

SCARED SILLY

CURSES ARE THE WORST

ELIZABETH FULBERG

SCHOLASTIC INC.

If you purchased this book without a cover, you should be aware that this book is stolen property. It was reported as “unsold and destroyed” to the publisher, and neither the author nor the publisher has received any payment for this “stripped book.”

Copyright © 2023 by Elizabeth Eulberg, Inc.

All rights reserved. Published by Scholastic Inc., *Publishers since 1920*. SCHOLASTIC and associated logos are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of Scholastic Inc.

The publisher does not have any control over and does not assume any responsibility for author or third-party websites or their content.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without written permission of the publisher. For information regarding permission, write to Scholastic Inc., Attention: Permissions Department, 557 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either the product of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously, and any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, business establishments, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

ISBN 978-1-338-81535-1

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 23 24 25 26 27

Printed in the U.S.A. 40

First edition, March 2023

Book design by Stephanie Yang



WARNING!

According to Rule 1, section BOO!, paragraph yada yada of the *Publisher's Guide to Scaring Children*, I must warn you that the following story contains skin-crawling creatures and scary moments that would terrify even the bravest of souls.

What kind of scary things, you ask? Do you *really* want to know?

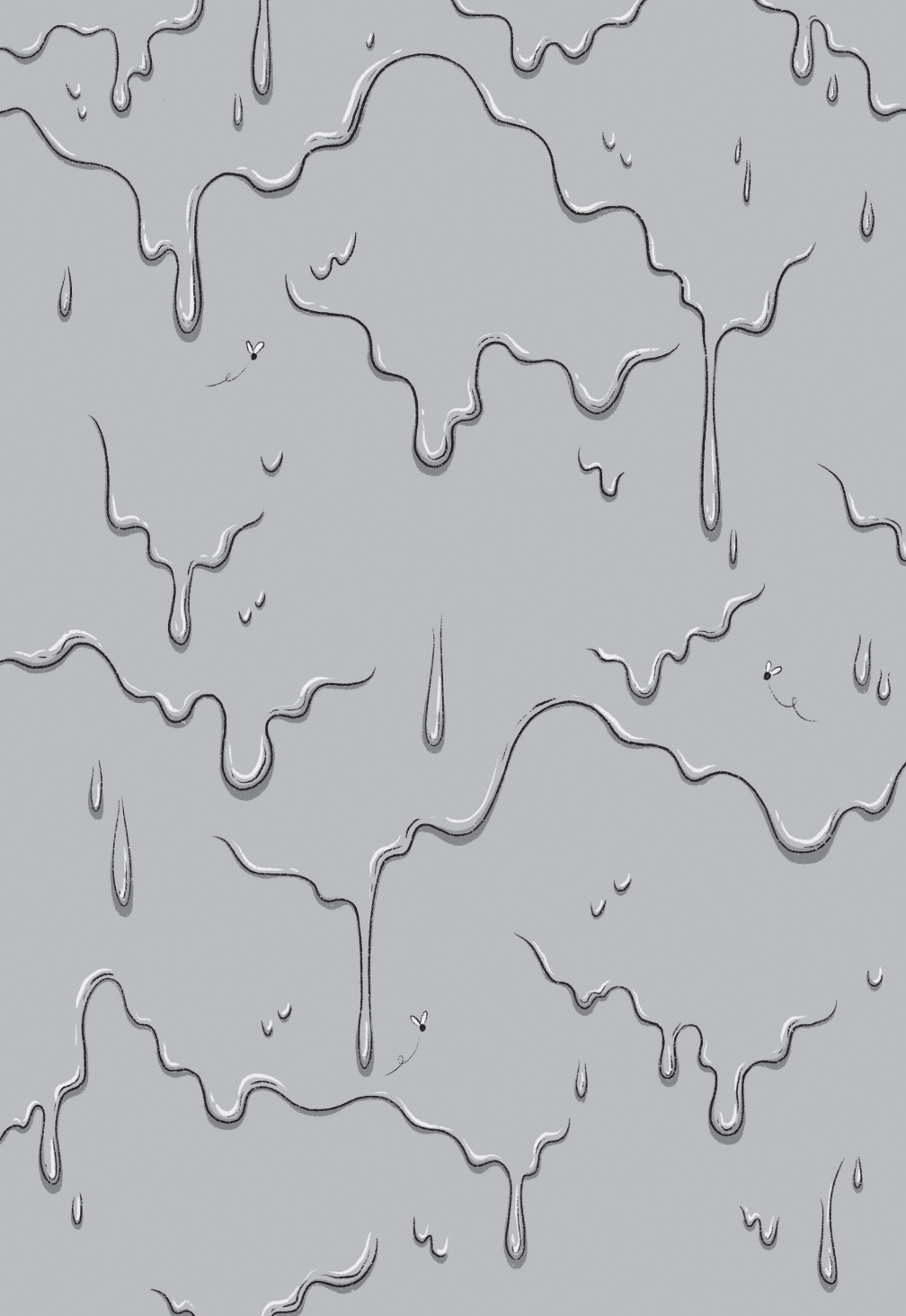
Oh, you do? Well, okay, then. (Pretty nosy if you ask me . . .)

