

Sleepover at Aaron's Place

By Ethan Clark

Something that I remember from my childhood from when I was...a little older was this sleepover I had at my old friend Aaron's house.

It all began when I got picked up from school right on the day it was happening. Aaron's older sister was in the pickup car lane, driving an old minivan with a dent on the side door and a squeaky drive belt hanging on for dear life!

Once that sliding door opened up, I was hit with the salty, greasy smell of fast food and the potent, suffocating scent of cigarettes. Aaron's older sister didn't talk much on the drive to their house. But she was at least nice.

When we arrived at Aaron's place, his older sister told me to go in through the basement door. I tried to ask her why, but she said nothing. I walked through the backyard, all a little overgrown with the weeds scratching against my thighs.

I saw the basement door, and the little concrete porch in front of it. Beneath the window sits a tricycle that clearly hasn't been used in ages. The plastic is faded, the seat has a layer of an unidentifiable scum atop it.

The wood on the back screen door was chipped in many places, and the bottom sweep was breaking. Through the screen, I could see a door with a Christmas wreath still hung on it. The wreath was a little gross, appearing wilted despite being artificial, the ribbon glued to it, looking like it was rotting.

As I knocked on the back basement door, I could hear a faint, angered scream come from the door followed by a thump. Soon after, Aaron arrived.

"Yoo, it's you!" He greeted. I asked him what all that anger was over, and he just shrugged it off, saying he just got mad because he lost a match in his video game at the last minute.

He grabbed me by the arm, pulling me into his basement game room. I have to say, it was a little smelly. I can't remember WHAT it smelled like, but it wasn't pleasant. The room itself was quite sparse, and much like the extra room at the house of the cousins who live the next town over, having just a couch, a TV, and a box of weird things beside the TV.

I tried to go upstairs, but Aaron stopped me, saying that there's a bathroom down here, and that his sister will go get some food from a fast food place when it's time for dinner.

I was beginning to feel uncomfortable but didn't leave, because I didn't want to hurt Aaron's feelings. So, I stayed.

Funnily enough, Aaron didn't want to be at his own home either. He dragged me into his backyard, and beyond the chain-link fence. I had no idea where we were going, I just trusted him because in school, I learned it was safer to travel with a buddy.

We arrived at our destination, the flat back concrete visage of a building. I asked Aaron what the place was, but he just shrugged and began to walk around over to the front.

I stepped inside, and could smell ice cream! It was an ice cream shop! Aaron spoke to the man at the front desk and just said "the usual", and that man gave him a scoop of chocolate and cookies n' cream.

I took a long look at all the flavors in the ice cream shop. I just pointed at two that looked really good. I ended up eating some chocolate chunk and cotton candy.

Aaron ate a bit nastily and sloppily, with ice cream getting all over his face. I was grossed out and just watched whatever was on the TV in the ice cream shop. It was just...the local news. The story on the TV was about a new public library opening up. I remember the interviewer talking to some kid who was like excited about the DVD section.

We kinda then just sat around after we finished our ice cream, watching the cars go by outside as night began to fall onto the world. Aaron then stood up and walked out, and I followed after him, into the woods, and back into that smelly old basement.

First thing Aaron did was dig around in a plastic container filled with random odds and ends, until fishing out a DVD with "THE WILD THINGZ" crudely written on it with a marker.

The DVD looked strange. Almost, threatening, even if what followed after wasn't. I asked Aaron what's on the DVD and he just told me "Dude! The Wild Thingz is like the dumbest movie ever! You gotta see this trainwreck just to BELIEVE it!"

Aaron quickly popped the DVD into his games console, and the movie just...abruptly began on a black void of a title card that just read "THE WILD THINGZ: PLAYTIMES OVER" in a generic white font...and I think there was just some weird watermark in the corner.

That movie was DEFINITELY pirated. No way a movie would start like that!

I don't recall EXACTLY what happened after the title card came, but I do remember seeing a cheerleader showing up in her limousine at someone's house to pick up the most stereotypical depiction of a gamer...I think they then went to a toy store to see the launch of a brand new toy.

As the movie was getting started, Aaron's sister came down the stairs holding a fast food bag, and Aaron took it. She then ran upstairs really quickly after hearing some...thud coming from the upstairs.

Still never knew what was up with that. Hopefully, it was nothing too serious.

Anyways, Aaron was right about The Wild Thingz being a terrible movie. The main characters had these 2D animated sidekicks, and those are like what the “Wild Thingz” were supposed to be.

One of them was this cat who just liked to roast and insult the snot out of people while the other one was this...fairy, I guess, who liked to prank people.

The animation on them looked really cheap. Those “Wild Thingz” just looked like they were lazily pasted onto the screen.

The plot of the movie was kinda silly also. The main characters had to rescue some toy inventor named something like Dina or Diane from this evil toy inventor woman so that she can learn all her secrets and...make better toys?

And then they like went to Shoney’s a LOT in the movie. They HAD to have been sponsored! Nobody goes to Shoney’s 3 days in a row.

But boy...this movie was FUN to watch! Maybe it was because it was just me and Aaron eating chicken nuggets and drinking soda in what I assumed was the only “safe” place in his house, laughing at all the weird stuff in the movie.

Oh man, I remember that final battle scene so vividly. The villain had this henchman who was SO over-the-top, trying to act like a cartoon character with exaggerated moments and facial expressions as he presented the “SUPER TOY”.

The “Super Toy” was just some toy robot you could have bought at the store spray painted red and with spikes stuck all over it. It like, blew up AND THEN the main characters had to fight a...monster? IDK WHAT that thing was but it looked ugly, and had bad animation, and I’m pretty sure that wisecracking cat thing killed it by farting on it. Gross.

The only other thing accompanying us was the distant sound of the train horn and clickety-clacks...I almost forgot a train track ran behind Aaron’s house. Can’t believe I crossed over that to get to the ice cream shop!