

Pueblo City-County Library District

26TH ANNUAL SCARY STORY CONTEST



WINNING STORIES 2018



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Pueblo City-County Library District

2018 Scary Story Contest

Pueblo City-County Library District, in cooperation with the Friends of the Library, is pleased to announce the winners of the 26th Annual Scary Story Contest. Budding writers, from second grade to adult, were invited to enter the creative writing contest. Mysterious, suspenseful or humorous scary tales of a non-violent nature were judged by the Friends of the Library. Entries were judged for characterization, plot, description, dialog, setting, theme and originality. Winners received a certificate of achievement, a booklet with all of the winning stories, a Folkmanis puppet and a \$10 gift certificate to Books Again, the Friends of the Library's used book store. All participants received a certificate of recognition. There were 1,313 entries this year!

The judges were Friends of the Library board members Eileen Arnot, Monica Ayala, Leslie Carroll, Heather Smith, Becky Sudduth and Sherry Wingo and PCCLD staff members Tabitha Davis and Sara Schwartz.

The library wishes to thank the many teachers who supported the creative writing experience by having their students enter the contest. We look forward to receiving your work again next year!

WINNERS

2nd Grade

Payton Cadena Fountain International Magnet School – Mrs. McGee
Avery Lull Desert Sage Elementary School – Mrs. Marten
Claire Stegelmeier Goodnight School – Mrs. Reding
Traevion Wilhite-Penny Columbian Elementary School – Mr. Gavato

3rd Grade

Jordan Reding Goodnight School – Mrs. Armijo
Lovelle Sanchez Colorado Connections Academy – Ms. Corona
Eathan Schmidt Highland Park Elementary School – Ms. Montanez
Bayleigh Trujillo Goodnight School – Mrs. Armijo

4th Grade

Hailey Abram Goodnight School – Mrs. Thielbar
Sophia Clark Desert Sage Elementary School – Ms. Arguto
Elijah Martinez South Park Elementary School – Ms. Huskin
Hayven Romero Goodnight School – Mrs. Thielbar

5th Grade

Catlin Bonicelli Goodnight School – Mr. Casarez
Angelo Cirullo Sierra Vista Elementary School – Mrs. Aguilar
Natalie Montoya Sierra Vista Elementary School – Mrs. Aguilar
Maggie Stegelmeier Goodnight School – Mr. Casarez

6th Grade

Jakson Hughes St. John Neumann Catholic School – Mrs. See
Brady Lewin Vineland Middle School – Mr. Schornack
Jasiah Morales Goodnight School – Mr. Moore
Tyler Thielemier Goodnight School – Mr. Moore

7th Grade

Katie Casey Risley International Academy of Innovation – Mr. Brandenburg
Isabella Montalvo St. John Neumann Catholic School – Mrs. See
Jade Moore St. John Neumann Catholic School – Mrs. See
Isaiah Norwood Risley International Academy of Innovation – Mr. Brandenburg

8th Grade

Taylor Filler Roncalli Middle School – Ms. Reed
Aiden Moss St. John Neumann Catholic School – Mrs. See
Jillian Pratt St. John Neumann Catholic School – Mrs. See
Sadie Raylynn Ritchie Risley International Academy of Innovation – Ms. Hudson

High School

Jazmine Manzanares Romero Paragon Learning Center – Mrs. Kitchen
Nathan Morris Centennial High School – Ms. Blackmore
Kalena Muller Centennial High School – Ms. Blackmore
Charles Wood Paragon Learning Center – Mrs. Kitchen

Adult

Marlene See

The Abandoned Circus

Payton Cadena

Once there was a boy named Kaleb. He had a lot of friends. He had some of them with him. It was his birthday and his mom let him go to the circus by himself. His mom would not usually let him go without her. He thought that it was weird that his mom let him but he went anyways. So he went on with his friends to the circus. It was not too far from his house. He just walked. Soon he got there, it looked like it was packed and it even sounded like it was packed too. They walked in in a happy mood. They went in and it was empty so they walked further in and it was still empty but they heard noise. So they tried to figure out what it was. Later on they felt something touch them. They looked up, there was nobody there so they kept on searching. Out of nowhere something came out and grabbed Kaleb. All of his friends ran but eventually it grabbed all of them. Here is came the twentieth year of them being gone. The last day of January it was on the news and it was all over the electronics. It popped up on all the phones and all of the iPads, computers and it was amazing that the kids were alive. The only problem is that they thought that they were still young. But all that mattered is that they had their kids back. In the end they all got their children back and it was all fine in the end. And that was probably the last time that the circus would ever exist.



The Detective Case

Avery Lull

Once upon a time there was a detective but there was a villain, Dr. Good Butty Evil. One night in the city Dr. Good Butty Evil was up to no good. He was building Robo 2000. Suddenly detective was on the case. He saw footsteps the size of a Robo foot first. Then he saw scrap wires leading to Dr. Good Butty Eveil's lair. So then the Robo guy was really scary. There was oil dripping, red eyes and wires sticking out. Then Robo gained laser eyes! But detective dodged all the lasers. Then he fought and everything was normal. The end.



Night of the Living Pumpkin

Claire Stegelmeier

Once upon a time by the woods in Pennsylvania there were three kids. Their names were Zach, Grace and Taylor. They were sitting in the house deciding what to do. "Why don't we go play in the woods?" said Zach. "Okay," they girls said. So they did. They were out in the woods when suddenly they heard a growl. "Grrrr," it said. They all screamed loudly. "Run!" yelled Zach. Soon they all got lost. Then they heard a growl again. This time when they turned around they saw a pumpkin with a scary face on it. "Oh it's just a jack o' lantern," Grace said. "Smash it!" Zach yelled. "Yay!" said Taylor. She loved smashing things. "Do it," Zach and Grace yelled. So Taylor did and the growling ended.



Untitled

Traevion Wilhite-Penny

On Halloween, a mean ghost came into my house. He turned the TV off and on. The ghost turned the faucet off and on. He kept taking the covers off when I was sleeping. The ghost was a bad ghost.



Bloody Mary

Jordan Reding

Once upon a time there was an evil queen nick-named Bloody Mary because she was a mean devil. Every year for Halloween she walks the earth to see who will be her next subject of destruction and death. Once, Milli and Travonni went out walking in the woods to find the scary ghost, old Bloody Mary and would be able to see the ghost like figure just before night time. It was a stormy day that day and it was getting dark outside. Milli and Travonni thought that they found a bloody corpse and bones of some dead people. It appeared that the bones were buried in a small shallow grave. It appeared that wild animals had begun to eat all the flesh off the dead bodies. Upon their finding that all of the light from the stars that night had been hidden behind the trees, Milli and Travonni began to be frightened. After being frightened, they quickly turned around and saw the ghost, herself, the famous Bloody Mary. When Blood Mary saw Milli and Travonni, she began to chase them through the woods. She was a ghost like figure wearing torn clothing and a stained white dress. The ghost was chasing the children but the ghost did not have legs. Once Bloody Mary caught up to them, she grabbed the children's shoulders with her ghostlike hands and dragged them back to the spot where all of the dead bodies were. The town that was located just outside of the wooded area heard all of Milli and Travonni's screaming. The townspeople ran to the woods to save them. They were able to make it there just in time to save the children from evil Blood Mary.



