


GORDON KORMAN



SWINDLE

 SCHOLASTIC



SNEAKING OUT AT NIGHT - HELPFUL HINTS:

- (i) When lying to your parents, maintain EYE CONTACT.
- (ii) Make sure you ask permission to attend the correct FAKE SLEEPOVER. (Boys - Stan Winter's place. Girls - Karen Lobodzic's)
- (iii) Meet at the OLD ROCKFORD HOUSE at 8:30 p.m. Friday. (You can't miss it; there's a CRANE with a giant WRECKING BALL parked in front.)
- (iv) Enter through missing plants in BOARDED-UP WINDOW, first floor, east side.

(v) Bring your SLEEPING BAG. Remember:
The old Rockford house is a CONDEMNED
BUILDING that will be demolished TOMORROW
MORNING. There will be no beds, no running water,
no furniture, no lights, no TV. . . .

When a plan came from Griffin Bing, even the tiniest detail had to be perfect. He'd agonized over every fine point and possibility. All except one: What if nobody showed up?

"We probably shouldn't have put in the part about no TV," Griffin's friend Ben Slovak said glumly.

Griffin and Ben sat cross-legged on their sleeping bags in what had once been an elegant living room. They were surrounded by shredded drapery, remnants of ancient furnishings, and mounds of dust. All around them, the cavernous old house creaked and groaned with hollow, eerie noises. Outside, a thunderstorm raged.

Griffin trained the beam of his flashlight on his wristwatch: 10:34 p.m. "I can't believe it," he seethed. "How could we get *nobody*? Twenty-eight people said they were coming!"

"Maybe they're just late," Ben offered lamely.

"Nine o'clock is late. Ten-thirty is a no-show. Don't they have any self-respect? This is like saying it's totally fine for the adults in this town to walk all over us."

Ben would have dearly loved to be No-Show #29. Only loyalty to his best friend had brought him here tonight. "Come on, Griffin," he reasoned. "What difference does it make if two people or two *hundred* people spend the last night in a condemned building? How does that show the adults that we're standing up for our rights? They're never even going to know about it."

"We'll know," Griffin said stoutly, sticking out his jaw. "Sometimes you have to prove to yourself that you're more than just a slab of meat under the shrink-wrap in your grocer's



SWINDLE: *to cheat, steal, trick, deceive, defraud, lie, rob, con, backstab, obtain dishonestly. . .*

Griffin Bing is on his way to a million dollars . . . until a mean collector named S. Wendell Palomino (a.k.a. Swindle) tricks him out of a rare Babe Ruth baseball card. Now Griffin must put together a team of friends (and one or two enemies) to get it back.

There are many things standing in their way—a menacing guard dog, a high-tech security system, a very secret hiding place, and the fact that none of them can drive. But Griffin is a Man With a Plan, and even if some things go way beyond his control, he's not going to let his fortune go without a fight.

“Pure fun from top to bottom.”
—*SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL*

“This will be one book you can't keep on the shelf!”—*BOOKBUZZ.COM*

