

SCARED SILLY

ZOMBIE WEDDING CRASHERS

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 978-1-338-81536-8

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

Printed in the U.S.A. 40

First edition, September 2023

Book design by Stephanie Yang



1

Brace yourself, young, impressionable reader.

It appears that life is back to normal for Regan Charles.

Wait. What? you may be thinking. *How is that scary? Why did you do this huge and frankly a-little-over-the-top (hey!) warning if all is well in Cauldron's Cove?*

I mean, I do get it. You want excitement. Adventure. Something to read while picking your nose.

Welp, as it turns out, so does Regan. (Not the nose-picking part, because *gross*.)

But see, the thing is, now that the witch's curse has been broken and Regan's no longer dealing with a clone or running for her life, she's *super bored*.

Well, kinda. Because it's not as if she doesn't have a lot of stuff to do.

Here's something you should know about Regan Charles if you didn't read the first book or may have forgotten—which, no judgment,

since I forget lots of stuff, like my siblings' birthdays, where I hid the treasure, putting on deodorant, what I was writing about . . .

Where was I? Oh right. Regan is one busy girl. Her to-do list is straight-up bonkers. She helps her parents run Bed and Boofast, Cauldron's Cove's premier bed-and-breakfast; she looks after her four—that's right, *four*—younger siblings, which includes, but is not limited to, packing lunches, supervising bath time, performing bed-time story hours, inspecting the brushing of teeth, and the glamorous task of wiping snotty noses and poopy bums; *and* she has to spend extra time on her homework due to her learning differences.

Even with that jammed-packed schedule, something seems to be missing for Regan.

It's not like she *enjoyed* being tormented by her science teacher who was possessed by a witch's curse. It's just that she liked being part of something that wasn't the demands that came with being the oldest sibling. (Hats off to you oldest siblings out there, from this youngest—and obviously favorite—sibling.)

"So, what did your parents say?" Zoey Ito asks Regan during lunch on Tuesday. Zoey is Regan's lunchmate sort of by default. What does *that* mean? Well, keep reading and I'll get into it.

Patience, young reader.

Okay, it's been two weeks since the aforementioned curse thing-amabob. And yes, that's the highly technical term to describe a very stressful and nerve-racking series of events: *thingamabob*.

"What?" Regan snaps out of her reoccurring daydream of saving the school and her town once again.

"About the cat?" Zoey takes a carrot from Regan's lunch tray.

"I haven't talked to them yet, but I will. It's just so cute." Regan's heart flutters as she thinks about the small ginger tabby that's come to the back door of her house every night for the last week.

Regan first spotted the cat when she was doing the oh-so-glamorous task of taking the sheets off the line. Her mother swears that air-dried sheets are a much nicer experience for the guests—and use no electricity, unlike a dryer, so they're better for the environment and save money, *blah, blah, blah*. Which is true and all, but it was Regan who was out on the crisp October evening struggling with folding the fitted sheets. She heard rattling in the bushes, which startled her, since she was still on edge from the whole being-trapped-in-a-room-with-a-monster incident.

You can't really blame a girl for being a bit jumpy.

Then Regan heard a high-pitched *meow* and discovered two eyes staring at her, which belonged to this adorable cat with no collar.

She ran into the house and brought out a saucer of milk and some tuna. The cat approached the food cautiously before diving in like it hadn't eaten in weeks.

The cat has come back every night since. It now even nuzzles with Regan. (*Awww . . .*)

It's not like Regan *needs* an extra thing to take care of, but she wants something that's just for her. Okay, let's be real, no way her siblings wouldn't run after the cat and pretty much terrorize the poor thing, but Regan just loves all things cute and cuddly. She was so jealous when Ms. Stein, the science teacher, handed Darius a kitten during their detention, even if it was all so she could collect a very allergic Darius's snot and ultimately clone him. *Especially* when Regan got her hair ripped out instead.

"When are you going to ask them?" Zoey presses Regan.

"I'm worried they'll say no."

"But you can handle the responsibility of having a pet. You're the most responsible person I know," Zoey replies with a confident nod before her mouth drops. "Oh, is it because you got detention and then the whole thing at the day care? I still can't believe you did that."