Bad Candy

Lovelle Sanchez

One night, the night of Halloween, the year 1998, a boy was dressed as a vampire and he went to every house in his neighborhood to get candy. Then when he got home, he got into his candy and his candy started moving. The boy just thought someone touched it. Then his candy grew arms and pinched the little boy and started jumping on him. Then the boy got all the candy in the candy basket and threw it outside.

Many years later, the year of 2018, the night of Halloween, a pretty little girl was dressed as a princess and her name was Mia. Mia went to many houses for candy. She opened her candy bag on her ninth house to get candy. She opened the lollipop and it started moving. Mia thought someone just touched it. Then the lollipop grew arms and jumped on Mia. Her parents saw and started eating the candy and other people's candy from their baskets and it started coming alive too.

The other people's candy started jumping and pinching them too. All the parents either started eating candy or smashing candy or even stepping on candy. Then finally all the candy dies and they all made a plan for if the candy came back to life. They made their plan. Their plan was if the candy comes back to life they will pretend like they don't know and eat the candy and if some of the candy runs away the people will smash it. The candy never came back to life because they were scared the people will eat them.



The Young Boy

Eathan Schmidt

Once upon a time in the early 1900s for the thirteenth time this happened: A young boy went to go sit on the porch at about 5 p.m. because he was in an argument with his parents. When he got calmed down and opened the door, his parents were gone! The young boy looked under the two beds then in the small closet but they weren't there. He noticed that the blankets were torn up and that there was a giant crack across the house floor but they couldn't have left because his back was against the door. Then the boy saw someone looking through the crack. He really wanted to know who it was but the strange thing was that the person looking through the crack didn't look familiar. After a while he started to hear his mom screaming and after that he heard an unusual voice quietly saying, "Stop screaming." The boy opened the hidden door and finally he saw his parents.



The Haunted Day

Bayleigh Trujillo

One day Julie and Jackie were getting ready for school and were talking about the stories of the haunted basement at their school. While they were driving to school Jackie saw a doll. Julie said no way. At school Julie was in gym and she saw a red balloon. In lunch Julie and Jackie were talking and at recess they saw someone in a mask. After they saw the person in the mask they stopped talking and ran away, then it was time to go inside from recess. When they got inside they read, wrote and did math and then it was time to go home.

When they got home they asked their parents if they could go on a walk. On their walk they ended up at their school. They noticed a secret door and decided to see what was inside. Inside the room there were a lot of spiders and a staircase. They walked down the stairs and reached the bottom where they saw faces that they recognized from watching scary movies. They started to run away from Jason, Annabelle and Pennywise but they got captured because they could not run fast enough.

Jackie and Julie's mom started to get worried because the girls were not home yet. She called all the neighbors and they began looking for the girls. They ended up finding the girls trapped in a small room behind the secret door at their school. They all started to run down a long dark hallway trying to get away. While trying to get away they turned around and saw Jason, Annabelle and Pennywise chasing them. They could see the light from the doorway but they were never heard from again.

Kidnapped

Hailey Abram

Just like any ordinary day I woke up and started playing video games. As usual, I was starving. I was going down the stairs to get something to eat when I saw something out the window. I went outside to investigate. A strange man was standing in the back yard. I tried to follow him, but he disappeared. Suddenly, everything went dark. A couple of hours later I woke up and my arms were tied behind me, my legs were wrapped with tape and I was laying in the trunk of a car...I realized I'd been kidnapped. I've never been so scared in my life.

I finally saw sunlight just before being dragged into a dark cave. The cave was dark and damp with a strange smell. There was one small light hanging in a corner. All of a sudden I was pushed into a cell and the door was locked behind me. I could see just enough to realize that I was completely surrounded by bats. I could feel tears running down my face and tried not to scream. There was nowhere to run. How long would I be here? Why did this man kidnap me? I have to find a way to escape this nightmare!

In the dark cave I couldn't tell the difference between night and day. Somehow I fell asleep for a few hours. When I woke up, I saw the man who took me. He didn't see me watching him. He was staring at a small TV. When he moved away I could see the screen for a split second. It looked like my house on the screen. How could this be? Was he spying on my family? My mom and my dad were on the screen too. It looks like they are worried.

When the man saw me watching him he became angry. I asked him why he would want to take me. I begged him to let me go. He said that I took his mom away and he would never let me go. I was lucky enough to get a piece of bread to eat and a couple sips of water each day. I won't survive this for much longer. I have to find a way out.

Just as I was ready to give up hope, I realized I still had a pocket knife in my jeans. The cell door was made of wood. It would take some time, but maybe I could use my knife to break out of the cell. I had to be very careful and quiet. If the man heard me there is no telling what he would do.

I was able to cut through one cell bar when I heard the man coming. I quickly laid down and pretended to be asleep. For the first time the man lifted my cage door to clean it out. This was my chance to escape. I found a large rock on the cave floor. I hit him over the head and ran out of the cage as fast as I could. But, how would I ever find my way out in the dark. I remembered there was a small light as I was first entering the cave. I got a glimpse of the dim light and ran towards it. On my way out of the cave, I saw a picture of a baby and a young woman hanging on the cave wall. I grabbed it and ran out. I could hear his footsteps behind me, but he wasn't as fast as me. I've been on the track team for the last three years.

I was able to escape the cave and ran towards the trees. After about four or five miles I saw a road. I know if I don't get off this road soon he'll find me. I decided to run back into the trees and wait. It was almost dark and I heard a truck driving down the road. I ran towards it. The nice old man drove me to the police station.

When my mom and dad came to pick me up I was still holding the photo of the baby and young woman in my hand. My mom couldn't believe what she saw. It was a picture of her and the baby she gave up for adoption years ago . . . my own brother had kidnapped me.



The Missing

Sophia Clark



Worry was nothing new to Preston Elwoods. Usually his worries had to do with his crumbling old mansion. He worried most about his shutters that needed a fresh coat of strawberry colored paint. The locks around the house also needed to be fixed. He worried about all of the wiring that made the lights flicker on and off. . . And about his old leaky roof. But this morning Preston found a whole new worry. His lovely wife Tilly had seemed to completely disappear. Preston had woken up to find her missing. He was older and his body had become stiff and crippled due to years of hard work. It was very difficult for Preston to get around. With this in mind he called his ten grandsons to come and help find Tilly.

