

WELCOME TO THE HALL OF HORRORS

THERE'S ALWAYS ROOM FOR ONE MORE SCREAM

Greetings. Come in. You've found my old castle, here in the darkest, most hidden part of HorrorLand.

Pay no attention to those screeching bats. They always get excited when someone new arrives. They think it might be *dinnertime*.

Don't look so terrified. The bats won't bother you. The scorpions will keep them away.

Take a seat next to the coffin table over there. Cozy, right?

No, I don't know who is buried in there. I just hope he's *dead*! Ha-ha.

The Hall of Horrors is a place for very special visitors. A place for kids who have stories to tell.

Frightened kids find their way here. Haunted kids. They are eager to tell me their stories. For I am the Listener. I am the Story-Keeper, the keeper of tales.

We have a visitor today. That girl who keeps

twisting and untwisting a strand of her red hair. Yes, she looks tense.

The girl's name is Monica Anderson. She is twelve.

See that Halloween mask on her lap? That mask is the ugliest thing I've ever seen. (Except when I look in the mirror in the morning. Ha-ha. I have to be careful. I have to sneak up on the mirror so it doesn't break.)

My guess is Monica has a Halloween story to tell. "Why did you bring that mask, Monica?" I ask her.

"I didn't bring it. The mask brought *me*."

"Are you saying that mask is *alive*?"

"I'm saying this Halloween was the most terrifying night of my life. My brother, Peter, and I will never go trick-or-treating again."

"Well, start at the beginning, Monica. I am the Story-Keeper. Tell me your story."

Monica squeezes the ugly mask between her hands. "What happened to Peter and me is hard to believe. Are you sure you want to hear it?"

Go ahead, Monica. Don't be afraid. There's Always Room for One More Scream in the Hall of Horrors.