

I Ain't Goin' Out Alone

by Marilyn Reeves

Of course he *would* have to stumble going down the bus steps, book bag ejecting its contents as it hits the ground, and Susan O'Mally coming down right behind him – Susan of the long red hair and big green eyes; the girl who inhabits his fantasies. And as he's crawling on the ground scrambling for his books, Owen and Spurling come along and one of them steps on his pinky finger, and the other one hollers, "Hey Two-Ton! Pick up them books – you're littering!"

Tim hisses the pain between gritted teeth, but somehow manages not to cry out. Finally, book bag restored to his ample shoulder, he clumps on along the walkway to the house, head down, face flushed, eyes burning unshed tears. Just another day in Wonder Land for Timothy "Two-Ton" Halderman.

Tim drops the bag inside the front door, lofts his jacket toward the sofa and heads to the refrigerator. He grabs a half gallon of milk and guzzles it straight from the carton, then rummages around for a snack. He bypasses the saran-wrapped dinner that Beulah always leaves for him to microwave – he'll eat that later in front of the TV – and polishes off the last of the fudge-ripple ice cream along with a generous slice of ham. Then, taking a bag of Doritos and a big Coke into his room he fires up the computer.

Should do my homework, but what the hell. A man needs a little down-time after all those long hours sitting in class. And it's not like I don't make good grades. Heck, I'm smarter than the rest of those bozos even if I *never* crack a book.

Today's headlines offer the usual menu of murder and mayhem. Looks like they're still hunting down the latest serial killer – always leaves a signature – just like on *Criminal Minds*. Seems he has a penchant for pinky fingers (the thought of which causes his own sore finger to start throbbing again).

Might be kind of fun being a serial killer. Imagine the look on Susan O'Mally's face if I kept her tied up in the basement for awhile and had my way with her a few times before I did her in. Let's see, what would be the most fun – hang her upside down and watch her die slowly, or bring out the old Swiss Army Knife and start carving ... just little pieces at a time. That would take her down a notch or two, wouldn't it? Literally! he laughs. Maybe I'd send her big toe to the FBI and let them figure out who it belongs to.

Then, let's see, who's next? Oh, I know. Annie. Annie What's-Her-Name. She thinks she's so damn cute. Looks right through me like I'm not even there – which is kinda hard to do, considering the amount of space I take up. Oh, yeah! I'll get those guys, too – Owen and Spurling. I think I'll just mace them first and then stomp them to death. Why specialize? I think I've got enough hate to go around. Then I'll get Dad's automatic out of the gun case and when the cops finally arrive for the big shoot-out, I'll take a few of them out with me. Make a name for myself like those other dudes on TV. Least I'll go out with a bang, so to speak.

Well, I'll think about that later. Right now I want to try out my new video game, "The Bloodier the Better". Maybe I'll learn some new tricks to enhance my new career.