One by one he sent his grandsons to search the house and property for Tilly. By lunchtime not only was Tilly still missing, but also the grandsons...all had vanished! At this point Preston was terribly worried. He called Carl, the best detective in town.

Unfortunately though, as soon as Detective Carl went on the search, he ended up missing as well. After a couple of hours of pacing back and forth about what to do, Preston decided to take matters into his own hands. He found his cane from the stylish old days and set off to search for all of them. . . Tilly, the grandsons, and even Detective Carl. As Preston wandered through the halls he thought he heard scratching sounds. Before long he heard his wife screaming. While limping as fast as he could through the halls to help, he saw red droplets of liquid that looked like blood falling from the ceiling. "What could've happened?" he thought. He wandered around frantically seeing more and more liquid leaking from the ceilings of the halls. Then he heard where the noise was coming from. . . the attic! He hurried over to the stairs and frantically climbed each step. Preston couldn't help but think there must be some horrible creature in the attic. When he opened the attic door he positioned himself for a fight, but instead found all of the missing people.

"Preston!" shrieked his wife. "I told you to fix that lock. And that closing spring on the door caught us like a mousetrap with no way of stopping it quick enough. . . I have been stuck in here all day trying to find a way out. You also didn't put that large container of red paint away and I tripped right over it. Now it is spilled and soaking everything, just who do you suppose is going to clean up this mess!" Preston was glad to not find some terrifying ugly creature in the attic, but at this moment he thought that an angry Tilly might be worse!

The Scarecrows Walk Among Us

Elijah Martinez



One night a man named Bob and his son Tim wanted to put up a Scarecrow. When looking for his son, he found his son dead in the maze. But who killed him? Was it the scarecrow or was it, Bob? The next day Bob got so paranoid he killed his wife.

That same night he took down the scarecrow. When he got back to his house, he saw the scarecrow in the living room. He went back outside and saw the scarecrow hanging from a tree. He went back inside and there it was standing with a knife. He screamed and ran outside to his car. When he opened the door, the scarecrow was in the passenger seat waiting with a knife. Turns out there were many scarecrows that night. He ran back into his house and took one of the scarecrows and threw it at the car and locked all of his doors.

The next day they were all gone and so was the car. He knew he was stuck there. He had seen all the scarecrows and his car that same night. He said that he would stay there forever, just to get the scarecrow that killed his son. But it was not the scarecrow that killed his son, it was the farmer across the street.

Bob did not like the farmer, his name was Enrique. The farmer had set up the scarecrows. Bob knew what he had to do. He confronted the farmer. Bob told him if he did not admit to putting up the scarecrows he would call the police, and he would make sure, he would go to jail. All of a sudden a loud crashing noise came from Bob's house. Bob ran all the way back across the street to his home. He saw one of the scarecrows there, he decided that he should run. Bob got his gun and ran for his car. He wasn't able to get far, but he got away from the house for the night.

He went back the next day, and two tables were gone. The TV was flipped over, and there was a floating teapot. Bob did not know what to do, so he shot at it, and nothing happened. He slammed the teapot to the ground. He ran outside and saw the same scarecrow on the tree. That's when Bob decided to put away his differences with enemy Enrique. The farmer helped him, and they tried to get rid of the ghost. But two days later they were in their own funerals. I guess you can say that the ghost is still alive. Unless I am the ghost. Or should I say ghosts, there are a lot of us. I guess you can call us night seekers, but we don't just move at night.



Untitled

Hayven Romero

October 31, Halloween Night. The town of Phoenix, Arizona was always a nice place until one day a paleontologist disappeared outside of the city.

The day before it happened me and my friends JC, Cassidy, Jasmine, and Julian were going to visit my uncle Travis who lives outside Phoenix too and might know who did this. In a couple of hours, we finally make it to my uncle's house at 10 a.m. in the morning. We were lucky that he has a pool because it was 100 degrees outside so we stayed in the pool all day, well we didn't swim all day because we got hungry and went to In-N-Out Burger. When we got back, my uncle explained to us what he knows about the missing paleontologist. When he finished I heard stomping, loud stomping. I looked up and saw a ghost T-Rex staring at me with creepy glowing red eyes, then Jasmine said "RUN!" We all jumped out of our seats and ran to the car. I quickly started the car and drove off but the T-Rex wouldn't stop chasing us, I turned up the speed and sped off to In-N-Out Burger and ordered a 500-pound burger and drove to the Arizona Cardinal football field and put the burger in the center of the field with the help of the one and only Larry Fitzgerald. Suddenly the ghost T-Rex burst through the walls of the field picked up the burger and came after us again. I put the car speed up to 90 and sped off. I barely saw this van with wires coming out of it before we passed it. I pulled over the car and almost hit the van. We jumped out of the car and pulled on the wires and suddenly the T-Rex fell over and almost crushed us so we jumped in the van and looked at all the buttons and saw the paleontologist with her arms tied up with a cloth with a picture of a mad scientist on it. I quickly untied the cloth while Jasmine, Cassidy and JC were thinking about something. When I finished untying the knot in the cloth Jasmine, Cassidy, and JC said, "That scientist probably made the ghost T-Rex." "Probably," Julian said. "Then, where is he? I guess that's a mystery unsolved," I said. To be continued.

Unknown

Catlin Bonicelli

My heart was pumping harder than it ever had, my throat filling with blood, and I could feel my legs giving out. An owl screeched in the distance as the moon shed its misty glare on the forest. Out of instinct, I glanced back at what was chasing me. I thought it was a bear but it was far from that; it had glazed over eyes, long thick hair, a visible rib cage, and worst of all the fur surrounding its large mouth was matted with deep red. Its large and lean body was clearly built for chasing down prey. I was that prey.

I pumped my arms and legs faster and quicker, trying to run from the figure towering over me, its honey, furry hands outstretched to grasp me, and quite possibly kill me. As quickly as I could, I leapt over fallen trees and dodged brambles of twigs. I hurled myself behind one of the trees in my path, and the creature seemed to be stumped as to where I was.

I was holding my breath, barely even blinking to avoid making noise. My hair was full of knots and tangles, which were accompanied by a mass of thorns and dead leaves. Whatever was chasing me ran, flat-footed away. I waited about two minutes, which felt like two hours before sprinting out from behind the tree, and hopefully out of the forest. I assumed I'd have to run about two and a half miles before I was even out of the forest, into the suburbs of Washington. I could then hide in someone's house. I ran hard. I could hear the sound of crunching leaves behind me, so I assumed that meant the "unknown thing" was chasing me again.

As I neared the edge of the forest, my legs cramped and my throat burned. Honestly, I was surprised I had gotten that far. I ran out of the woods, rapidly searching for a house.

