. He doesn't know anything. We did a lot more than throw rocks... You're both stupid.
- <: When are you going to turn off the light?
- >: ...
- <: Are you going to turn it off?
- >: I'll turn off the light, but if the devil comes in, I'm not going to defend you.
- <: What are you talking about?
- >: The devil, genius. Don't you know he's always around these old houses with all the cobwebs?
- <: You're a liar.
- >: He appears inside old mirrors. You didn't know? You yourself said that mirror was as old as Grandma.
- <: Mirrors are for looking at yourself and that's all. See? That's just you and me in there and nothing else.

>: That's when the light is on. Demons are afraid of even the smallest candlelight. Don't you know that fallen angels can't stand the light? But when the lights are turned off that's when they can look and spy on us through the mirrors. Demons get into houses through big mirrors.

<: You're a liar.

>: In a lot of old houses like this one, people cover up the mirrors at night with black cloth and that way they keep the demons out.

<: You're making that up.

>: Ask anyone. If we turn off the light, it won't even be ten minutes before a demon comes up through the mirror and the second we fall asleep he'll climb into our beds and steal our memories.

<: You're making it up.

>: If you want we can turn off the light so you'll see.

<: I don't believe anything you say.

>: ...

<: What are you doing? Don't turn off the light. Don't turn it off.

>: You'll see. You say you don't believe anything I say? Well you'll see how the devil appears.

<: I'm going to scream for Grandma.

- >: See what a crybaby you are?
- <: I'm not a crybaby.
- >: Then I'll turn off the light.
- >: If you turn off the light I'll scream for Grandma.
- >: If you scream the devil will come after you. Demons can always hear you. Even when they're hiding in the mirror, they can hear you.
- <: I don't believe you.
- >: Lower your voice, he can hear you. He can also see anything that moves.
- <: Turn on the light. I don't believe anything you say. The devil doesn't exist.
- >: Then take that blanket off of your head. How do you expect to see that the devil doesn't exist if you cover your head?
- <: You're making all of this up.
- >: Hold up. I think I saw something.
- <: That's not true.
- >: Take off that blanket.

- <: When Dad gets back I'm going to tell him what you're doing.
- >: You'll have to wait a month. Dad isn't coming back for a month.
- <: Either way, I'll tell him.
- >: Hold up. Don't move. If you move, the demon is going to come after you.
- <: And why not after you?
- >: I already hid behind the bed and he can't see me. Don't you move...
Be quiet. He's going to hear you. I see it... it's like... it's like a shadow...
- <: Are you serious?
- >: Don't move or he'll find you... He came out from behind the curtains. I never thought a demon would look like that. He has the face of a really old man. Hold up, his skin isn't red. It's purple, like a dry scab. And his eyes ...
- <: What?
- >: He doesn't have eyes. They're black, like two beetles. His ears are pointy.. what did I tell you. He's moving his head, looking around the room. Don't you move...
- <: I want my Dad.
- >: Hold up... I think he saw you..

- <: But I haven't moved.
- >: Your blanket is shaking. It's shaking like a wet dog.
- <: Come on, I'm your brother: Turn on the light.
- >: I think he's coming in.
- <: Turn on the light.
- >: He'll see me.
- <: If you don't turn on the light he's going to steal my memory.
- >: If I turn on the light and make him leave, are you going to let me read?
- <: Turn on the light.
- >: Fine. Since you're such a crybaby.
- <: ...
- >: ...
- <: Is he gone? Hello? Can I take off the blanket? Hey? Where are you? Where are you?... You better not scare me. Come out already. Demons don't exist... Grandma!
- >: ...

<: The devil kidnapped my brother. Grandma!

>: Where are you going! Don't bother Grandma.

<: ...

>: Man you're stupid. The devil in the mirror...

Stuff about men

>: I've been waiting for you for about a thousand hours. Grandma is going to be mad. She said we had to be home early. Why don't you lift your head? What's wrong?

<: Nothing. Let's go.

>: Something happen to you?

<: Nothing happened. Let's go.

>: Why won't you look at me?

<: Grandma said we had to be home early.

>: Let me see.

<: No. You're going to make fun of me.

>: Why would I make fun of you?

<: You always make fun of what happens to me.

>: That's not true. I've never made fun of you.

<: And that time that piñata fell on top of me?

>: Just that one time.

<: And the time Anna threw me in the pool?

>: I promise I won't make fun of you this time.

<: Remember what you promised.

>: Who did this to you?

<: Let's go.

>: They punched you?

<: I don't like that school anymore.

>: Did you fight back? Did you punch them back?

<: I want to go back to my old school.

>: Tell me who it was.

<: I want us to go back to the city.

>: Answer me, who punched you?

<: ...

>: ...

<: Why did they call me a dirty rat from the capital?

>: Who called you that?

- <: They told me that in this town they didn't like dirty rats from the capital.
- >: ...
- <: What does that mean?
- >: Well it's an insult.
- <: They told me that since I was a stinky rat from the capital, I probably had a knife or a gun on me. And probably I was here to mug people and then they said a bunch of other stuff.
- >: This is why I didn't want to come to a town full of cows... people here make stuff up that isn't true.
- <: I told them I never even owned a gun, so then they wanted to pat me down, but I didn't let them and they told me that if I was so brave then I had to fight all of them.
- >: How many were there?
- <: I don't want to go back to that school.
- >: This is what happens to you for being a crybaby. I've told you before, men don't cry. How do you expect people to respect you if they think you're a girl instead of a man?
- <: I'm not a crybaby, and I'm not a girl. I'm sensitive. That's what Grandma says. Besides, the reason they hit me was because they think I'm a dirty rat from the city.

- >: Grandma doesn't know about these things. She's a woman.
- <: She might be a woman, but even that guy who sells groceries is afraid of her.
- >: I really don't understand our grandmother, she tells you you're sensitive when you cry but she beats me with her horrible Bible for any little thing I do.
- <: Don't tell her they punched me at school.
- >: In that case you're going to have to do what I say and go and punch them back.
- <: I'm not a violent person, even if they say I am.
- >: ...
- <: ...
- >: I'm going to teach you how to box.
- <: You don't know how to box.
- >: Of course I do. Thing is you never realized Uncle Rodrigo was giving me lessons. One day I went home with a black eye, just like the one you have, and our Uncle gave me private boxing lessons. The next week I found the boy who had punched me, and I challenged him to a boxing match. He didn't even last two rounds. From that day on, everyone respected me.

- <: You never came home with a black eye.
- >: My best move was the left hook to the gut.
- <: If you had come home with a black eye, Mom would have taken you to the hospital.
- >: Just two or three lessons, and that's all you'll need.
- <: I think it'll be better if I tell my teacher what happened.
- >: Are you nuts? If you tell your teacher, all the kids in school are going to be your enemy. You have to honor the code of fist fights. Teachers cannot get involved.
- <: ...
- >: ...
- <: When my teacher asked me what happened, I told her I ran into one of the swings.
- >: That was good. That way they won't ask you any more questions. You weren't a crybaby.
- <: But didn't you say I was a crybaby?
- >: Yeah, but it's one thing to be a crybaby at Grandma's house, and another thing to go and be a crybaby to your teacher.