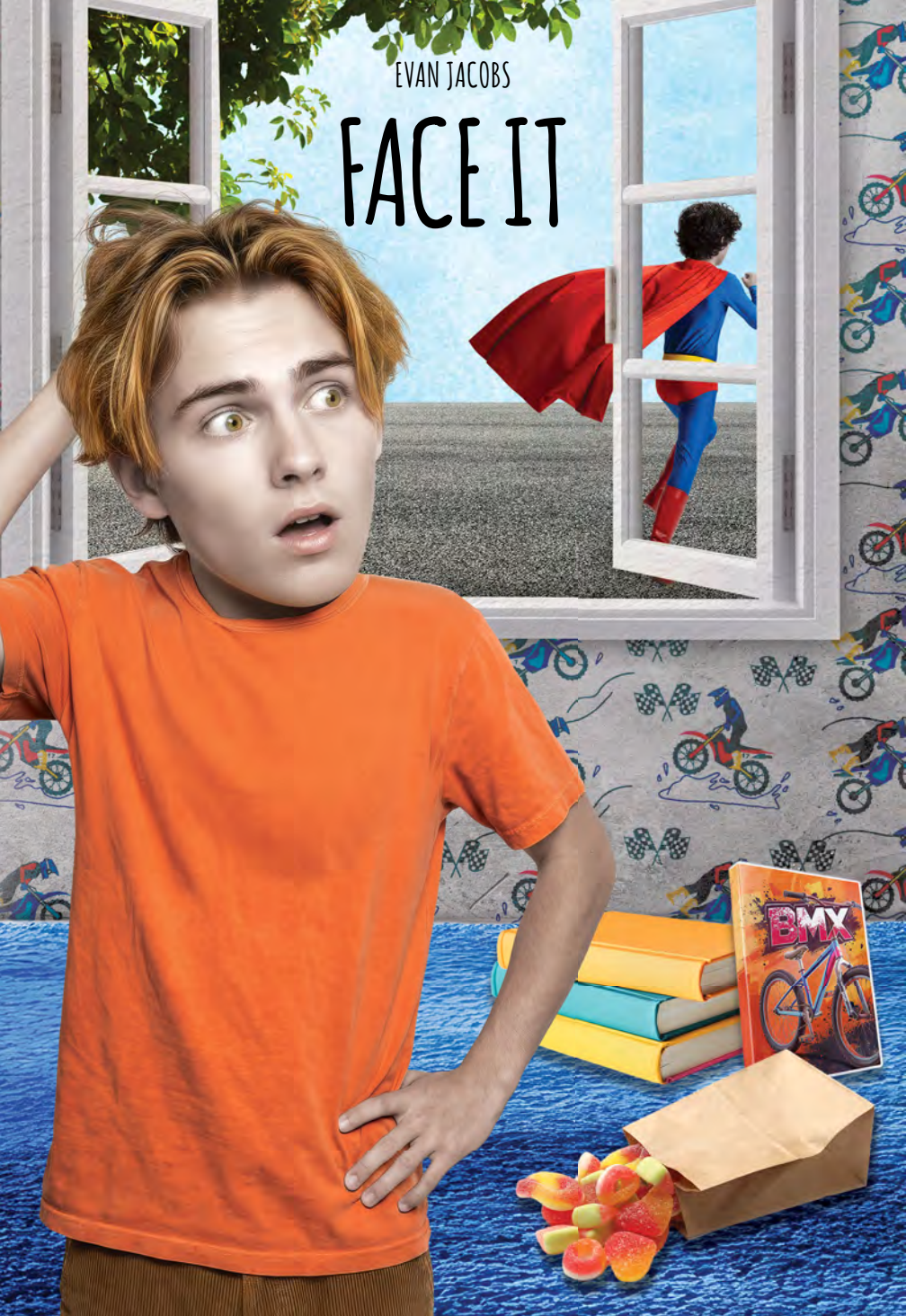

EVAN JACOBS
FACE IT
BMX

Josh's Notes

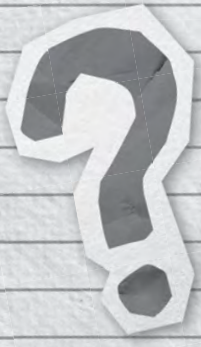
WHAT SCARES PEOPLE ON HALLOWEEN



A MASK THAT NO ONE ELSE HAS



SCARY TRUE STORIES



THE UNEXPLAINABLE







WHAT NOT TO DO ON HALLOWEEN (OR EVER)

DANGEROUS PRANKS



STEAL CANDY



BE MEAN TO LITTLE DAVEY



HOW MUCH MY FAMILY LOVES ME:





CHAPTER 1

ODD THINGS

It was Sunday afternoon. Josh Alcazar was riding his new BMX bike. He had turned 13 a month ago. The bike was all he'd wanted for his birthday.

Josh's best friend, Nick, rode alongside him. He had the same kind of bike. The boys were always riding together. They loved doing bike tricks too. But Josh liked something else even more. It was Halloween.

"Why don't you just go as a zombie?" Nick asked him.