There it was, like shining heaven: 62, Burden Road. I hopped the fence gate and rang the doorbell with such force I was surprised it didn't break. Someone came trotting down the stairs, and opened the door. I ran inside, locked the door, and propped a chair against the door knob.

The lady introduced herself as Mrs. Waltham and that her husband was on a business trip. I explained what was chasing me. She looked shocked and almost excited. She lumbered up the stairs and returned with a pistol and a baseball bat (she gave me the bat) and she peered through her large bay window.

Suddenly, the glass shattered. The creature hopped into the house shoving Mrs. Waltham aside and lurching for me. With a scream and a bang the scene faded, slowly darkening.

I woke up panting, beads of sweat streaming down my forehead. I looked out of my window onto my street. It was all a dream...

Extra Info:

The "unknown" creature in this text was based off of a creature called a Wendigo which originated in Native American folklore, (Specifically Algonquin folklore) and is associated with starvation, cannibalism, and greed. The wendigo has been pictured in many forms but I chose my favorite for this passage: An animal with a very skinny and malnourished body, a deer like complexion, glazed over eyes, and of course, horns.



Headless Horseman

Angelo Cirullo

A few years back in a little town in Wyoming, they said, "They defeated the headless horseman," but did they?

One night Zach met up at Angelo's house to spend the night. They played board games and watched a movie. When they started to fall asleep they heard a strange laugh.

They jumped out of their sleeping bags. They all looked at each other and Zach said in a scared voice, "What was that?!" They thought it was nothing so they all went back to sleep.

A few hours later around 3 a.m., they heard it again. As they looked out the huge window they saw an odd man with no head riding a weird horse that was pitch black with neon orange eyes. That strange man was holding a flaming pumpkin that could talk.

They ran to Angelos' sleeping parents. When they told them they went to go check, but that strange man disappeared into thin air.

The next day they decided to go to the library to see if there were any books about the strange man. Zach found a book that was all about the town's mysteries. After Zach flipped through a couple of pages, they found the strange man in it. He was called the "Headless Horseman Defeated in 1978." Angelo told Zach, "If he was defeated in 1978, how is he back now?" Zach said, "I don't know."

That night they stayed up all night until they heard that weird laugh. Zach and Angelo ran downstairs to go talk to the Headless Horseman. They ran towards him, Zach said, "Why are you here?" The only thing Zach and Angelo can hear is the Headless Horseman heavily breathing. Then he finally answered and said in a deep voice, "I came for revenge." Then he took their souls and said, "You have to solve riddles to get them back." Then he disappeared into thin air again.

Their first riddle was to go somewhere that has water but not a lot of water. Zach and Angelo both said at the same time, "The pond!" When they arrived, there was a note in a bush. The note said "You solved the first riddle, your next riddle is somewhere that has a lot of animals." Zach said, "The zoo!" They ran to where the zoo was to find another note. This note said, "You found the second riddle, your last riddle is somewhere that has a lot of grass. They both thought until Angelo said, "There is only one place that has grass, which is the park!"

When they got there, there was the Headless Horseman with their souls in his hand. He said "You will have to fight to get them back." He made it fair and gave them pumpkin swords. When he did, he threw flaming pumpkins at them. He missed every shot, when he was out of pumpkins, they charged at him and stabbed him in the heart making his soul come out and fade away. His pumpkin that was on fire turned into a regular pumpkin, and his horse turned into a regular horse that had a white coat with blue eyes. Zach and Angelo didn't tell anybody about the Headless Horseman, but a month later the town police found out, and told the mayor of the city. They both got a medal of bravery.



The Toy Aisle

Natalie Montoya

October 29, 2007, it was a cold rainy day just a typical night before Halloween. My mom and my brother Jake and I just got out of the car and raced to the entrance of the big store, soaking wet and cold in the store, we were super weirded out when it seemed like no one was in the store and it was quiet. It felt like we were the only ones there except the clerk.

We ended up in the furniture aisle, I asked my mom if I could go to the toy aisle, she said “Yes, but stay near me. The store is about to close.” Of course I ran as fast as I could to see all the toys. There were bears, robots, dolls, and plenty more I could name. As I looked up at the toys, there was a flicker in the big store, then suddenly they went off! Then right there and then I saw something that would scar me for life. The only light in the store was a red light coming from the bears eyes. I saw dolls twitch as they came alive, I saw the robots turning off and on like a mad man. You may have thought run get out of there, but I didn’t move. I just stood there huddled in a ball with my knees tucked in tight to my chest. I could hear my heavy breathing. I just stood there without making a sound, scared, and alone, I heard the lights turn on, and it was silent for a second.

I heard my mom yell my name, “Oliva!” Tears ran down my face as I ran down to run into my mom’s arms. I held her tight. As my mom and brother escorted me out of the big tall store, I took one last look at the toy aisle as I walked out that night. I saw that the toys were back on the shelf like they were. I thought it was just my imagination or was it a spooky story I could tell for the rest of my life. I’m now 22 years old and that happened when I was 10 years old, and I still remember it like yesterday.



The Haunted Lighthouse

Maggie Stegelmeier

One spring night, I was walking along the Californian beach, feeling the sand squish in between the toes of my bare feet, and watching the pastel coral and citrus colored clouds float across the evening sky. After fifteen minutes of walking, I spied an old beat-up looking lighthouse. There was a patch of gray green boulders in front of the lighthouse. As I neared the boulders, I began to jump across them towards the lighthouse. As I drew nearer I realized that beat-up was an understatement. It looked like it would topple over any second. The wind suddenly picked up, whistling in my ears. I was unsure if I should go up. “It’ll be an adventure,” I thought. As I turned the doorknob, I was surprised to see it was open. Inside it had a damp musty smell and stone steps spiraling up to the top. The wooden rail was splintering and a dark wooden shade. As I climbed, my conscience was telling me to go back. “Shut up.” I told it. When I finally reached the top, there was a huge light coated with dust. As I blew some of it off, I spotted the words: LH Co. 1955. There were also windows surrounding me coated with thick grime. As I walked over to the side of the room, the wooden planks creaked and groaned. Then I noticed an old cedar wood trunk. When I came closer it started to rattle and squeak. I saw that it was the only thing not coated in dust. “Someone’s been up here,” I thought. Despite the ruckus, I cautiously opened the lid and a bunch of moths flew out! I jumped back and after they were gone, I peered in and saw that it was full of spiders the size of dinner plates and rats as big as twice the size they should’ve been! I shrieked and ran down the stairs two at a time. If there was something I was deathly afraid of it was rats and spiders! I sprinted along the beach all the way up the stairs back into the condo where my family was staying. I typed in the code and burst into the living room, my heart pounding wildly. After a while, I calmed down and finally went to sleep. The next day I was walking down the same beach and the lighthouse was gone! “But where did it go?” I thought.

