

# WILLIAM JOSEPH MOHR

From

## CACOOON ABOVE A SHALLOW GRAVE

### ACT I, Scene 3

(The KILLER is dressed as before. He is leaning against a refrigerator with a closed door which is now isolated on a fairly large platform. He is nervously playing with a large piece of sandpaper, alternately rubbing it against his fingertips and against the side of the refrigerator.)

Suddenly JESSE enters on his roller skates. He is seven years old, a bit short for his age, but not weak-looking. Dark hair. He smiles easily. He carries a present, wrapped in bright-colored paper, with a bright red ribbon.)

KILLER

Hi, kid. How you doing?

(The KILLER holds up an egg in his hand. His hand closes around the egg and when his hand opens again, the egg has disappeared.)

JESSE

I'm o.k. What cha doing?

KILLER

Getting ready for my magic show. I'm practicing. You want to help me?

JESSE

Sure. What do I have to do?

KILLER

I'm going to make a dozen eggs appear. Out of nowhere. Thin air. Go ahead. Feel my arms. See. Nothing hidden anywhere. Look.

(He opens the refrigerator door. A whole slew of eggs appears in his hands. He rapidly sets them in the slots of the door's egg-holder.)

Now you will notice this refrigerator is empty. Except for the eggs. We'll close the door.

(He takes JESSE's hand and together they slam the door shut.)

And here's the chicken.

(A chicken appears out of nowhere in front of them.)

And now it's gone.

(The chicken disappears.)

Where could it have gone? Let's look in here.

(He takes JESSE's hand and together they open the door.)

What do you know? It's in the refrigerator.

(They slam the door shut.)

Hey, we'd better let it out or it's going to fill the whole thing up with eggs.

(JESSE reaches to open the door.)

Don't open the door or you'll spoil the magic. Abra-ca-dabra.

(They open the door. The chicken and the eggs are gone. JESSE's present is inside the refrigerator.)

What's your present doing in there? We'd better take it out before it disappears.

(The KILLER reaches in and gives the present back to JESSE.)

Hey, would you like to be in my show?

JESSE

Sure. How do you do all these tricks?

KILLER

If you're in my show, I'll teach you. Get in there

(He opens the refrigerator door.)

and I'll show you how the chicken trick works.

(He picks up a large red, white, and blue candle by the side of the refrigerator and lights the wick.)

Now here's a magic candle. When you get inside, it will light up everything and you'll see how to get out.

JESSE

I thought this was the chicken trick. You didn't give the chicken a candle.

KILLER

How can a chicken hold a candle? This is a special trick for you. You're smarter than a chicken.

JESSE

I'm scared. How come you won't show me how to get out before I get in?

KILLER

You don't trust me. I let the lousy chicken out, I'll let you out. I trust you. I really do. Here, I'll prove it. I'll get in the refrigerator. Now shut the door.

(The KILLER climbs into the refrigerator.)

Shut the door. Go ahead. Shut it.

(JESSE shuts the door with one hand, his other holding the candle. A long pause. JESSE stands still. Suddenly he grabs the door and opens it, an expression of panic on his face.)

JESSE

How come...

(The KILLER interrupts.)

KILLER

There, you see, you let me out. I knew you would. I wasn't worried at all. And I'll let you out too if you have any trouble with the candle. Come on, hurry up. That magic candle is going to burn all up and there won't be any of it left for the magic show at the party. Believe me, you'll get out. I can't let you keep that candle. It's the only one I have. Go ahead, I trusted you, don't you trust me?

(JESSE crawls in the refrigerator.)

Now hold your breath, be careful, don't blow out your candle.

(The KILLER slams the door shut. He stands there, paralyzed with what he has done. The candle itself goes out, although an almost imperceptible light can be seen inside the refrigerator which slowly becomes semi-transparent during the KILLER's speech.)

KILLER

What if that kid hadn't let me out. I better fix up some kind of trap door. He believed me. He wanted to go in there, I didn't make him go in there. Are all of them going to be that dumb? I can't help it. I didn't make them watch the magic tricks. Fishing wire, twenty-weight. I'm not the one who lets them wander around all day long. I got out, I figured out how to get away. I went right through the walls. Anyone who wants out bad enough gets out. I just want to see how bad they want to get out, that's all. No one's stuck in there if they don't want to get out. It's easy to get away. Shit, I put a whole bunch of food in there. They could live for a week. Cookies, soda pop. Peanuts, Kids love peanuts. Chocolate. Man, they'd have to stuff themselves blind to eat all that in a day. Some fried chicken, ham, mayonaise, bread, soft-boiled eggs, they better not wait too long, it'll spoil. Soup, stews. Maybe some grapes next time.

(The KILLER exits as in the first scene. The light in the refrigerator increases. JESSE can be seen struggling against the walls of the refrigerator. His gasping becomes louder.)

JESSE

Hey, let me out of here, let me out. I can't see anything, let me out. If you don't let me out, I'm going to kill you. You said you'd let me out. I let you out. He let the bird out. If the bird got out, there must be a hole here somewhere. It must be in the ceiling, like the secret hole in Hawaii I hid my imaginary razor in so I could copy my father when he was shaving in the morning, the hole in the roof, it must be here somewhere.

(JESSE's struggle causes vertical slightly mounded on both sides split in the refrigerator door, like a vulva's lips. He begins to push one leg through the split.)

That's it, first one leg, then the other. When I catch up with him, I'm going to kill him. He'll be sorry he ever tried to pull this trick on me.

(His leg jerks back in as if pushed.)

Who's pushing me back in?

(He kicks out with his leg again and the leg goes back inside again. He punches his fist through the vulva and the arm is shoved back in. He begins beating his head against the door and finally his head emerges. The rest of his body follows and he finds himself back on the ground, dazed and gasping. A light blue silk sheet, about fifteen feet high, descends from the flies and completely umbrellas the area around the refrigerator. He swirls around on his roller skates, trying to figure out some way out of this new trap.)

The first thing I remember is swinging down a hallway from chandelier to chandelier, but I was three years old and I didn't even know what a chandelier looked like.

Raspberries in the back yard and a chimney at night. It was all magic. And the chicken coops by the alley and eating strawberries in the rain until the dog was so wet he shook all over. He was barking at the strawberries. And I went swimming in the pond with the red dog, floating all over, the rain picky-pocking the dog and me. Then I took my mother's can of beans and went out to the field and picked some weeds. They burned and I threw the can in the fire-hole. I heard a fire engine. I ran and hid. The fire was in a ditch, how could they see it, there wasn't any smoke. When I went back, the can was gone. They took my beans.

(He stops struggling and skating and stands very still and straight as if half-reading, half-reciting a paper he has written in front of a school class. The sound of wind begins very low.)

Why I Like Squirrels More than Gophers. Even though both can cause rabies by biting you and you should stay away from them and do not try to pet them, you should not feed them either, I like squirrels more because they climb up in trees and nibble on their pinecones and gophers build tunnels under the ground and make my father try to flush them out with the hose.

(The sound of wind increases to a high pitch. JESSE flails in the space as though the wind is sucking him back into the refrigerator. He stumbles backwards.)

How come I can't get out of here? What kind of trap is this? I saw a movie where a wolf chewed off his foot to get away. How come I can't get out of here even if I bite it off?

(JESSE is sucked back into the refrigerator. The lights flicker as he enters. His loud hoarse breathing ceases. Blackness. Silence. In the distance, a helicopter's rotor blades can be heard. They grow louder to a drone, then fade away.)

© Copyright 1976 William Mohr