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STUDENT WRITING SAMPLE

Only Ten

by *Brian Lange, Grade 8, Wyoming Middle School*

Prompt: 10. Create a story based on this number.

There I stood, looking up at the poster surrounded by flashing lights. It was the most beautiful thing I ever saw.

The poster read: Ninja Commando Vampires II: Now in theaters.

Ever since Ninja Commando Vampires I came out on video, I had awaited this day.

Then, my heart sank.

The bottom corner read: PG-13.

And I was only ten.

Ten, at first, seems like a nice, round, double-digit number. And thirteen is supposed to be unlucky. But right now, I thought whoever thought that up must have never seen Ninja Commando Vampires I.

I casually walked up to the ticket window, observing the schedule. NCVII was in thirty minutes.

Standing on my tippy-toes, I mumbled into the speaker.

“One ticket to Nina Commando Vampires II, please,” I said, trying to conceal both my high squeaky voice and my increasing excitement.

“OK, that’ll be... Hey, wait a minute.” My heart froze again. “Are you thirteen or over?”

“Uhh...yeah, I just turned 13 a few days ago.”

“Prove it, shrimp.”

“Uhh, I don’t have an ID or anything like that.”

“Well, until you prove to me you’re thirteen or older, or you have a parent or guardian with you, I’m under strict orders not to let you see that movie.”

“Umm, I’ll be right back.”

I had to think of something, and something fast. The movie started in... I checked my watch... 25 minutes! And the good seats would be gone in 10.

Ten. How I hated that number.

“OK,” I thought out loud in the bathroom stall, alone. “I gotta make myself look older. But how?”

“Hey, kid.” I was startled as the voice came from the stall beside me.

“Yy...Yes?”

“You wanna get into a PG-thirteener, right?” the gravelly voice said.

“Yy... Yes.”

“You got a picture?”

I checked my wallet, and lo and behold, I had a miniature school picture of myself. But why did he want it?

“Uhh... yeah.”

“Slide it under.” I obeyed the ominous faceless voice and slid the badly-framed, grinning color picture under the divider between the two of us. I noticed there were no feet touching ground on the other side.

Seconds later, an ID card with my picture on it slid back! Proof that I wasn’t ten. I slid a few one dollar bills in return.

“Thanks!” I flung open the stall door and ran from the shady bathroom, clutching the card all the way.

“Here,” I said, out of breath, showing the ID to the ticket man. I still had 20 minutes.

“This card says you’re a 17-year-old female named Kelly.”

“Uhh, oops, wrong card,” I said and retreated.

I hadn't bothered to check the ID.

“Stupid black market,” I muttered. Then, I had a great idea. I patiently waited right next to the ticket window. Then, the time came.

“One senior ticket for the 4:30 showing of Ninja Commando Vampires II, please,” an old man said. He got his ticket and I quickly walked up to the window.

“I'm with him, he's my grandpa.”

“And he makes you pay?” the cashier said, puzzled.

“He says my generation needs a work ethic.”

“Good enough for me,” he replied.

My heart jumped. My hands shook and sweated as I gave him the money. He handed me the ticket.

I grabbed it and sprinted to theater 12 for the 4:30 showing. I sat down in a horrible top row seat, just as the previews started. Oh well. IF it truly was a “four star action spectacular,” my seat wouldn't matter.

It had guns. It had women. It had cool gadgets. It had kung fu. It had blood sucking. And it was the best action I ever saw. But for the next few years, it gave me horrible nightmares.

After all, I was only ten. 🐼