Dun dun dunnnnn!!!

The Tourist

Jakson Hughes

One day my dad and I started on a trail for a hike. We saw other people walking along the path. There was this tourist in a backpack and fedora. The tourist went the other way. We continued on the trail. On the trail we saw some deer, birds, and rock formations. We went back to the start of the trail.

As we were walking back we saw the same tourist. Instead of seeing and hearing other people there was nobody in sight except for the tourist and my dad. In the parking lot everybody’s cars were still there but everybody was gone. That moment I had a weird feeling. I told my dad, “Everybody is missing.”

My dad, the way he is just said, “They all went in different directions.” We casually hopped into the car. As we drove off I saw the tourist fade into the distance. “Dad, I don’t trust that tourist,” I said suspiciously. “What does that guy have to do with it?” asked dad. “Well, that guy was the only one there and when we started our hike he was walking back to the parking lot.” “He probably went another direction and came back,” answered my dad. “No cars ever moved either,” I exclaimed not convinced. “Do you have any water?” asked my dad. “Yes,” I grabbed my water bottle and handed it to him. He took the lid off and drank the water. He gave me back the mostly empty water bottle.

We drove to Target to get a new razor. The drive back was nice. My dad’s amazing driving skills were showcased when he almost ran over an elderly man wearing a dark gray suit. We drove in the parking lot and found a great spot near the front next to a car with a white dog that was barking. Next to that car was a black hearse with vanity plates that read “Vacancy.”

We went inside and headed toward the back of the store. Once there, my dad grabbed a purple razor to shave his beard. We walked to check out and there wasn’t anyone there. I looked around and there wasn’t anyone besides us in the store except to my left was the tourist. I whispered to my dad, “The tourist is right there,” and nodded my head slightly in his direction.

And then the lights went out. My dad grabbed my hand and said, “I believe you now.” We darted toward the front door. We rushed out the door and ran to the car. The barking dog was gone. No one was in the parking lot. Total silence. We drove off.

At home, after parking the car we ran into the house and locked the door. We ran into my dad’s bedroom and turned on the TV. On the TV was static and a message that said, “All TV Networks are Down Due to Connection Lost.” We kept the set on just in case the message changed. It was 4:30 p.m. and my mom would be home from work any time. At 5 p.m. she was still not home.

We finally heard a news reporter’s voice from the TV. He reported that a Colorado tourist was killing people. We opened the door to go to the other room and there he was.



Trick or Treat

Brady Lewin



Louis and Bill are super excited about Halloween. They have been planning it since last year. This year will be the first year that Louis and Bill get to go out Trick or Treating alone. After months of planning they had the perfect costumes and had mapped out the neighborhood. They knew exactly which houses were giving out the best candy, and which ones were giving out veggie sticks, yuck. On Halloween Louis and Bill met at Bill's house to get their costumes on. Louis had spent weeks working on his costume, he was going to be a very, very scary Tax Collector. Bill on the other hand had decided to use his father's old military uniform and was going as a Navy SEAL. The boys were excited as they got ready. They talked about their strategy for the night, and made estimates about how much candy they would end up with. After eating a quick dinner, the boys said their goodbyes and headed out the door. At the end of the driveway they looked back and gave their parents a nervous but excited wave, they had been waiting for this night all year. The moon shone bright and the streets were alive with ghosts, goblins, zombies and princesses. Excitedly the boys rushed from house to house knocking on doors and ringing doorbells. "Trick or Treat", they would shout at the people who answered the doors. As the night grew darker, the temperature began to drop and the streets began to get busier and busier. The once fun costumes worn by kids their age and younger were suddenly scarier versions worn by even scarier high school kids. Prisoners, Vampires, and people who looked like they had just escaped a mental hospital now walked on the same streets. Louis and Bill were becoming nervous and decided to pick up their pace and try to put some distance between themselves and the much scarier, older trick-or-treaters. Louis and Bill had collected quite the collection of candy, in fact their plan had been nearly perfect, and they had only gotten Veggie Straws at two of their stops. "I wonder if we should head home now," said Bill, "my arm is getting heavy from carrying all this candy." Louis looked at Bill and shook his head, "NO WAY, we still have room in our bags and besides I heard this block gives out full sized candy bars!" Bill looked at Louis, he looked behind him at the gang of older kids, and then he looked down the full sized candy bar street. "Okay," he said, "but let's make this fast!"

Picking up speed, the two boys began down the street. First house, jackpot, full sized Snickers bar. Second house, you guessed it King Sized Twix! "This is awesome," screamed Bill. The boys had become so excited and wound up on sugar that they keep their quick pace and failed to notice the street lights up ahead had begun to flicker off and on. As they made their way further up the block it began to get darker and darker. Suddenly Louis stopped. "Hey, what happened to the street lights?" he asked. "I...I don't know," replied Bill nervously. Looking around, the boys decided that they would go to one more house before heading home. Quickly they approached the last house on the block. Knock, Knock, Knock. Slowly the door opened. "Trick or Treat," the boys said together. A sweet old lady answered the door and placed two bags of Veggie Straws into the boys' bags. Feeling defeated and a little angry, Louis turned and started down the driveway. Bill stood and looked at the Veggie Straws in his bag, and then back to the old lady. "Thank you," Bill said quietly. The old lady stood in her doorway with a glow from the TV behind her. Bill turned quickly on heels only to realize that Louis was gone. Surrounding him was at least 10 maybe even more teenagers. Devils, Werewolves, Killers and Zombie Brides looked down at him. Blood dripped from their mouths and oozed from wounds they had created. Suddenly they all began to laugh and cackle. Bill only was frozen in fear. He had to think and think fast. Where was Louis, how could he have left him here all alone. Was he okay, had the teenagers gotten to him first. Overcome with fear and a will to live, Bill turned back quickly towards the kind, old woman with the Veggie Straws and glowing TV. He was going to make a run for it. He knew he would be safe in her house. Quickly he turned and blindly started running the couple of steps it would take to make it inside of her house. BAM! There was a sudden cracking sound. Bill was overcome by bright lights and overwhelming pain. What in the world had just happened? Bill realized he was looking up now. Staring down at him was the little, old lady, a gang of scary looking teenagers, and Louis who was laughing uncontrollably. "What were you trying to do?" laughed Louis. "You just ran face first right into that little, old ladies door. Knocked yourself out I think." "I don't know," said Bill. I think I was trying to escape. Suddenly the hands of some very scary looking figures reached down to help Bill to his feet. Other scary figures were replacing his candy into his bag, as much of it had fallen out during his impact. "You took quite a spill there buddy," said a very realistic Zombie. "Are you going to make it home alright?" Nervously Bill laughed and replied, "Yeah, I think so." Heading back towards Bills house, the boys reflected on their adventures from the night. They laughed as they walked quickly back towards the house. When they arrived they quickly showed their parents all the candy they had gotten, and filled them in on what they were already planning for next year's Halloween.

