

THE GHOST OF BULLY BURNES - Leseprobe

Chapter One - A Shocking Sight!

It was just after midnight, a still, dark night. No wind. No moon. Toby opened his bedroom window and stood there taking deep breaths of the cool air to slow down the pounding of his wildly beating heart. A bad dream had awakened him and driven him from his bed.

Several moments later and much calmer now, he closed the window and was about to go back to bed when he noticed something - someone? moving in the street below. He focused his eyes and watched as five figures appeared in the light of a street lamp, two houses away. They were coming out of a garage, carrying things. 'Garage thieves!' Toby said out loud. His heart began to race again. He grabbed his smartphone and was about to call the police when one of the figures turned to say something to one of the others. When Toby saw his face, his mouth fell open. It was the face of his best friend. 'Phil?' he whispered. 'It can't be true. Phil? Is that you?' His hand shaking, he took a quick photo of the scene.

For a long moment, Toby stood at the window and repeated the word 'Phil' over and over again. Finally, he put the phone down. He couldn't call the police. The first thing he had to do was to talk with his friend. He had known him practically all his life. They had gone to the same kindergarten and grade school together. He couldn't believe that Phil was part of a gang. He wasn't like that. Or was he? Toby thought about how his relationship with Phil had changed. They had always been close friends, but since the beginning of the new school year they hadn't seen much of each other. Sadly, he realized that somehow, slowly but surely, Phil had been slipping away from him.

Shocked, he looked at the photo he had taken. Only one of the figures was facing the camera. Was it really Phil? The picture was unclear. To get a better look, he went to his desk and took out a magnifying glass. For several seconds, he studied the photo. In the end, he was sure: The boy facing the camera was Phil Turner! Toby took a deep breath and sat down. He had to sit down. The idea that Phil belonged to a gang of thieves was like a kick in the stomach. He lowered his head and buried his face deep in his hands.

Closing his eyes, he grew very still - on the outside. Inside, in his imagination, he was demanding answers from Phil about the shocking scene he had just witnessed. *What are you doing raiding a garage? Was that the first time? Why have you kept this a secret from me? Friends don't keep secrets from one another! Secrets are poison. They can kill a friendship!* Toby took a deep breath. *If you'd only been open with me about this, I would have helped you. What made you join a gang? Were you under some kind of pressure? Were you forced to join? Who - or what's - behind this?*