

The Tale of Cabin Six

It was a dark and stormy night and the boys of Cabin Six were not ready for bed. It had been a big day at Camp Mohican. They had gone on a hike, learned the names of ten types of moss, and had the talent show.

Mikey, who could perform basic break dancing moves and do a back flip, had won the talent show, bringing the trophy home to Cabin Six. Flashes of lightning spotlights Mikey as he spins on the warped boards of the floor in an encore performance for his cabin mates. They hang from their bunks, cheering him on as he executes a passable windmill.

Right when Mikey was about to nail a sweet move, his foot catches the edge of a bed. He slams to a stop and the bed skids a few inches away from the wall. Brett, being the biggest, is going to move the bed back to clear the dance floor, but Mikey notices something strange on the wall. One of the boards has come loose and there is a puff of weird green cotton peeking out.

"What's that?" Mikey asks.

"Just some gunk." Brett reaches into the hole and tears the cotton out. "Eww, sticky gunk."

Brett shakes his hand, but the cotton won't come off. Tony grabs his trombone and uses the slide to try and peel off the gunk without touching it.

"Gimme that." Brett grabs the trombone and pulls off the slide, throwing the rest of the instrument on the floor with a big clang.

"Watch it!" Tony shouts.

"This stuff is starting to burn." Brett digs at it. "Besides, no one wants to hear you play."

The boys watch Brett as his hand seems to become more stuck, his fingers gluing together when they touch. They start to joke that it looks like pillow stuffing mixed with boogers. Everyone is so interested in watching this that they don't see what crawls out of the hole in the wall.

They cheer when Brett gets one finger free right as the creature moves across the floor and up Brett's shoe. He's focused on freeing his thumb when he feels something on his ankle. Brett looks down to see a black spider with bright green circles on its abdomen and green stripes running down each leg. It's the size of a book, one of those big books that nerds read, and even from standing up Brett can see its fangs sink into the skin of his calf.

Brett screams, dropping the trombone slide and reaching for his leg. The other boys panic as Brett falls to the ground still screaming. In the chaos, Mikey sees the spider skitter towards the door and disappear behind a duffle bag.

Brett's screams turn to gurgles when a thick green foam begins pouring out of his mouth. His body shakes, eyes bloodshot and hands grasping at the air.

Dennis, who really enjoyed the lessons on moss, grabs a straw from a Capri Sun and rushes over to Brett.

"We need to clear his airway!" Dennis shouts.

Dennis can't get the straw through the foam, so he reaches into Brett's mouth and then pulls his hand back with a yell. "It's hot!"

Dennis' hand and Brett's face start to sizzle. Tony wraps his shirt around the hand, trying to wipe off the foam in the process.

The rest of the boys watch as Brett's face begins to cook. His eyes smoke in his head as his shaking turns full body lurches like a fish on the dock. A flash of lightning makes Brett glow in the last moment of his life. One more huge twitch, and Brett is still.

In the following silence, the boys can only look at each other in horror. Dennis' crying brings them back. Tony takes away his shirt to show a skeletal hand, the flesh melted away.

"What do we do?" Tony asks the room.

"We have to get a counselor." Graham starts for the door.

"Wait!" Mikey yells. "The spider went behind that bag. It could still be there."

"Brett needs help!" Cole is standing over the big boy.

"Then let's kill that thing!" Tony picks up a bat. A couple other boys grab weapons, leaving Dennis and Cole near Brett.

Mikey leads the way, his hands inside boots to protect them and squash the spider. Silently, he motions for Tony to move the bag. Tony holds the bat in one hand and slowly reaches for the bag. Everyone is holding their breath, thunder and Dennis' sobs being the only sounds in Cabin Six.

Biting his lip, Tony takes the strap and slides the bag away from the wall. Nothing but a dirty sock.

Tony lets out a big exhale, but Mikey puts a hand on his arm. "It could still be around, we should look-"

A side pocket on the bag rustles and the spider dashes out, running up Tony's hand and onto his arm. He shouts and drops the bag as the spider bites him and leaps onto Graham's face. Graham's hands fly up but stop halfway as a strangled cry escapes his throat. The spider finishes pouring venom into Graham and runs around the back of his head, jumping off toward the nearest bunk.

Tony and Graham hit the floor at the same time. Soon after, the shaking and sizzling starts. Luke is a tall guy that hadn't said much all summer. Now, he calmly steps over, picks up the bat Tony had, and raises it over the dying boy.

"What are you doing?" Mikey steps between them.

"He's suffering."

"You can't kill him!"

