

The sleepover was to be the greatest moment of your childhood, until the whimpering woke you up. Is this even the right house?

Premise: The soul of a dark child haunts the dreams of children sleeping at sleepovers. Her name is Alice and she wants to play, but her idea of play is twisted. The first children to fall asleep at sleepovers are transported to her nightmarish mansion where she “befriends” them. Fortunately for these kids, one of them (the one who was mysteriously saved from an accident when he or she was younger) has a protective spirit, the Gackle. Alice spends the first two acts terrifying the children and trying to convince them that the Gackle is really responsible. Her goal is simply to have fun. The only way to stop her is to ignore her, which will require a particularly courageous kid...and a few pulls from the tower. If this does not occur to the players, but one of them decides to use the advice their parents had on handling bullies (see character questionnaires), and it sounds good, let that work as well.

Deception: The children will begin the story believing the Gackle is responsible for all that is going on. Because the Gackle can’t speak, he can’t tell his side of the story. In truth, the Gackle is there to protect the kids from Alice and her playhouse.

The beginning: The children are awoken by the sounds of whimpering. They shouldn’t recognize the room they are in, or even each other. The room itself is a large, Victorian living room with plenty of stuffy furniture, bookshelves, and a smoldering fireplace. In a corner near the fire place is a little girl dressed in her Sunday best (as opposed to the PJs all the other kids will be in). She is sitting on the floor, facing the wall, crying over something in her lap. When the children ask her what is wrong, she will show them her teddy bear, which is soaked in blood. Soon a pool of blood forms around the sitting girl and she slumps over, exposing a nasty stomach wound.

Important Characters:

Alice: This little girl is a physical replica of Alice. She is really just a ghost with very little power over the physical world. Most of it is focused on the house itself. In general, she appears like a pretty, ethereal girl with blonde hair. She is always dressed well, but her tummy wound constantly bleeds through her clothing. She should bounce between sounding helpful and sing-songy.

Gackle: The Gackle has the body of a little boy and the head of a hairless cat. Because of this, it can only make cat noises, including purring, meowing, and if need be a lion-like roar. Use these to alert the children of the Gackle’s presences. His elbows and knees bend the wrong way, creating an eerie impression when he walks. He is extremely swift and can crawl along the walls or ceiling (because of the way his knees and elbows bend, he appears a bit like a four-legged spider when he does this). The Gackle will spit, hiss, and roar at Alice, but can’t do much more. He spends his time trying to keep the children from falling into her traps.

Table of Contents

Act I (p2)

Lost in the Maze

The Gackle

The Hall of Broken Toys

Bells and Servents/Gackle Attack

Act II (p3)

Alice’s Feast

Gackle To the Rescue

The Gackle’s Lair

Escape from the Gackle

Act III (p4)

Slay the Gackle

Alice’s Room

Revenge of the Teddy Bear

Showdown with Alice

Act I

The following events do not necessarily have to happen in order. This is the exploratory phase of the adventure. The children will most likely start in a panic and seek help. During this, they will uncover some of the secrets of the house, as presented below.

Lost in the Maze: The house is old, musty, and creaky. It is furnished in a Victorian fashion and covered in cobwebs. The children will most likely be running through the house searching for help. Soon they will discover that there are no adults around. The only phone, an ancient one with separate speaking and listening pieces, will just echo what they say. And the rooms appear to be shifting. It is not only a maze, but one that moves at random. They can hear distant cranks turning just before each shift. Create a tense moment where several children are forced to dive through a disappearing doorway in order to stay with the group – that should soak up some pulls.

Along all the ceilings are little grooves or tracks. It should be unclear what they are for at this point, but see *Bells and Servants* below.

The Gackle: When you feel the action is winding down a bit and the children are starting to settle down, introduce some purring noises. Alice should appear as a ghost before the children (who will most likely have to pull to avoid being terrified) and warn them that the Gackle is about. At this point, a shadow should leap from a corner of the ceiling and hiss at Alice. The children should actually run screaming at this point. Any attempt to do anything coherent will require at least one pull to steady their nerves. They should only get a fleeting impression of the Gackle, with no real details. Save those for later.

