

Prologue

Janet could barely hear the door knocking over the music. It was just past 11 and there had not been any trick-or-treaters in the last couple hours. Regardless, she had promised her brother she would make sure the neighborhood kids got their candy in exchange for letting her join the party with his high school friends. She pulled down her China doll mask with the bleeding eyes, grabbed the almost-empty candy bowl, and swung the door open as ominously as she could manage in a room crowded with dancing monsters and pounding techno music.

Two cops stood on the doorstep, flashlights out and looking pissed.

Janet froze. "We've received some noise complaints and it's after 11 PM. Are your parents home?", asked the officer with the bushy moustache. He sounded almost bored, like a question he had asked a million times before. His eyes were already darting about the room, looking for something to have a problem with. He took a step forward.

Her brother Pete had been very clear: if the cops show up, tell them to wait outside and come and find him ASAP. "Don't let them in", he had said firmly, holding her gaze to drive the point home. "Be polite, tell them to wait right there, and come get me, fast."

Remembering she was still wearing the doll mask, Janet quickly pulled it down and held up a hand. "Wait right there please, I'll go get my... the person in charge." She turned on her heel and raced back through the crowded living room. Behind her she heard a frantic voice yell "COPS!" and everyone started running.

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