

# The House on Plum Street

## An **Analyzing Plot** Spooky Story

Every story has characters, a setting, and some kind of action. All of these together is called the **plot**. Here, the plot focuses on a young man who will do anything—and we mean anything—to earn money for something he wants. The plot gets very creepy, very quickly. Check it out!

**I**t started with greed. Some folks want money. Me? My name is Louis and I wanted a music system: A G-750 Blaster CD-Surround Total Theater System that costs \$2,999.

How did I pay for it? In a word, I didn't. I put it on the installment plan. Each month, I paid \$200 — for 24 months.

This worked out OK, until I lost my job at the video store. Suddenly, I needed money, and I needed it fast. So when I saw the ad in the newspaper, I knew I had no choice. It read:

Make \$100 a night.  
Be the caretaker at  
my great-great-uncle  
Farley's house at  
13 Plum Street, one  
night a week. No  
questions asked. Call  
Jasper at LK5-1313.



I called and, just like the ad said, I got the job with no questions asked. Jasper handed me the key and promised me it would be an easy job, except for one thing: Some people said the house was haunted.

“Nonsense,” I said. “I don’t believe in haunted houses.”

I will say this: The place was dark, dank, and full of cobwebs. The windows were cracked and broken. The floors creaked. Was it haunted?

Of course not, I told myself.

And for most of the night, there was no sign of anything strange. Then, the house’s music system caught my eye. I had never seen one like it before. I turned it on. The most beautiful music came pouring out of unseen speakers. I’d never heard such music before. I couldn’t identify the instruments or the style of music. I just knew it spoke directly to my heart, filling me with happiness and contentment. I looked at the label on the system. It was called a Bizarre-100.

I sat there and listened to the Bizarre-100 for most of the evening. I had no doubt that it was the greatest sound system in the world.

I decided that I had to have it.

**1. Who is the main character in the story?**

- ☐ A. Jasper
- ☐ B. Uncle Farley
- ☐ C. Louis
- ☐ D. The house

**2. What is the setting of the story?**

- ☐ A. A spooky old house
- ☐ B. A haunted music system
- ☐ C. The distant past
- ☐ D. Louis’s apartment

**3. What problem does the main character face?**

- ☐ A. He doesn’t have a music system.
- ☐ B. He doesn’t have the money to pay for his music system.
- ☐ C. He needs to get his old job back from the video store.
- ☐ D. He is being pursued by a ghost.

**4. What steps does the main character take to solve the problem?**

- ☐ A. He decides to return the music system.
- ☐ B. He buys a very expensive music system.
- ☐ C. He tricks Uncle Jasper into giving him a new music system.
- ☐ D. He takes a job caring for a house that may be haunted.

I looked closely at the case. There was a small plaque that read: WHOSOEVER WANTS THIS SYSTEM, YOU CAN HAVE IT—IF YOU ARE TRULY WORTHY!

So the next morning, when I got ready to leave, I went over to the system. I tried to unplug it.

Suddenly, the room filled with a mournful, loathsome sound:

“You are not worthy! LEAVE ME ALO-O-ONE!”

A strange radio broadcast? Perhaps. When I tried to yank the plug out of the wall, it wouldn’t budge. The terrible sound got louder:

“You are not worthy! LEAVE ME ALO-O-O-ONE!”

I gave it one more pull.

“You are truly not worthy! LEAVE ME ALO-O-O-O-ONE!”

At that point, the walls began to shake. The windows began to rattle. Cracks in the ceiling began to widen. Plaster began to fall.

I looked up. The ceiling was about to cave in!

I ran. I didn’t turn around until I reached the front gate. Then I heard a terrible noise. The old house was collapsing!

I ran straight to Jasper and told him what happened.

“Finally,” he said. “I’ve been waiting for Uncle Farley’s house to fall apart for twenty years. You did it. You finally did it!”

“Tell me something,” I said. “That music system in the house. Where did it come from? Was it your uncle’s?”

“Music system?” Jasper replied. “That place didn’t have a music system. It didn’t even have a radio! My uncle moved out in 1912, before anyone in this town even had a radio.”

Sure enough, when the workers came to clean up the wreckage, they found no sign of a sound system. And it should have survived the collapse.

Myself? I can’t explain what happened. I still don’t believe in haunted houses. Well, maybe a little bit.

One thing I definitely don’t believe in is an expensive sound system. The day after the house collapsed, I traded in my \$2,999 system for a plain old \$129 set. And I like it fine. So taking the caretaking job did solve my problem—in a way. But sometimes, when I’m lying in bed at night, I close my eyes and think I hear the beautiful sounds that came from the Bizarre-100 system. I tell myself that somehow, somewhere, I’ll hear that music again.



**5. In this section, what new problem does the main character face?**

- ☐ A. He wants to play music, but the Bizarre-100 won’t let him.
- ☐ B. He wants to destroy the music system because he can’t have it.
- ☐ C. He wants to take the Bizarre-100 music system.
- ☐ D. He wants to escape the house.

**6. What is the climax of the story?**

- ☐ A. The house burns down when the music system overheats.
- ☐ B. The house collapses when Louis tries to unplug the system.
- ☐ C. The house is sold to Jasper for a small price.
- ☐ D. Louis is attacked by a ghost.

**7. How does the main character change as a result of what happens in the story?**

- ☐ A. He no longer believes in haunted houses.
- ☐ B. He no longer likes music.
- ☐ C. He is now a ghost.
- ☐ D. He no longer wants a fancy, expensive sound system.

**8. You’re a reporter for *The Haunted Times*, a magazine dedicated to tracking down ghosts and hauntings. On a separate sheet of paper, write an article describing what happened at Uncle Farley’s house. Was it haunted—or not?**

THE  
END