

“I look like a nerd, don’t I? Like a complete nerd,” you moan to your friend Gabe. In the mirror you see your costume and wince. “Halloween is only a few days away. I’m doomed!”

You and Gabe have been best friends for two years. Gabe has long brown hair, wire-rimmed glasses — and a way of giving advice that sometimes bugs you.

“You do look pretty stupid,” Gabe admits. “Where did you get that costume, anyway?”

“It’s called Vampire in a Can,” you explain, holding up the cardboard can. “I bought it from Mr. Reuterly at Scary Stuff.”

“I don’t believe it!” Gabe slaps his forehead. “You bought a costume from the Eyeball Man? What if he took out his glass eye — right there in the store — and *showed* it to you?”

“He never takes out his glass eye,” you answer.

“Okay, okay,” Gabe says. “But your costume is still ridiculous. It’s just a set of plastic fangs, a cheap little black cape, and a fake tattoo of fang marks for your neck. Isn’t there anything else in the can?”

You pick it up and peer inside. “Hey, look!” you cry.

“What?” Gabe asks, looking interested.

“There *is* something else in the can,” you answer. You reach in and pull out a small plastic packet that was stuck to the inside. It looks like a ketchup packet.

“What is it?” Gabe moves closer.

“I think it’s fake blood,” you tell him.

“Really? Cool,” Gabe says. He picks up the Vampire in a Can box and reads the label. “That’s weird. It doesn’t say anything on the box about fake blood.”

Then you notice the writing on the packet.

In bloodred letters, it says, DANGER — KEEP AWAY.

You hand the packet to Gabe. He reads the label and his eyes grow wide. “Are you going to open it?” he asks.

You gulp. The words on the packet are kind of scary.

But you’re *dying* to know what’s inside.

So? Are you going to open it?

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*If you open the packet, turn to PAGE 34.*

*If you don’t open it, turn to PAGE 67.*

“Yeow!” you cry, jerking away from the vicious dog.

But Buttermilk is fast. He lunges at you, baring long, sharp fangs. His hot breath stinks.

Oh, no. He’s a vampire dog, too!

“Get off, Buttermilk!” you command. You push him away and scramble to your feet.

Buttermilk lunges at you!

“Yikes!” you shout. You dash across the Berklines’ yard and jump the fence. You run around to the back.

There, on the back patio, are three more dogs. All bitten in the neck. All changing into vampire dogs!

Two of them are dachshunds. The third is a big mutt. They lift their heads and sniff the air.

Then they all howl and leap at you!

You race to the gate. Then skid to a stop.

Buttermilk is waiting just outside the fence!

Standing in the doorway are the vampires. All of them!

Countess Yvonne stalks toward you. Right behind her are at least twenty others. Hungry for blood!

“Don’t be afraid,” Countess Yvonne says. “We only want to drain the rest of your fresh, human blood. Then you’ll truly be one of us. Don’t worry. It won’t hurt.”

The last person who told you that was your dentist.

“Run!” you shout at Gabe.

But you can’t run. The vampires are pushing into the small room, filling the doorway.

You feel like you’re losing your mind. You cry, “I’m going batty!”

The countess stops in her tracks and starts laughing. “‘Batty’! What a hoot!” The other vampires begin laughing uncontrollably. The corny pun has them in hysterics!

The bloodsuckers are distracted. Here’s your chance! You drop to your hands and knees and start crawling. Gabe follows you. You scramble like mad between the legs of the guffawing vampires.

Quick, make a decision. Which way now?

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*If you run back the way you came, turn to PAGE 18.*

*If you try to find the Garlic Spray, turn to PAGE 56.*

The red liquid gleams. A vampire places a plastic straw in one of the goblets and holds it toward you. “Sip?”

You lick your dry lips.

*You’d die for a gulp.*

But you swallow hard and shake your head.

You can’t let yourself drink it. If you do, and it’s blood — and you *know* it’s blood — you’re pretty sure you’ll be a vampire forever. And forever is a long time.

“No,” you repeat. “I’ll pass on the blood!”

“I’m sorry you feel that way,” Countess Yvonne says.

She gives one short nod to the others. They glide toward you. Closing in on you.

In desperation, you search for a weapon. But the only thing you see are the goblets of blood.

Frantically, you dart to the table and lift a goblet. You toss the whole glassful of liquid into the countess’s face!

You back up, heart pounding in fear.

What now? Is Gabe a vampire, too? Did Fifi bite him?

Gabe bursts out laughing. “Ha-ha. Got you good!” he says, doubling over.

“You creep!” you yell.

Gabe laughs again, then tells you the truth. “It was easy,” he says. “I just ran over to the Eyeball Man’s store. I remembered seeing something there called Dog in a Can. So I bought a bunch of them. Sure enough, there were these little packets inside. They said, ‘Danger — Keep Away’ — just like on the blood packet. So I opened one, and it was a dog biscuit. I figured it was worth a try.”

“You mean you gave the biscuits to the vampire dogs, and they changed back?” you gasp. “Excellent!”

Then an idea hits you. A great idea!

“Do you have one of those special dog biscuits left?” you ask.

“Yeah,” Gabe replies. “So what?”

“Give me one,” you say. “I think I want to be a dog for Halloween!”

**THE END**

You're terrified of the dog. Then you remember.  
Fido can't kill you.

You're a vampire! Only a few things can kill you.  
A stake through the heart. Being exposed to  
sunlight. Being burned alive.

You bare your fangs and hiss. The Doberman  
slinks away, whining.

"Not bad," Gabe admits.

Oh, by the way. There's one other thing that can  
knock you out. . . .

A blood shortage.

Without blood, vampires don't die. But they  
become so weak, they can't move.

That's what's happening to you now. With a  
moan, you collapse.