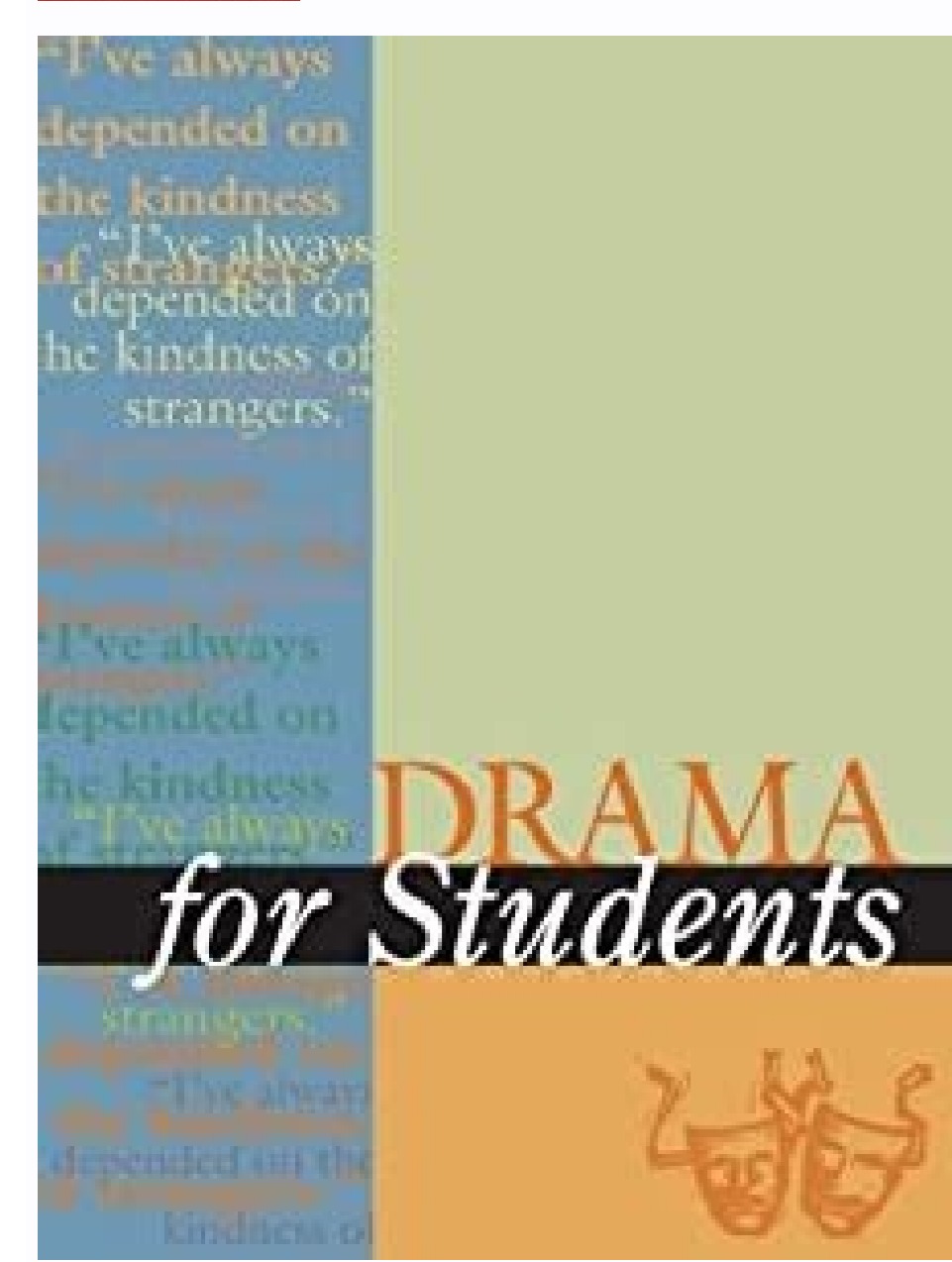
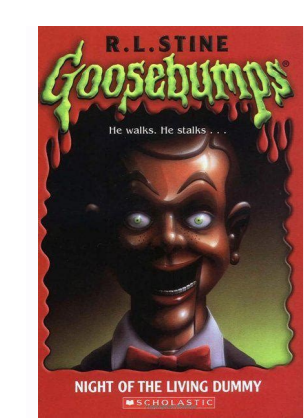


I'm not robot!



September 2010

IT WAS LATE, AND UNTIL a moment ago, all had been quiet. Magnus Bane, High Warlock of Brooklyn, sat in his living room on his favorite chair, open book facedown in his lap, and watched the latch of his top-story window jiggle. For the last week, somebody had been prodding and testing the magical wards protecting his apartment. Now it seemed they had decided to prod more directly.

Magnus thought this a foolish decision on their part. Warlocks kept late hours, for one thing. For another, he lived with a Shadowhunter—who was currently out on patrol, true, but Magnus was fully capable of defending himself, even in his pajamas. He cinched the belt of his black silk robe tighter and wiggled his fingers in front of him, feeling magic gather in them.

He reflected that years ago he would have been much more casual about this kind of break-in, letting it play out naturally and trusting his instincts to lead him through. Now he sat pointing literal finger-guns at the window. Now his infant son was asleep just down the hall.

At just over a year old, Max was sleeping through the night most of the time now. This was a relief, but also an inconvenience, because both of Max's parents kept nocturnal hours. Max, on the other hand, kept military hours, waking every morning at five thirty with a cheerful shriek that Magnus both adored and dreaded.



