

# SKELETON IN THE CLOSET

AND OTHER SCARY STORIES



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FOR THOSE WITH SKELETONS IN THEIR CLOSETS.



# SKELETON IN THE CLOSET

It started when Felipe got an F on his report card. Rather than bring the card to his parents, he buried it under a pile of several coats in his closet. He hoped they'd never find it. This might have been the end of it, if he hadn't come home to his father cleaning the following day.

"Thought I'd help you clean your closet next, Sport," his father said from behind the vacuum.

"That's all right, dad," Felipe said in an attempt to keep his father out of his closet. It would be nice to have help cleaning, but he had a secret to keep. "I can do it myself."

"Nonsense!" his father said. "I'm in a cleaning mood and many hands make light work. I'll be there in a minute."

After putting down his backpack, Felipe raced to his closet. Opening it, he jumped back, surprised. It might have been mistaken for a trick of the light or a Halloween decoration, but it wasn't. It was a real skeleton. The skeleton sat atop the pile of coats. In its bony hand was Felipe's report card.

"Tsk! Tsk!" the skeleton tapped the report card with the small bone of its index finger as it spoke. Even without lungs or a throat the skeleton had a heavy, breathy voice. The skeleton's speech was as broken as its bony body. It paused where it shouldn't have and broke the words up like the joints of its own frame—femur to

tibia, mandible to cranium, 'skeleton' to 'ske'le'ton.' It was a little difficult to understand it at first. "An F in math'ma'tics? What a s'hame. Your fat'her will be an'gry."

Felipe felt a great fear of the talking skeleton, but strangely he felt more fear of his parents knowing his grades, as well as knowing he had hidden them.

"Don't wo'rry," the skeleton said. "I'll keep your se'cret for 'a s'in."

"My secret for a sin?"

"Yes, but you must ag'ree first."

"All right," Felipe said. "I agree."

Though the skeleton had no fleshy cheeks with which to do so, it seemed to smile. It said, "Knock that vase ov'er there to the fl'oor."

Felipe looked where the skeleton pointed. The vase was his mother's favorite. It stood atop a narrow table in the hall so that she could see it every day. It would not go unmissed.

"You'd bet'ter hu'rry," the skeleton said as Felipe shut the closet door on him.

The skeleton was right—Felipe didn't have much time. Just as he was darting out of his room, his father came down the hall. "Careful now, Felipe. No running," his father said and Felipe stopped running until his father rounded the corner; then he ran the rest of the way to the vase. Standing in front of the glass container, he wrestled with his new choice: break a vase and keep his secret, or save his mother the heartache of losing an heirloom and take his punishment for his bad grade.

His father entered Felipe's room.

He moved to the closet door.

He raised his hand to the closet handle—Felipe

could hear its familiar rattle. Slowly, his father turned the handle.

*CRASH!*

The heirloom vase fell to the floor with a great shattering sound. Felipe's father came at once to see the damage. His face went white. The vase was in several dozen pieces.

"Sorry! I was running," Felipe lied, "and it fell over. I couldn't catch it."

His father sighed and took his own head into his hands. It seemed as if he was trying to keep his anger from escaping out of his ears. After a moment, he said, "Accidents happen. I'll clean this up. You get to work on your closet. A fully cleaned house might help your mother be less upset when she finds out."

Felipe did as he was told. It took him quite a while to get all of the coats and socks put away. The skeleton stood in the corner of the closet the entire time, watching. It still held the report card. As Felipe was finishing up vacuuming the closet, he heard his mother come in the front door. He could hear her -weep a little after speaking to his father. It was clear she'd been told about the vase. Then Felipe heard his mother walking towards his room. His heartbeat quickened.

With the closet clean, there was nowhere left to hide the report card, not to mention a full-sized skeleton! Besides, the skeleton still held the report card in its bony hands and didn't seem likely to give it up. The report card held power over Felipe, after all.

His mother's footsteps resounded from the hall.

"I'll keep your se'cret for 'a s'in," the skeleton said.

"All right!" Felipe said, urgently. "What is it? What

would you have me do?"

"S'moke this cig'a'rette." The skeleton held out a lit cigarette. The smell of it infiltrated the closet in an instant. There would be no hiding it like he might be able to hide the F on his report card. Reluctantly, Felipe took the cigarette in his mouth. As he did, the Skeleton withdrew into the dark corner of the closet. The door opened and Felipe looked at his mother. Her mouth was wide open. Angrily, she snatched the cigarette and threw it in the nearby sink.

"What has gotten into you?" she said and set about digging through the dresser drawers looking for more cigarettes. "Where did you get that cigarette?"

Felipe had to think fast or she'd discover the skeleton in the closet—and his report card! "From Thomas next door! It was only the one."

She stopped digging through his sock drawer.

"We'll just see what he has to say about that," his mother said and walked away. She shouted from down the hall, "You're grounded!" A few minutes later she returned with Thomas. Thomas refused to admit he'd given Felipe the cigarette. He hadn't, after all, but Felipe had to get him to take the blame. Since their stories didn't line up, Felipe's mother told them to take a minute to talk it over and come to the truth. She left and Felipe brought Thomas into the closet to muffle their voices in case his mother was listening.

"You have to tell them you gave the cigarette to me," pleaded Felipe.

"No way! No way would I do that! Just tell them the truth," Thomas said and stormed back out of the closet.



Before Felipe could call after him or stop him, he heard the skeleton say, "I'll keep your se'cret for 'a s'in."

"All right!" Felipe said, desperately. "What would you have me do?"

"Push him."

Thomas was making his way across the bedroom towards the door to the hall when Felipe caught him. Felipe shoved him and Thomas stumbled forward. After hitting his head against the door, Thomas fell to the floor. There, he didn't move. He didn't even seem to be breathing.

"Goodness! What happened?" Felipe's mother demanded when she opened the door to see Thomas on the floor.

"H-h-he tripped," Felipe lied.

"We have to call the police," his mother said to his father. "And an ambulance!"

After Thomas was carried away on a stretcher, a police officer came in and asked Felipe's parents some questions. Felipe would be the next one to be questioned, he knew. The cop would know he was a liar. He wanted to run—to hide! Sneaking back into the closet, he closed the door behind him to find the skeleton waiting for him.

Felipe was panicking now. He was going to go to jail!

"I'll keep your se'cret for your skin," the skeleton said.

"All right—" Felipe said before he realized the skeleton had said something different this time. It was too late. He had already agreed. He went to the closet door to escape, but it wouldn't open. The skeleton was on him before he could scream. Even without muscles

the skeleton was strong... Only the skeleton did have muscles now. It was Felipe who did not. The skeleton had eyes and hair and skin now, too! Felipe's eyes and hair and skin. It was Felipe who was now the skeleton. The former skeleton finished pulling up the skin of Felipe's legs as if it was a pair of jeans. Felipe watched with hollow eye sockets as the thief stuffed the last of his guts into a flap of belly it then sealed shut. Then his world went dark as a coat was tossed over his skull. A few more coats were tossed on him until he was buried under a pile of coats.

Felipe then realized that he'd likely never see the sun again. He'd cry, but the skeleton from the closet had stolen his tear ducts. He knew that the freshly skinned skeleton would do anything to keep Felipe a secret. He'd probably even skin his parents, if they figured out that it wasn't the real Felipe beneath their son's skin. He might enjoy a different skin for each day of the week.

Suddenly, that F in math didn't seem so terrible.