Alice will try to lead the children around, pretending to beckon them to safety. In reality she wants to lead them to the hall of broken toys.

The Hall of Broken Toys: Eventually, Alice will lead the children to this dark, ominous hall. It is large and wide and sheets cover clumps of things along the walls. If asked where they are, Alice will answer that this is the Hall of Broken Toys in her sing-songy, unhelpful voice. A little exploration will reveal that under each sheet is a different child with a different fatal wound. The children will not move at first, but one startled PC should knock over a piece of furniture which will cause a domino-effect with the bodies and other furniture around. The end result will be a pile of bodies at the foot of the entrance. The bodies will not move outright, but will move in implausible, but explainable ways to deter anyone from leaving (such as snagging the ankle of a child climbing over them). Much planning and pulling is required to escape.

Bells and Servants/Gackle Attack: In every room there are a number of silken ropes hanging from the ceiling. Each rope is attached to a bell that rings and summons a servant to the room. The servants are dressed in normal servant garb, but are dried-up, mummified husks of their former selves. They are propelled and animated by wires coming from the tracks in the ceilings. When a servant first enters the room, the children will again have to pull to keep rational. They are a horrifying sight. However, the servants will only perform the functions they normally would, such as serving tea or dusting a shelf. They are mute, and unintelligible. In all aspects they are corpses on strings.

Let the PCs accidentally summon a servant while running about. They could trip them up and get in the way. Then, when you are ready for some real excitement, have one of the servants attempt to remove one of the kids' coats (they should be wearing only PJs). This will most likely appear like an attack. And it certainly does to the Gackle, who arrives hissing and screeching. The Gackle does not want to hurt the child, but will attack the servant grappling the child, making it difficult to discern the Gackle's intent. Then once things have been stirred up enough, have the Gackle run off with the servant in tow.

Act II

Alice's Feast: If things have settled down, or the players are getting frustrated with exploring, it is time to eat. Alice will invite the children to dinner. At first this may appear to be Alice acting crazy (it is) but if the PCs doubt the rationality of eating at a time like this, Alice will try to convince them that, like her namesake discovered in the Looking Glass, food can be magical, and possibly a key to their escape. Denying her will raise her ire and she will go as far as to summon several butlers to restrain the children and force them to the dinner table.

The dining hall is an ornate deal with furniture slightly larger than the PCs. The food will be fragrant, and already on the table, covered by silver platter domes. Alice will insist on the most immaculate of table manners and become agitated if anyone tries to eat before saying grace or what not. Play up the formality of it all, but don't let anyone eat anything yet because...

Gackle to the Rescue: Before anyone can take a bite, the Gackle will arrive, pounce on the offending food, and attempt to rescue the child about to eat it. This entails grabbing the child and bounding off with him. Generally, a battle over the child should ensue (egged on by Alice), but ultimately, unless someone is really willing to sacrifice, the Gackle will carry one of the children across the ceiling and down the hall.

The Gackle's Lair: "He hides in the walls and beneath the stairs." Alice will lead the children into the shadow part of the house, in those pockets of construction that allow for secret passages along the skeletal structure of the home. This interconnecting maze of crawlspaces and tight fits is where the Gackle will try to hide any child he rescues. While the main group of children search for the one rescued by the Gackle, that particular child can be trying to find his way out as well (the Gackle left him where he thought the child would be safe). A number of things can be encountered back here, including:

- Rats,
- Bugs and large spiders,
- Secret passages to different rooms of the house,
- The gears and tracks that allow the rooms of the house to move (and perhaps they start to move when the children are caught between rooms),
- The tombs of the servants, where they are hung like so many clothes in a closet waiting to be summoned by the bells,
- And so forth.

Be sure to emphasize the cramped conditions and let the children hear the purring of the Gackle nearby from time to time.

Escape from the Gackle: Once the PCs have found the rescued child, the Gackle will have sniffed them out. This is yet another chase and tumble sequence with the Gackle, just between the walls and under the stairs this time. Use it to take up more time or use up more pulls as necessary. Ultimately, the PCs shouldn't lose their life to the Gackle, that is not his intent. So he will let them escape if they are that determined.