We're talking blood, guts, *homework*, snotty tissues, kidnapping, *broccoli*, lightning, annoying *siblings*, a vat of goo, some dog poo (and the occasional rhyme from time to time), a *history* lesson, detention, *stinky cheese*, super long needles, and maybe worst of all . . . even more *broccoli*. *Ewww*.

Readers of this story may experience the following symptoms: being woken up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat, taco cravings, restless brain syndrome, suspicion of science teachers, need-to-read-under-a-blanket-itis, the sudden urge to hug your siblings, and the uncontrollable desire to keep turning the page.

It's probably best to put this book down and walk away. Pretend you never opened it and move on with your young, impressionable life.

However, if you think you're super, *duper* brave and want to continue, you're doing so at your own risk.



Wow, you think you're pretty tough, huh?

Impressive.

Fine, go ahead and read. Just don't say you weren't warned.



1

To begin our story, we need to travel back to over three hundred years ago. In the dark ages before indoor toilets and the internet. (Hey, you were warned things were going to get scary!)

In a time of witches. Yes, *witches*, as in rides-broomsticks-and-casts-spells witches. Now, not *all* had hairy moles on their cheeks, but since there was no running water, a lot of them smelled. But so did everybody else. Pretty much *everything* and *everyone* stank back then.

Okay, back to the witches.

Many had lived a quiet life until the Salem witch trials.

WARNING: HISTORY LESSON AHEAD! The following paragraph contains historical elements that may be considered “learning,” but don’t worry, this will be the last time it happens.

The Salem witch trials took place during the late 1600s in Massachusetts. Over two hundred people, mostly women, were accused of witchcraft or being possessed by the devil. It’s also

important to remember that back then, a woman who could read or solve equations was considered the devil's work. *A woman who can do math in the 1600s? She must be a witch! Burn her!* Anyhoo, hearings took place and nineteen people were executed by hanging.

Learning over. *Phew!*

Many witches fled Salem during this time, including Ann Wilder. Ann ended up in the small town of Cauldron's Cove. Because let's be real, if you name a town *Cauldron's Cove*, you're just asking for witches to flock there. It's like calling a town *Bloodadelphia* and not expecting vampires to move in. Because yes, vampires are also real, but that's a story for another time.

The townsfolk in Cauldron's Cove didn't trust this ginger-haired newcomer. Never trust a ginger—and I should know; I am one. One dark and stormy evening, a thunderstorm ravaged the town. A bolt of lightning caused the church to burn down. Without any proof, the town decided it was Ann's fault. The next night, the townspeople burned down Ann's house before burning *her* at the stake.

What a time to be alive, huh? *Yikes!*

As Ann was dragged up to the fiery pit, she screamed out to the crowd, "You hath underestimated my powers! Never underestimate a woman!" Then, with her final breath, Ann placed a curse upon the town.

Ann promised to release a series of creatures to terrorize the children and grandchildren of the townspeople. Because sometimes children have to pay for their parents' sins. And what would be more torturous for those responsible for her death than watching their children and grandchildren suffer?

But see, Ann really *was* bad at math. When you think about it, wouldn't you be, too? Remember, these were ye olden times when doing a little addition could make someone scream, *She's a witch!* So you couldn't blame a girl for not wanting to do her multiplication tables. (Although I highly recommend that you do *not* use the but-I-didn't-want-you-to-think-I-was-a-witch excuse for skipping your math homework. Believe me, I've tried, and it does *not* work.)

So yeah, Ann made a teeny-tiny error in her curse that caused it to be dormant for many, *many* years.

Three hundred and thirty-one years to be exact.

So instead of cursing the children and grandchildren of Ann's murderers, it's the great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great—*takes a deep breath*—great-great-grandchildren she cursed.

And now the time has come for Ann's monsters to be unleashed upon the unsuspecting children of Cauldron's Cove.