Billy and Susan were normal kids. In fact, they were very normal, almost too normal. They lived in a normal suburb with normal sized houses with normal sized cars parked in the driveways. Everything in their life was normal...everything but one.

It was the summer of ’88 and the thermometer had hit 102 degrees, a real scorcher of a summer. School had been out for a month which meant that most kids had absolutely no responsibilities and a lot of time on their hands. Yes, it is true that a lot of kids had little league practice or swimming lessons; but Billy and Susan weren’t really into what all the other kids did.

Billy and Susan liked magic.

“Hey, wanna go down to ol’ man Potter’s Place and look for frogs?” , Billy whispered to Susan one morning across the breakfast table.

Yessssss!, she hissed, which caused their mother to look over her shoulder while she finished washing the dishes at the sink.

Hey Mom, would it be alright if Susan and I went into town to grab some ice cream from Peppermint Pete’s?” Billy asked innocently.

“Didn’t you just have breakfast?” she replied before giving into the two puppy-dog stares that met her from across the table. Oh ok, but remember, no side roads......and I don’t want you hanging around that old house. It looks like it’s ready to fall down!!!

We won’t Mom. Don’t worry.

Little did she know, she had every reason to worry.

Once out of the house, the two made a hard left in the exact opposite direction of Peppermint Pete’s, the local candy shop.

They sprinted down the hill sliding from time to time on the loose gravel which had just been laid earlier that week. Soon, they came upon a narrow path which led to some dense foliage not more than fifty yards from where they were now standing. The path was almost eerily straight as if it had been carved into the earth with a knife.

“Do you have them?” Susan asked Billy.
“Of course.” You don’t really think I would be standing this close without it do you?” Billy breathed.

They took one more look at one another then sprinted down the path Susan after Billy. Long grass which hung over into the path whipped their legs and occasionally snagged their feet causing them to stumble ever so slightly.

As they approached the forest, they slowed to a slow jog for it was dark and very difficult to see the ground. The only help came from small shafts of light that squeezed through maple leaves before disappearing again when the wind rustled the tree tops.

It was a strange day in July. For a summer that had broken every heat-related record, this day was downright cool. The breeze had a nip of fall in it and large, puffy-white clouds converged on one another in the sky like large steamboats passing in a canal.

“Hey look, there it is!” whispered Susan with excitement. She had been here only once since the accident.

Billy took out a small blue booklet from his back pocket. On the front, it read “Science Notes” which had been scratched over and replaced with the words Magic Spells.

When they were here a month previous, they had done something they wished they hadn’t. They had spoken the spell which could end the world. Actually, it was a mistake. Susan had thought she was reading the spell of good fortune and homemaking, which would’ve transformed the old, broken-down house they were now staring at into a luxurious mansion on the water. Instead she read the “Zombie Spell.”

Billy and Susan had wild imaginations that they only shared with each other. They enjoyed fighting ghosts and werewolves while flailing around with sticks and making swooshing noises while swiping at imaginary demons.

As they stood on the edge of the water, looking out over the glassy surface of the lake, they couldn’t help but think of what zombies they would defeat today and save the world yet again.

They were just getting ready to read the spell and start their imaginary adventure when they heard something.

A noise.

Coming from the house.

Usually, the only sounds they heard were their own. Not even birds or wild life seemed to live in this section of the woods. It was usually dead silent.
Then again.

Something dragging.

Billy reached into his pocket and took out one of his “magic stones”. (And yes, I’m sure you’ve noticed by this point that Billy has some pretty general names for his objects. Zombie spell, Magic Spells, and now magic stones.) Writing and creativity were never a strong subject for Billy ….except for fighting imaginary monsters, he was great at being creative there.

Clenching the smooth, light gray stone in his hand, Billy whipped his arm to side sending the stone whizzing across the pond skipping the three times before hitting the side of the old house and making an ear-splitting “BANG”.

Susan took the next stone, and awkwardly sent it right into the water 10 feet in front of them not skipping once.

“Nice toss Roger Clemens”, Billy murmured.

“I’m only 8!, replied Susan, and then stuck out her tongue.

Billy then took the last stone from his pocket and heaved it as hard as he could, probably his best throw ever, and with just one skip, sent it sailing through a large hole on the second story of the house.

Billy turned to his sister. “How come that stone didn’t make any noise?”

Suddenly, as his sister began to speak, a rock skipped across the lake hitting her square in the knee.

Ooooowwwww!!! Susan cried and began to cry. Her knee felt as if it had exploded inside itself.

Billy leaned over and picked up the rock. “Hey, this is the same rock I just threw.”

Susan didn’t say anything. She was wailing that she wanted to go home.

Billy took the rock, turned around and threw it again, this time hitting a window on the first floor and smashing it to pieces. To his dismay, he again saw his rock sail out of the window and land right at his feet.

Billy was irritated. He didn’t know who was playing this joke on him, but whoever it was was going to pay for hurting his little sister, and messing with his imaginary game.

He gripped the rock. He threw with all his might, but the third stone kept skipping back.
Frustrated, Billy shouted, “Hey you wimp!!! Whoever you are you’re going to get it!!! Show yourself!!!.

And that’s when he saw it.....

A mangled face peered through the long grass at the water’s edge. Billy couldn’t believe what he was seeing. Was this true? Was he really looking at a zombie?

Panic.

“Susan!!! The spell worked last time!! Zombies are living in the house!! RUUNNNNNNNNN!!!”

As he went to run, Billy suddenly realized how bad his sister’s knee was. Blood stained the ground they stood on. As he looked up, he realized that zombies standing in tattered flannels and overalls were staring at them all around the lake. There must’ve been hundreds. How come he didn’t see them before?

As Billy attempted to drag his sister back up the bank and onto the narrow path they followed into the woods, he felt jagged teeth sink into his neck and he knew it was all over.

The two day dreamers were never heard from again.