That's because Regan *didn't* smash the glass window at the day care where her siblings River and Rose go. It was her clone.

I know, I know—who hasn't used the it-was-my-clone excuse?—but it really *was* Regan's clone.

Regan bites the corner of her lip, because it's not like she can say, *Actually, I was set up alongside Sofia Vargas, Darius Washington, and Bennett Norland by Ms. Stein. She was under a curse that a witch put on the children of Cauldron's Cove before being burned alive at the stake over three hundred years ago. She created clones out of all of us that did awful things that we got blamed for because our parents didn't believe us about Ms. Stein or the clones, so then we had to team up with the clones and one big monster to destroy Ms. Stein's lab and get rid of the curse.*

I mean, she *could* say all that, but no way would Zoey believe her.

So the four detention-mates made a pact that they wouldn't tell anybody because they knew they wouldn't be believed. Even Ms. Stein, who was under said curse, is still hazy about what happened.

So yeah, nobody knows that Regan helped save the world.

Okay, maybe not the *world*, but it was a pretty big deal.

Don't believe me? (*Rude!*)

Tell me this: Have *you* been cloned lately? At least to your knowledge? No? Well, you have four people to thank for that: Regan, Sofia, Bennett, and Darius.

So, *you're welcome*.

Anyhoo, it's like the four of them shared this bond, and then like cheddar-flavored potato chips in my office—*poof!*—it was gone in a flash.

Regan glances at Darius's table. He's in the middle of laughing with his friends, but as he catches Regan's eye, he gives her a little wave.

At least Darius hasn't gone back to pretending that Regan doesn't exist, unlike Bennett.

Her eyes drift across the cafeteria to where Bennett sits among the cool crowd. And in case you need a reminder, Bennett Norland is one chill dude with lots of friends. But Mr. Cool hasn't said a single word to Regan for nearly two weeks, which is decidedly *not cool*.

And then there's Sofia.

Regan spies Sofia in the corner of the cafeteria, her face with its permanent scowl as she reads a book.

"You know, I should ask Sofia to join us," Regan says.

Zoey pushes up the frames of her purple glasses, a terrified look on her face. "Please don't. You know how Sofia can get."

(Oh, believe me, I know.)

But just in case *you* don't know how Sofia Vargas can get, let's just say that she is über-smart and knows it and gets super, duper annoyed

at pretty much everything and everybody, especially Bennett, who will soon be her stepbrother.

Soon as in four days.

“She’s not that bad,” Regan counters.

Zoey’s entire body starts to tremble. “She terrifies me,” she says in a whisper.

Okay, Zoey has a point. Besides, it’s not like Regan isn’t a little scared of Sofia because she can be blunt and not so nice, and, well, reread the few lines above . . . *but* there was a moment after they broke the curse that it almost seemed that Sofia was not only softening up but as disappointed as Regan about the group going their separate ways.

And then there’s the fact that Regan wishes she had more friends. She and Zoey sit next to each other at lunch because they’re both in a couple classes for their learning differences. It started back during the first day of school, when Zoey saw Regan sitting by herself and came over. So yeah, sort of lunchmates by default (or probably more accurately by pity). Zoey has her band friends and does debate, but Regan is always too busy to really do anything after school.

“Sofia’s not as bad as *some* people,” Regan says as she looks over at the girls sitting at Bennett’s table.

Just then Maisy Menzel catches Regan's eye. Regan quickly looks away, but it's too late. She's been spotted.

Uh-oh. This isn't good.

Yeah, Regan was once locked in a room with a monster and clones, but this is much, *much* worse.

What could possibly be worse than monsters and risking your life?

How about a mean girl?

Yep. And also *yikes*.

Maisy stands up and narrows her eyes at Regan. "What are you looking at, Rhino?" Maisy says so loudly that the entire cafeteria goes quiet.

All eyes turn toward Regan, who is focused on her lunch tray, willing Maisy to leave her alone.

However, like most things in life—like, oh, I don't know, for instance . . . a book deadline—you can't make it go away by ignoring it. I mean, I've tried, but books don't write themselves and bullies just don't disappear.