Untitled

Jasiah Morales

One day, it was 3 a.m. in the morning and Jasiah was having a dream, but not a good one. He was dreaming about a terrifying zombie apocalypse that was happening. Then all of a sudden, Boom! He woke up frightened. "What's going on?" he wondered. Then when he looked out of his bedroom window, he knew it wasn't a dream anymore.

He was really scared and he didn't know what was happening. He ran downstairs to get his parents, but then he heard something, something outside. It was screaming! He went straight to his living room window, he saw a group of boys running on the street away from something that was chasing them, but Jasiah couldn't see what it was.

Then he started running toward his front door to his house. "Hurry! Come inside!" Jasiah yelled. Then one by one they all ran into his house. "Are you guys ok?" Jasiah asked. "Yeah we are all fine. Thank you," one boy said. "What is going on?" Jasiah asked. "There was an infection /disease that all started in a laboratory, but the scientist wasn't paying attention and when the gas got to him, he turned into..." "Into what?" The boy gulped and said, "A zombie."

Later that evening the three boys introduced themselves. Their names were Jace, Devonte, and Ellie. "What are we going to do now?" Jace asked. "I have to find my family," Jasiah said. After Jasiah said that, he searched his house for over 45 minutes. No sign of them. "Now what are we going to do?" Jasiah asked. "I know somewhere," Ellie said. "And where is that exactly, your majesty?" Devonte said in sarcasm. "You'll find out," Ellie stated.

Jasiah started packing his things and the other boys waited. When he was done packing Jace said, "Alright let's get started." They all started walking on the road and tried to be quiet while doing it. An hour had passed and they were all tired and exhausted. "When are we going to be there?" Jace asked. "We're almost there," Ellie stated. "Can you please tell us where you are taking us?" Jasiah asked. "I am taking us to a military base where there will be food and other stuff that we will need," Ellie said. A couple of minutes later, they were able to see the base, but then something bad happened. A car alarm went off and they were able to hear it from Jasiah's house. "Oh no!" Devonte exclaimed. Soon, when they looked behind them, they saw a herd of zombies that were chasing them. They all started running but Jasiah tripped over a rock and hurt his ankle. "Jasiah!!!" the three boys shouted. "It's too late," Devonte said. Then right whenever Jasiah was going to get bit. He woke up. "What was that?" Jasiah said. "That was the most craziest dream ever!" he exclaimed. Then later that day, he started playing Fortnite for 24 hours straight and ate over 12 bags of chips and four liters of Pepsi.



The Crazy Custodian

Tyler Thielemier

I never meant to get Benny trapped in a stall in the boys' bathroom at school, but you see, it wasn't my fault. In order for you to see the story from my point of view, we will have to jump back three and a half years.

It all started when I was in second grade in science class. At the time, we were doing what I thought was a really cool project involving dry ice. I guess that I got kind of over excited and had a little accident. I don't want to go into full detail but we did have to evacuate the classroom. Our custodian was a grumpy old man named Mr. Larson, and he wasn't very happy to clean up my mess. Now, even three years later, I can tell that he still isn't very fond of me. It was crazy that it even happened in the first place, but luckily the odds of something like that happening again are like seven trillion to one. But, taking into account what is about to happen, I might have made a miscalculation.

It was a nice week in October then, and everything is as it should be, until my fourth period in the library. I don't know the exact physics of how I knocked over every bookshelf in the room, but I certainly didn't think that a little game of wall ball against a shelf could have hurt (seriously, how can that possibly happen). I think that the world is out to get me. And to no one's surprise, it was Mr. Larson who had to clean it all up. Just from the way that he looked at me, I would have packed my bags and hightailed it out of town right then and there if I didn't have the world's longest detention. From what I could tell, I was the last person to leave the school.

I raced through the halls, eager to get home. I was just about to walk through the doorway, but instead of going through it, I ran right into the cold, hard, wood. I tried to open it but it wouldn't budge, it was locked. I tried to think of how this could have happened when a sneering face passed through my mind. It was Larson. That evil custodian trapped me inside the building to get back at me (couldn't really blame the guy). He was kind of a bomb after the dry ice thing, but now, with the library, I think that I just set him off. Just as I was about to try to find another way out, I heard the loudest scream that I think the human vocal cords could possibly make. Practically drowning in pure terror, I ran to the nearest classroom and closed the door behind me. I waited and waited. Minutes went by and the screaming didn't stop. I knew that I wasn't going to get out of this by hiding in a corner, so I gathered all of the courage I could, and went towards the horrid noise.

It was pretty easy to find the source. It was coming from a stall in the boys' bathroom. I prepared myself for whatever was in there. Then, I opened the door to find Benny, a total germaphobe who wouldn't be in a public bathroom in the first place if he hadn't been put there forcefully (most likely by Mr. Larson). Benny was probably so scared to touch the germ-covered stall door that he wouldn't come out and started screaming.

It took a while, but we got everything figured out. It turns out that Mr. Larson made it look like I trapped Benny in the stall. He got me in quite a bit of trouble. At least my crazy custodian got his revenge and is done with me...I hope.



Curiosity Killed the Kat

Katie Casey

I was sitting on the couch in my living room, when my parents were getting ready to go to my uncle's house. "We'll be back tomorrow Kat, if there is an emergency call us, and Gabby is the only person who is allowed to come over," my parents said. Gabby is my best friend, and she wanted to have a sleepover tonight. I called Gabby and she came over. We ordered a pizza and started watching TV. We were sitting on the couch when I heard a noise coming from the basement. "What is that?" Gabby asked me. "I don't know." "Let's go see what it is," Gabby said. "No, we should stay up here and just be alert," I told her. "Oh come on Kat, it's probably nothing." She walked to the basement door and put her ear to it. "It sounds like crying," Gabby told me. "You're scaring me, get away from there," I said. "Fine." She came over and sat next to me. The crying began to get louder. "I'm going to the bathroom," Gabby said, "Okay."