Act III

Slay the Gackle: By now, Alice is bored with the Gackle and his interference. She will encourage the children to destroy him. A Gackle hunt is declared, and she will lead them to a new room covered in hunting trophies and a variety of exotic weapons from around the world. The children are welcome to anything they can imagine, but try to keep the weapons exotic and fanciful. Rather than an uzi, use an elephant gun. Rather than a sword, a kris, or tribal spear. Think Victorian big game hunter. Include nets, bear traps, and the like.

Once the children are armed, let them run freely through out the house or plan a way to capture the Gackle. At this point, it is entirely likely that they will do more harm to themselves. Let them. Eventually, they should find the Gackle, and a tremendous battle should follow. Take as much time and as many pulls as you need, but don't take too much time. The Gackle should die here, and there should be enough time left for the children to realize their horrible mistake.

Alice's Room: Once the Gackle is dead, Alice will again offer to show the children the way out. This time she will lead them to her bedroom. A highly exaggerated little girls room with all the usual toys, but twisted and deformed. At this point the PCs should get the idea that Alice is not entirely beneficial (although they may have suspected this much sooner). Resistance will be met with force from the marionette house staff. Once everyone is in, the doors will seal shut, trapping the children with Alice. If it isn't too over the top, she will cackle madly, and suddenly stop, becoming somber and child like.

"Would you like to see my favorite toy?"

Revenge of the Teddy Bear: This is another shameless attempt to waste time and pulls. Alice will dig through her toy box and produce the teddy bear she had with her in the beginning. It will still be soaked in the blood from her stomach wound. She will offer the bear to one of the children. If any of them touch it, it will awaken, leap from the child's hands, and scamper into a pile of dolls and toys in the closet. From here it will use wire hangers and other makeshift weapons to hunt the children until enough time has passed, enough pulls are made, or someone figures out how to defeat Alice.

Showdown with Alice: As mentioned before, the way to stop Alice, and return everyone to their respective sleepover parties, is to ignore her. This will take some pulling, because she can be quite insistent. This will be especially difficult if the Teddy Bear is still running around. All the children must join in, but if only a few try at first, you should encourage them by describing how Alice begins to fade.

If no one thinks of ignoring her, but comes up with another clever plan, you can let that fly as well. Especially if it involves the advice their parents gave them about bullies. All the character questionnaires but one should have something about that on them.

Characters

Like the Bunnies & Burrows characters, these have less than the traditional 13 questions.

What did you do to your brother that you are afraid your parents are finding out about while you are at this sleepover?

What game do you always beat your siblings in?

What nightmare have you had that has made you wet the bed?

What do the kids tease you about in school?

Who do you idolize?

What happened to you the last time you were bullied and what advice did your parents give you?

What is your name?

Why were you almost not allowed to go on this sleepover?

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

What would you rather be doing when you have to do homework?

What do the kids tease you about in school?

When you were younger, what near-fatal accident were you mysteriously saved from?

What happened to you the last time you were bullied and what advice did your parents give you?

What is your name?

Why is it that you are so good at sports?

What is the worst thing you have done to another kid while bullying them?

What happened to you when you were younger that left that scar?

Why didn't you want to go on this sleepover?

Who is the one person you trust and why?

What do the kids tease you about in school?

What is your name?

What is your favorite extracurricular activity and why?

What wouldn't your mom let you bring to the sleepover, but you brought anyway?

Why has your best friend stopped talking to you?

What picture did your mom put in your room when you were younger that terrified you, and why?

What do the kids tease you about in school?

What happened to you the last time you were bullied and what advice did your parents give you?

What is your name?

Why do some of the kids at your school look up to you?

What did you bring to the sleepover that the other kids teased you about?

What are you better at than anyone you know?

Who makes your life a living hell and why?

What do the kids tease you about in school?

What happened to you the last time you were bullied and what advice did your parents give you?

What is your name?

What is the one subject you look forward to at school?

What do you always carry with you for comfort?

What do the kids tease you about in school?

What was the last fight you were in about and how did it end?

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

What happened to you the last time you were bullied and what advice did your parents give you?

What is your name?