Josh shook his head. “Nah. There’ll be too many zombies on Halloween. I want to be different. We’re in eighth grade. It’s our last year at Hyde Creek Middle School. This Halloween needs to be next level.”

“Well,” Nick said. “You know it’s almost here. Time is running out. The good costumes might be all gone.”

Josh stopped and stared ahead. “Check that out.” He flipped his hair from his eyes. “The giant pumpkin looks smaller this year.”

A platform was in the middle of the street. It held a huge orange pumpkin. There was a sign above it. The sign read “Halloween is almost here!” This was a tradition in the small town of Hyde Creek. Every year, a giant pumpkin was displayed before Halloween.

Nick pushed up his glasses on his nose. They changed weekly. The clear frames he wore today were his favorite. He liked how they set against his dark brown skin. “Yeah. And the decorations

are terrible this year. What's with the streamers? But it doesn't matter. Halloween is still going to be awesome."

"The decorations just need to be scarier." Josh shook his head. "They're so weak this year."

Nick rolled his eyes. "You always want scarier stuff."

Josh started riding again. "Nothing is ever scary *enough*. Even horror movies have that problem. Most special effects aren't that special." He snickered.

The boys rode to Hyde Creek Mall. They locked up their bikes on a rack.

"So, what *do* you want to be for Halloween?" Nick asked as they entered the mall.

"I don't know." Josh shoved his hand in his pocket. He checked for his money. Luckily, he hadn't forgotten it. "Something no one else would think of."

"Why are you like that, Josh?"

"Like what?"

Nick laughed. "You always complicate what's simple. This is Halloween. It shouldn't be hard. Just relax. Who cares if your costume is the same as someone else's?"

"*I* do," Josh said proudly. "It's like how you are with your glasses. You like variety. I'm adding *variety* to Halloween." He grinned.

Just then, a store caught Josh's eye. The store's name was Odd Things.

Josh stopped in front of it. "What's this place?"

Nick shrugged. "Beats me." He walked toward the entrance. "I wonder if they have fake blood. My zombie costume needs it."

Josh followed Nick into the tiny store. It was dimly lit. There were no other customers inside.

The place was filled with books. Josh looked closer at the collection. One was titled *Real Hauntings*. Another was *The Unexplained*. Small monster figurines rested on other shelves. Some shelves were packed with porcelain dolls.

"This store is weird," Nick whispered.

Josh glanced at a man sitting behind the counter. The man's long black hair was draped over his shirt. He was reading a famous horror novel. It was about a clown.

Josh was glad the man didn't seem to hear Nick. "Well, I think this place is cool," Josh said loudly. He turned to the man. "Excuse me. How long has this store been here?"

The man didn't look up from his book. "It has always been here."

Josh smiled. "Oh. We've just never noticed it before."

The man didn't respond.

"Let's leave," Nick said. "This place doesn't have any fake blood. I'll just go to the usual Halloween store."

That's when Josh noticed a mask. It was sitting on a shelf among the dolls.

Josh picked up the mask. It was big enough to cover his entire head. The face was expressionless.

There were cutouts for eyes. Brown hair at the top was combed to one side. Small holes were at the nose. A tag on the mask read One Size Fits All. But there was no price.

Josh easily slid the mask on. It fit him perfectly. He felt like it formed to the shape of his face.

Nick stared at him. "Whoa. That fits like it's made for you. Are you getting it?"

"Let me see how it looks." Josh pulled out his phone. He switched the camera to selfie view. Seeing himself made him smile. The mouth on the mask curved upward. It smiled too. Josh frowned. The mask mimicked him. "This thing is amazing! My face is moving the mask's face. I've never had a mask like this!"

Nick grinned. "Wild! It's super creepy too."

Josh nodded. "This is exactly what I want. I'm getting it." He slid off the mask. It came off as easily as it went on. Then Josh carried it to the man at the counter. "How much is this?"

The man still didn't look up from his book. "Ten."

Josh had 15 dollars. That would cover the tax too. "Nice. I'll take it."

Finally, the man put down his book. He rang up the purchase.

After Josh paid, he thanked the man. But the man had already returned to his book. He said nothing.

Josh and Nick looked at each other. They burst out laughing after leaving the store.

FACE IT

HALLOWEEN, BMX BIKES, PEOPLE'S SUPPORT

STRANGE STORES, HAUNTED MASKS, BEING GROUNDED

JOSH IS OBSESSED WITH SCARY STUFF, BUT NOTHING PREPARED HIM FOR THE CREEPY MASK HE FINDS IN AN ODD LITTLE SHOP. AFTER TAKING THE MASK HOME, JOSH STARTS GETTING BLAMED FOR TERRIBLE INCIDENTS. DETERMINED TO PROVE HIS INNOCENCE, JOSH MUST UNCOVER THE HISTORY BEHIND THE MASK BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

WHITE LIGHTNING BOOKS®



SADDLEBACK
EDUCATIONAL PUBLISHING
www.sdlback.com
LEXILE HL250L
ISBN: 978-1-63889-921-1
90000
9 781638 899211