As Gabby left I grew more curious about what was making the sound in the basement. I knew I shouldn't have gone to see what it was, but I did anyway. I moved my hand shakingly to the door handle and opened it. I saw the stairs leading down to the dark room. I couldn't see anything and the light switch was down the stairs. I thought to myself sarcastically, "Of course I should just go down there into the darkness, where I heard the creepy crying. Maybe while I'm down there, I can pour myself a glass of water and just make myself right at home. Wait...this is my home." I walked down there and flipped the light switch on. The basement smelled like dirty laundry and it looked like someone had been living there. I saw a bunch of pillows in the corner with a grey blanket, it looked like a bed. Suddenly I heard the door upstairs slam shut and I turned around to look at what had closed the door. Then I heard someone crying in the far corner of the basement. I turned around with my eyes shut tight. Then I opened my eyes slightly and saw a human figure slumped over with a grey blanket covering it, the same grey blanket that was in the corner. It was crying. I ran up the stairs and into the living room. My friend was there laughing. "What's so funny?" I asked her. "You got so scared when I slammed the door." "That was you?" "Yep, and you should have seen your face," she said. "Wait, did you invite someone else over and tell them to go down there and scare me?" I asked. "No." "Oh, well there was something down there," I told her. Gabby walked down to the basement and then back up. "I didn't see anything down there," she said. We went to bed and decided to stop talking about it.

After that I continued to hear the same crying coming from the basement. I also began to have nightmares about what I saw down there. We decided to move one day and as we left I looked back at the windows of my house and saw someone looking back at me. A grey blanket covered them and they were smiling but tears were falling down their face. They just kept staring at me and when I saw their face I knew that they weren't human, they gave off a demonic vibe. That was the last time I saw my old house before it was torn down. I started to hear the crying again, in my new house's basement. I don't feel very safe in my house anymore and the nightmares have come back. I think that whatever is crying, is trying to warn me of something. Wish me luck...-Kat.



Child Sitting

Isabella Montalvo



Jessica was sitting in her room, doing her homework, when her cell phone rang. “Hello?” she asked. “Hi, Jessica, it’s Ms. Candor,” the caller said. “Hi, Ms. Candor. How are you?”

“I’m fine, thanks,” Ms. Candor said. “I know it’s kind of the last minute, but I’m going out with some friends tonight. Do you mind watching Macy, around eight? I might not be back until really late.”

“No problem. But.....do you mind if my brother comes, too?” Jessica asked. She had just watched a scary movie with her friends and was still shook up about it.

“That’s fine. I’ll see you at eight,” Jessica hung up and went back to her homework. At eight, she and her brother, Jonah walked over to the Candor house a few blocks away. “Thanks for coming, you two. I won’t be back till late, and you already know Macy’s bedtime is nine thirty. I’ll see you later,” Ms. Candor said as she left the house.

Walking into the living room, Jessica saw that Macy Candor was sitting on the couch, watching a kid’s TV show, with a toy phone sitting next to her. Jessica could see that it made sounds and lit up.

“Hi Macy,” Jonah said. He sat down next to the little girl. Jessica sat next to him and said hi also. “Hi, Jonah. Hi, Jessica,” Macy replied. She was a doll-like eight-year-old girl, with little blonde curls, big blue eyes, and rosy cheeks. She was wearing a white shirt and a pink skirt with white shoes.

“What do you want to do?” Jessica asked.

“Watch TV,” Macy replied.

That surprised Jessica. Macy was always the type of girl who wanted to play some game, like Candy Land or Hide-And-Seek. Suddenly, Macy’s toy phone rang. Jessica jumped, thinking, “How can a toy phone ring on its own?” But she reasoned that Macy must have pressed a button and made it ring.

“Hello?” Macy said, holding the phone up to her ear. She held the phone there for a while, talking to herself, while Jessica and her brother just glanced at each other.

Eventually, Macy put the phone back and went back to watching TV. Jessica, before she knew what she was doing, asked, “Who was that?”

“My friend,” Macy said simply. “What’s her name?” “His name is Luc. L-U-C.”

That’s a weird way to spell it, Jessica thought. But what she didn’t get was why Macy had told her how it was spelled. She didn’t think there was any Luke, or Luc, at all. He was probably her imaginary friend or something.

“Jessica, look,” Jonah said, pointing to the TV.

She hadn’t been paying much attention to the TV show Macy was watching. Now she looked, and saw that Macy was watching the Sci-Fi channel. Jessica listened for a second, she didn’t need to listen very long until she figured out what the show was about. It was a movie about a guy who was running around, knocking people out and collecting their hair in a box. When he was done, he went downstairs, threw the box into the fireplace, and then went back outside. He went back to the street he had been on, except now he walked, slowly. The people he had knocked out had woken up, and were running around, screaming and covered in flames. It didn’t take a genius to figure out that it was because the man had thrown the box into the fire.

“Macy, doesn’t your mom tell you not to watch scary movies?” Jonah asked.

“It’s not scary,” Macy replied. “Besides, Luc says I don’t have to listen to Mommy anymore.”

Jessica looked at her brother. “Maybe you shouldn’t listen to Luc. He doesn’t sound like a very imaginary friend, Jessica said. “He’s not imaginary,” Macy said, looking annoyed, “And I don’t have to listen to you either!”

“Macy don’t say things like that,” Jonah said.

“Don’t tell me what to do!” Macy shouted. She got up with her toy phone and sat down in the armchair to the side.

At the same time, “Who turned off the TV?” Jonah asked. “Luc did,” she replied. “Um.... you know Luc isn’t real, right?” Jonah said. Macy’s phone rang again. She picked it up, and soon she handed it to Jonah. “Luc wants to talk to you,” she said. Jonah looked confused but took the phone. “Hello?” he asked, playing along. Suddenly, Jonah’s eyes widened, and he threw the phone on the ground. “What’s wrong, Jonah?” Jessica asked. But Jonah didn’t say a word. He never said a word again.

The Add Account of Flight XXXX

Jade Moore

“Ladies and gentlemen, the Captain has turned on the Fasten Seat Belt sign. If you haven’t already done so, please stow your carry-on luggage underneath the seat in front of you or in an overhead bin. Please take your seat and fasten your seat belt. And make sure your seat back and folding trays are in their full upright position.” This is what flight attendants are “programmed” to say. Well ever wonder what happens if you don’t turn your phone on airplane mode or don’t put your tray tables up? This is the odd account of flight xxxx. I cannot tell you what flight this was, the city above which this took place, the time for which it happened, but what I can tell you is the weather, all in the interest of your protection and mine. And the names of these people are totally fictitious, for protecting their identities, yours and mine.

“...and if you have any questions or concerns, don’t hesitate to ask me or another flight attendant for anything you need.” “Are you ready?” Grace looked over at Alexa and nodded in comfort. “Yes, I’ll be fine,” Grace said in a not-so-reassuring tone. “Okay,” Alexa shrugged.

Their flight’s destination was xxxxxx. For spring break, this was their trip. Grace popped an Advil and continued reading “How and Why Pilots Die.” “Hello passengers, this is your captain speaking. The weather in xxxx is 74°F and sunny. The local time here is xxxxx. I hope you all enjoyed your flight and thank you for flying with xxxx.”

