FOREWORD

When it comes to vampires and werewolves, what you don't know can bite you.

It is widely believed that vampires are dead people brought back to life. Their sole purpose is to suck the blood of the living, which can turn the living people into vampires, too.

Not necessarily.

An eighth-grade vampire gets his blood from the blood bank in Christopher Paul Curtis's story, "Going Old School in the Age of Obama." This kid wouldn't be caught dead biting anyone—or would he?

Rule #1: It's not enough to watch your back. Watch your neck, too.

Some vampires have their hearts in the right places, so to speak. But others are untrustworthy. How can you tell the difference? It's tricky, as one of them learns the hard way in Peter Lerangis's tale, "I, Blooder."

Rule #2: There isn't always honor among vampires.

If you think a vampire lives in your neighborhood, resist the temptation to pay him a visit. This is something a couple of kids can't help doing in Kevin Emerson's story, "The Coffin Deliveries."

Rule #3: Do not become the "guests of honor" at a vampire dinner.

Werewolves are known to be people who—temporarily or permanently, voluntarily or involuntarily—are capable of turning into wolves. But there's a special kind of wolf that must keep to the shadows and away from the light. The characters in Joshua Gee's story, "Where Wolves Never Wander," find out why firsthand—or first*paw*, as the case may be.

Rule #4: Stay out of direct sunlight. At the very least, use sunblock.

If you find yourself in the company of a werewolf, get away as fast as you can. Do not stop to take a picture on your cell phone. JUST RUN.

Sometimes it may be too late to flee, as two brothers find out in a graveyard in "Perpetual Pest," by Neal Shusterman and Terry Black.

Rule #5: Never remove the silver bullets from a dead werewolf's body.

There are other creatures that can bite, too, such as spiritually possessed coyotes, who are always watching, always alert. This is why you should never take something that doesn't belong to you. When the girl in Douglas Rees's story, "Anasazi Breakdown," picks up an ancient piece of broken Native American pottery, she thinks it's okay to do so.

It isn't.

Rule #6: Don't steal—especially rare artifacts.

Dogs are man's—and woman's—best friend. Maybe you have a dog. Maybe you have more than one. But it's important to own a *living* dog. Ghost dogs are not nearly as friendly, especially when they're upset about something, like the dog in Ellen Wittlinger's "Ghost Dog."

Rule #7: You can't teach a ghost dog new tricks.

"Once bitten, twice shy" is an old expression. But you don't want to get bitten even once. There are seven stories about bites in this book. As you'll see, sometimes one bite is all it takes.

—Lois Metzger

PERPETUAL PEST

by Neal Shusterman and Terry Black

"Don't be stupid," Rudy said. "Dead people can't hurt you."

Mark nodded nervously. Sure, in the clear light of day, that made logical sense, but now, with the moon casting shadows over the rusty wrought-iron gates of Perpetual Rest cemetery . . . well, the whole thing seemed nuts.

"Maybe we should go home," Mark said, backing away.

Rudy just laughed and scrambled up the fence, climbing hand over hand, then vaulted to the other side. He landed on his feet like a cat and said, "Hand me the shovel."

Mark reluctantly slid the shovel through the fence bars into his older brother's eager grasp. Rudy, who was four years older than Mark, was a senior at Piedmont High, when he wasn't in juvie, and had the bad habit of doing things without worrying about their consequences. Mark had to admit it was fun sometimes, but other times—like *now*—it reminded him why his brother spent so much

time in a juvenile facility, wearing orange overalls behind locked gates.

"This won't really be stealing," Rudy had said, "because you can't steal from the dead, right? It's a legal fact."

There was one reason, and one reason only, that Mark was willing to sneak into the local cemetery and dig up rich people, looking for valuables. He wanted a pair of Sport-Kwest Trainers, the best athletic shoes on the market.

Endorsed by the NBA, worn by the best players, Sport-Kwest Trainers could make any kid a star. *With Sport-Kwest Trainers, you can slam-dunk the moon*, the commercials said. Looking at the moon right now, full and bright, Mark could almost believe it.

Of course, Mark wasn't dumb enough to think that a pair of shoes would turn him into a sports legend. But they had to be better than the dismal pair of no-name, shredded tennies he had now. Mom kept promising to replace them, but she just wanted to buy another bargain-bin pair. How could he even try out for the team with those on his feet? They'd laugh him off the court.

There was only one thing to do: Mark had to buy his own shoes. But at nearly two hundred bucks, snagging a pair of Sport-Kwest Trainers was about as likely as Mark slam-dunking the moon.

But Rudy had an idea. . . .

"Rich people are so greedy," Rudy had explained, "they like to take everything with them to the grave. Earrings, bracelets, diamond necklaces, you name it. I even heard about a guy who was buried in his Ferrari."

It was a foolproof plan, Rudy had said. Dig up jewelry that no one will miss and sell it on eBay. All Mark had to do was hold a

flashlight and watch for guards. It sure beat six months of mowing lawns. At least that's what Mark had thought until he was there, at the cemetery fence.

"C'mon, what are you waiting for?" Rudy asked from the other side of the gates.

Mark looked up at the rusty iron sign above the gates. The *R* in *Rest* had broken, so the letters read Perpetual Pest Memorial Park.

Mark passed Rudy the flashlight through the bars. "You go on without me," Mark said. "I'll keep watch from out here."

"Forget it, dweeb," Rudy said, loud enough to maybe wake the dead, or at least the neighbors. "Ya snooze, ya lose—da shoes!" Then he laughed at his own cleverness. "You gotta be strong to make it in this world, bro," Rudy said. "So climb the fence and let's do this. Show me how strong you are."

Awkwardly, Mark climbed the fence, the iron cross-struts hurting Mark's feet because of his worn-out soles.

"Hurry up," Rudy snapped. Rudy made everything look easy and seem reasonable—from climbing a ten-foot fence to an array of criminal activities. Mark wondered if his brother's influence would land him in juvie, too, one day. Like maybe tomorrow.

"About time," said Rudy as Mark dropped from the fence, nearly spraining an ankle. "Here, take the shovel. I'll find the grave."

"You mean you have one in mind?"

"I do my research," Rudy said, like he was talking about a school project.

He started off into the graveyard, under a twisted canopy of trees. Ground fog swirled around him, like a ghostly sea. Mark took

a deep breath and hurried after him, not really wanting to, but not wanting to be alone, either.

Up ahead, Rudy's flashlight beam bounced over the grounds of the cemetery, picking out marble headstones and vases stuffed with wilting flowers. Shadows danced with every step, like dark, scurrying animals. Mark heard the howl of a coyote—at least, he *hoped* it was a coyote—and smelled the sweet warmth of fresh-turned earth.

Mark tried to catch up with his brother, ignoring the gloom pressing in around him like cold tentacles in the mist. The graveyard was alive with unsettling sounds: the chirping of bugs, the hissing breath of the wind between headstones, the mysterious *scratch, scratch, scratch* of something unseen, like undead fingers, scrabbling upward through raw dirt. . . . Mark shook his head, furious at his own imagination.

"Wait up, Rudy!" But his brother wasn't listening. Rudy made a sharp turn, then came to a dead stop.

"We're here," he said.

They had come to an elaborate grave marked by an imposing statue of a mean-looking woman seated on a pedestal. If you looked real close, under the watery moonlight, you could see that the statue's teeth were bared, and its fingers splayed like claws.

A plaque resting at the foot of the statue read:

MADAME VORACIA THORNHILL
(1898–1962)
"Mine is yesterday, I know tomorrow."
—The Egyptian Book of the Dead