Luke stares at Mikey, and then down at Tony. Both he and Graham have reached the foaming, eyes smoking stage that Brett did right before the end. Luke keeps the bat raised as they watch two more of their friends die.

"Now can we leave?" Cole asks.

"We have to kill it. For them." Luke turns the bat on the bunk the spider jumped to and starts bashing the mattress.

"On the floor!" Dennis yells from where he's sitting. He's pointing out the spider as it makes a run for the hole in the wall. Mikey rips a sleeping bag off a bunk and swings it like a matador, covering the spider before it can reach its home.

The sleeping bag quivers once and goes still. The boys freeze. Mikey looks at Luke, who approaches with his bat.

"Careful." Cole whispers.

Luke nods, raises the bat, and slams it down again and again like he did with the mattress. They can hear the floor cracking under the swings. After a minute, he stops, out of breath, and grabs the corner of the sleeping bag that lies flat as a pancake.

"It's dead." Luke tells the others and yanks the bag up. Thick green web stretches from the floor to the bag where Luke holds it. A couple boards under the bag have cracked, revealing web leading down. No sign of the spider.

"Where is it?" Dennis asks.

"I think it went under the floor." Mikey says.

"Then let's get out of here." Luke throws down the bat and heads for the door.

"I thought you wanted to kill it." Mikey says.

"Not as much as I don't want to die." Luke says over his shoulder as he throws open the door. The boys don't have time to warn him before Luke walks right into a huge green web criss crossing the opening. Luke gets quickly and completely stuck in the web.

"How?" Asks Mikey.

"Why?" Asks Cole.

"Shhh." Says Dennis.

The three go quiet, leaving Luke to grunt as he tries to pull himself out. The storm is pelting down on the roof, but Dennis points to one of the windows.

"I think it's-"

Luke's scream brings their attention back to the front door where the spider is racing across his body, spinning him into a huge green cocoon. Every few steps, the spider pauses to inject more poison. Soon, Luke stops struggling and the remaining boys huddle together in fear as the spider finishes its work.

When the last of Luke is encased in web, the spider lazily walks to where Luke's head is and settles down. With a snap, the spider's fangs punch through Luke's skull and it begins to feed.

Even from across the cabin, they can see its body pulse and grow as it drinks Luke. The green on its back and legs glow and the spider even growls as it slurps up the rest of him.

"Spread out. Now." Dennis whispers.

Mikey and Cole freeze for the moment, but then the spider starts to move and so do they. Before the boys can get a few steps away, the spider leaps from its web, clearing a dozen feet in a single jump directly for Dennis.

At the last moment, Dennis brings up a boot and knocks the spider out of the air. It slams into the side of a bunk bed but hits the ground on all eight, sprinting for Cole.

Cole jumps up on a bed and throws a pillow over his shoulder. The spider grabs the pillow and bites it frantically.

"Over here!" Mikey yells to Cole. Mikey and Dennis have backed themselves into the corner and Mikey has the bat raised. At least this way, they'll see the spider coming.

Cole runs over to his friends and turns as fast as he can, sure the spider is right behind him. But there's nothing there.

All three boys stand in silence, looking up, down, and all around. Every time a branch outside hits the cabin or thunder cracks, they jump. Finally, Dennis spots it on one of the beams on the ceiling.

"There!" His shout makes them all jump again, and so does the spider.

It leaps from the ceiling, hits the ground running, and heads right for the hole where it first emerged. Ten feet away, the spider jumps, almost free, but Dennis is there too and he throws his good hand over the open space.

The spider lands on his hand and starts biting. Dennis screams once and then grits his teeth and says, "Get it."

Mikey raises the bat, looks at Dennis, and swings for the fences. His hit smashes Dennis' hand and the spider. Dennis starts to foam and the spider tries to hobble away, but Mikey hits again. And again. He smashes the spider, the floor boards, and even some of the wall.

Finally, he feels Cole's hand on his shoulder and stops. Dennis is dead but the spider has been smeared across the walls of the cabin.

"You got it." Cole says. Mikey catches his breath, but whatever he was going to say is lost under the sound of skittering from inside the walls.

The boys look down to see hundreds of tiny black and green spiders pouring out of the hole. The swarm rushes across the floor, covering Dennis' body in seconds.

"Go, we'll break through!" Mikey raises the bat and points at the web over the doorway.

They bolt for the door, hearing thousands of tiny feet racing after them. A few steps away, Mikey trips on the trombone Brett had thrown. In his fall, he gets twisted up with Cole, bringing him down too.

They try to stand, but the first few bites lock their limbs in pain and they fall again. One last flash of lightning shows the boys a black curtain of baby spiders descending on them. Their final cries are lost in the storm.