

Aiza R.

## Lost in Space

Mark and Josh never got along when they were little kids nor when they were teenagers. Even though they are twins, they had many different interests. For example, Mark found pleasure doing things such as studying, reading and writing. He got good grades and excelled in every subject, whereas Josh had a passion for sports, cars and movies. He got less than average grades and only had talent on the basketball court. Despite their differences, they shared a love for their pet Raccoon, Ruffles. Several years ago, Josh was taking out the garbage. When Josh opened the can, a racoon jumped out! Josh didn't get hurt, but he did get rabies. Since then, the boys kept the racoon. They named him Ruffles because of his very messy gray fur.

One Saturday night the twins were sleeping in their bedrooms until they were awakened by a bright light and a loud noise. Mark and Josh looked at each other with curious looks on their faces. They looked out the windows and were stunned by what they saw. A UFO was hovering over their lawn and aliens were running with a small object in their arms. The aliens were not tall, but not short either. They had slimy neon green skin and an abnormally large forehead. Their beady eyes took up more than 3/4 over their face! Mark and Josh rushed down to find their mom and Dad standing at the front window, looking at the UFO.

“Dad” asked Mark, “What do you think they're holding?”

Their dad simply shrugged and said, “I don't know son.”

Josh peered out the window, squinting his eyes. He suddenly shouted, “RUFFLES! THEY HAVE RUFFLES” Without warning, he flung the door open and bolted to the aliens carrying his racoon. It was too late, because the aliens had evaporated into the UFO. They disappeared in a second. All that remained was a note.

*Dear Earthling,*

*Your kind is very interesting. You guys have abnormally large foreheads. Your pet racoon is no ordinary racoon, he is the key to wiping out humanity. If you want your racoon back, you must make it to our headquarters before it's too late. You must follow these simple directions: Step 1: Locate the map in your house using the riddle “What room do ghosts avoid?” Step 2: Use the map to locate us in less than one hour. Good luck.*

The family hovered over the small piece of paper and exchanged worried looks. “It is” Mom said stiffly while crumbling the paper, “a lie”

Dad nodded, “I agree with your mother boys. Go to sleep.”

Josh and Mark walked in the house and went to their room. “I don't believe it.” Mark started, “Mom just found out we can all die and is calling it a lie. I'm not normally the one to take risks but we need to get Ruffles back”

“Yeah, but I don't want to work with you. You're too bossy and mean.” Josh said sarcastically and rolled his eyes.

“You’re not smart enough to do it alone. And I already figured the first riddle, The living room.” Mark said smartly.

The boys hurried down to search their living room. They looked behind the television, under the couch and even in the basket. They tore apart the living room silently, careful to not wake Mom and Dad. “Ugh!” Josh groaned in frustration and kicked the wall of the fireplace. The fire went out and two doors appeared. “What?” Josh questioned. Mark took the lead and opened the small doors. An old piece of paper was sitting on the musty floor.

“The map!” Mark exclaimed. They boys laid it onto the table and smoothed it out. It wasn’t very complicated. It was a map of the house. A fat red “X” was planted right over the boy’s bedroom! They exchanged excited looks and rushed up. They searched everywhere until they found a secret door! They climbed through the door into a pitch-black room. The lights turned on after a moment. The twins exchanged worried looks with each other.

A partner obstacle course. They had done many with their friends, but none as dangerous. Small platforms sat on top of bubbling lava. A rope ladder hung dangerously over a pool of crocodiles. More dangerous obstacles crowded the room. Josh looked and Mark, “Ready?” he asked eagerly.

Mark hesitated but nodded. The twins stepped onto the metal platform. They had to jump across, but the jump was too far. “We should use the zipline to cross.” Suggested Mark.

Josh shook his head, “No, perhaps the tight wire would be easier.”

“No. It would be harder” Mark insisted, “Zipline.”

“Tightrope.”

“Ugh” Mark groaned, “Fine do it yourself.” Mark walked toward the handle of the zipline. He gripped his sweaty hands around it.

*Three, two, one* Mark counted in his head. He pushed himself off the platform and zoomed over the lava onto the next platform. He turned to check Josh’s progress and saw that his tight rope had broken! “Josh!” He screamed, “How are you going to get across?” “I don’t know!” He shouted in return. “Make a bridge or something”

“Fine. I’ll make you a bridge.” Mark rolled his eyes. He began tying pieces of wood onto the rope and threw it across. Josh fastened it on his platform and began to walk across. “Yes!” Mark exclaimed while high-fiving Josh. The next obstacle stumped Josh and Mark. They had to cross a lava pool, but there were only two steps. Mark took the first and Josh took the second. “What?” Mark questioned, “How do we get across?”

“I know! Step onto my step!” Josh shouted. Mark stepped onto Josh’s step and looked at him for the next set of instructions. “Now bring your step,” Josh instructed, “and put in front of this one.” The twins repeated this process until they made it to the end. They walked down a dim hallway into a sterile room.

The aliens surrounded the twins. Josh and Mark panicked and looked for an exit. Ruffles was in a cage on the floor. Mark and Josh began running around confusing the aliens. The aliens attempted to grab them multiple times, but they were too fast. Mark grabbed the cage while Josh distracted the aliens. The twins ran out of the room while holding Ruffles. As they made it to their room, they returned Ruffles to his bed and hoped on their own.

“How did you sleep boys?” Mom asked the next morning. Ruffles was sitting peacefully at the dinner table. Mark and Josh grinned at each other.

“Well...” They began.