Maisy walks over with her clones (not actual clones like in the last book, but girls who try to dress and be exactly like Maisy, all with denim skirts and colorful tops, and hair pulled up in sleek ponytails) and stands in front of Regan. She taps her foot impatiently, but Regan refuses to look up.

Even though what Regan really, *really* wants to do is stand up to Maisy and ask her what her problem is. Sure Regan is fat, but so what? Why does Maisy care? Why does anybody care? Why should Regan have to be bullied for what she looks like? Why should anyone?

But then there's another part of Regan that wonders if there's another reason why people don't want to be friends with her. It's easy for her to think it's because of her size, but what if it's just that people simply don't like her?

Maybe she should ask Maisy why she has to always pick on her, but the words are caught in her throat.

A memory suddenly comes to Regan of when Bennett promised her that he wasn't going to let any of his friends bully her ever again.

Regan suddenly feels better. Bennett will make this stop. A promise is a promise. No way after everything they've been through that he'd let a friend treat her this way, right?

Why don't we check in and see what Bennett is doing now, shall we?

This is the dude who tried to sacrifice himself to save his future stepsister (which didn't go according to plan) and didn't hesitate to try to destroy a bubbling, cursed vat of goo (which also, ah, didn't go according to plan). Surely he's going to do *something*.

So, what do we find our usually-has-good-intentions Bennett doing?

Welp, he's leaning back in his seat, in his usual relaxed manner, watching the scene like it's some entertaining movie.

Well, I guess we've learned a valuable, yet painful, lesson: Bennett Norland isn't a dude of his word.

(My apologies for the lesson or doing anything that would constitute "learning," as we're not here for that nonsense, just to have fun and put our characters through delicious torture, I mean *adventure*. So here's a little humor to make up for it: A group of butts is walking. The smallest struggles to keep up. "Sorry, I'm a little behind.")

Okay, where were we? Oh yes, Maisy is being all Mean Girl to Regan—who is just staring at her lunch tray—and Bennett is doing zilch about it.

"Your trough isn't going to save you," Maisy says with a snicker before she starts snorting. "Eat your lunch, piggy."

"Come on, Maisy," Darius calls out. "Why don't you just leave Regan alone."

See, that Darius is a good one. And while Regan is grateful to him for saying something, she's too embarrassed to look up. She can tell that her cheeks are on fire and probably matching the color of her bright red hair.

"What?" Maisy says with an innocent bat of her eyelashes. "We all know this is Regan the Rhino's favorite period since she—AH!"

An eruption of milk comes out of nowhere and sprays Maisy's face and shiny black hair—and yes, it's as glorious a sight as you can imagine. Maisy screams in absolute horror.

(Let me tell you, dear reader, Maisy would not be able to read this book if spilled milk freaks her out. No way could she stomach the blood and guts that are about to come.)

“What did you just do?” Maisy squeals, and I gotta be honest, she sort of sounds like an actual pig.

Regan turns around to see Sofia standing there with her lunch tray. “I tripped,” Sofia replies in a bored voice. “Oops.”

“Ah!” Maisy storms off in a huff to the laughter of her classmates. Sofia, on the other hand, simply turns her back without giving Regan a second look.

Regan pinches her lips together to stop from laughing, even though it was nice to see Maisy get a taste of her own medicine.

“See, Zoey, I told you Sofia wasn't so bad.”



Regan is still beaming, thinking about Sofia and what happened at lunch, when she sets out milk and tuna for the cat that evening.

She starts thinking of what to name the tabby in case her parents let her keep it. Maybe Annie, since she's a fellow ginger? Or Merida? Or Ginny? Maybe Ariel?

Gingers got to stick together (and as a fellow ging, I would know).

Regan settles down with her homework as she waits.

And waits.

But the cat is nowhere to be found.

A disappointed Regan shrugs her shoulders as she goes inside to get her siblings ready for bed. Maybe the cat went back to its home.

Whatever happened, it's probably not that big of a deal.

Oh, but it is.

It's a very big deal.

As you'll soon see.