

The Body in the Library

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Purple shimmering fabric draped across posts, Disney characters dancing down the side. The bears are having a picnic, feasting on books and little children.

She turned her back for a moment, and he was gone. Not with the coloured pencils, not in the blue and green cube tunnels, not tangled in the dark magenta canopy, nor digging in the box with the big jigs train set. He wasn't standing pointing at the half waka coming through the wall, or climbing on the wheelie book trolley. He wasn't on the steps trying to check books out from Bobbie. Not by the window watching people park their cars. Where was he?

Had he followed someone else's buggy out of the library? Gone looking for the other half of the waka in non-fiction? Used the 'big' toilet and fallen in? Where could he be?

With hemp bag in one hand, she flicked the hair from her eyes and began striding across the floor, searching, searching, searching.

Then, in a dark corner, she saw a crimson bulging mass on the floor, a strange texture, misshapen, malformed. His body was still.

She saw an axe, a ghoul, and horror.

There he was, her first born, sunken into a red beanbag, holding a copy of *Goosebumps*. With toothy smile and chubby hands he signalled her to join him, the youngest person in 'senior fiction'.