Ah, finally Grace thought as the plane smoothly coasted on the pavement like a surfboard to a wave. They ordered an Uber as they walked out of their terminal because as soon as they saw the row of taxis lined up compared to the amount of people waiting to leave, they knew they would have been there for hours. The Uber Driver seemed friendly enough, although he didn’t talk to them, only to the people they had shared the Uber with for reasons of cost and saving. As their rented Town car cruised downtown, past a drycleaner, Uno Pizza, a few Starbucks, and a curiously unclean looking-diner, they arrived at their temporary home for the week.

“Oh well, hello ladies. You to seem to be getting in xxxx than expected,” a tall man with brown hair and green eyes said as they shuffled through the double doors. The hotel took the name The Guest House. It was a quaint building with a grand fireplace, books on the coffee table, a small library with an assortment of different books, different hats and scarves in the window, as the hotel doubled as a chic boutique. “Your room will be xxx,” he handed Grace the key with the room number “and your room,” he pointed to Alexa and repeated the same action, only this time slightly to the left of his side. “And if you need anything and I mean anything, don’t hesitate to call XXX-XXX-XXXX. Have a delightful stay and thank you for choosing The Guest House on your trip to Xxxx, xxxx.” “He seemed nice,” regarded Alexa. And they proceeded up the elevator to the x floor to begin their trip.

You see I could write down all of the things they did like go to see a Cub’s game at Wrigley Field or see the John Hancock building or look at the city from hundreds of feet up in the air, or go to millennium park, but my editor is probably going to take this piece out for your safety, and mine. But there is a small chance that she went got interrupted by a phone call from her previous employer, offering her job back and she was so excited that she skipped that part of the manuscript. Probably not, but always a possibility. Anyway, back to the story. As they finished up their hotdog with mustard, because you never put ketchup on a hotdog, the girls slowly trudged to the airport, back to the boring hometown of xxxx. They were looking for their returning flight number and on the news a segment on plane crashes was being displayed. “Breaking news, flight xxx has been recovered in the Xxxx ocean from seven days ago.” Alexa dropped her bags. Flight xxx. That was their flight, from one week ago. Then she began to put it together like pieces of a puzzle or leaves falling from a tree. That’s why they couldn’t get a cab and had to share one. That’s why no one seemed to be able to give them directions. That’s why they couldn’t find their departing flight. And this, my friends, is the odd account of flight xxx.



The Mysterious Manor

Isaiah Norwood

It is November 22, 1981, I was driving up a mountain going to my favorite camping site listening to my favorite song then suddenly my car breaks down. I tried to call for help several times with nothing but static on the other end. Nothing is working not my cell phone, satellite phone, or screaming for help nothing I had was working any more. Lightning strikes in the distance, then out of the corner of my eye I see something resembling a manor. I then turn to see that my eyes aren't playing tricks on me. I thought "hmm I don't remember seeing that the last time I was here." Suddenly I started towards the manor almost against my own will. Within a few minutes there I was staring at this huge door. I grab the door knocker and knock three times "BOOM... BOOM... BOOM..." An older man resembling a butler answers the door, surprisingly quick, and with hope I then ask him if I could stay until the rain passes over. To my surprise he says yes.

After he let me in he showed me to the basement, which was three floors down. It was odd going down there. The first subfloor had chinchillas on it, I'd say about 50 of them, then the next floor had about 30 red pandas, and the final floor leading to the basement had around 10 different tortoises. Once we finally got to the basement, the floor was covered in hay and there was a single door with a wooden latch keeping it closed. Then he told me several times on the way to the guest room to NEVER open the basement door no matter what I hear.

Sometime later I tried to head to bed, but there were these horrible snarling and scratching noises. I wanted to heed my warning. I tried so hard. In the end I went to the basement to see what the sound was. Sure enough it was coming from behind that door. I had to know what was making that sound. I built up my courage and slowly lifted the latch. I then stood there waiting and waiting. Suddenly a huge beast charges through the door. My heart is pounding and I am sprinting, past the tortoises, past the red pandas, past all the chinchillas, and out the door into the woods. It's right behind me I can feel its hot breath on the back of my neck. I accidentally trip... it is towering over me. Then all it did was bend down tap me on the shoulder and say, "Tag you're it." It trotted off and was never seen again.



Abyss

Taylor Filler

It was a regular New York City night in my mind: car horns honking and lights flashing. My sister, Kara, and I had just moved to Long Island, New York. Manhattan wasn't farther than a train ride, away from the island, and Kara and I had always wanted to visit the big city. When we were younger, mom didn't want us roaming the streets of New York alone, so we decided to go with our favorite cousins. They were older teenagers when we went on this trip. We left home in the dark, but when we got off the train in the city, the sun was just starting to rise. We visited Rockefeller Center, saw the Empire State Building, and toured Central Park. After an exhausting day, the time had come to head home. Everything changed the moment we stepped into Grand Central Station. Now we wondered if we would even get home. Our train had just pulled up. We were heading to the opening doors when a loud crack shook the platform. "Um, what ... what was that?" asked Kara, with a frightened expression. She looked around frantically. I was about five years older than she was, so I was startled, but not as petrified as Kara sounded.

"I...don't know," I answered honestly. I put on a brave face, but my fear was intensifying. The lights flickered and then went out. Suddenly, it was pitch black.

The entirety of New York City, normally filled with flashing screens and bright lights, was cloaked in darkness. The only visible light was that of people's cell phones. I could hear screams coming from the stairwell. I left my family

alone in the darkness and ran up the stairs to see what was happening. I stepped out on to the street and shivered from a sudden blast of cold air. I had only walked a few feet when I noticed people stopped in their tracks, seemingly as statues. As I watched, their bodies disintegrated, leaving behind ghostly blue figures with beady red eyes and razor sharp teeth.

Panicking, I remembered my family back in the subway. I stumbled back down the steps, calling their names.

When I got to the station, I heard screams of terror. I could pick out Kara shouting my name.

"Over here!" yelled my cousin Aster from the bathroom. I found my family hiding inside.

I sobbed into Kara's shoulder as I squeezed her in a hug.

"Thanks, but those are what you should be worried about!" Ian, my other cousin said. He pointed toward the holographic-looking figures as they chased people, absorbing them into the darkness. As they came closer, we screamed and ran.

I grabbed Kara's arm and yanked her forward. One managed to wrap its arm around me. I struggled against its grasp.

"Kara, go find Aster and Ian; run as fast as you can." I hugged her as she ran. I tried to fight it off, but every move I made was no use against its strength. It cackled. I screamed and turned away from it.

"What do you want?" I sounded whiny and scared, squeezing my eyes shut.

It cackled once more, "You can't escape your nightmares." It growled inside my head.

"What does that mean?!" I clenched my teeth in fear as the figure disintegrated, releasing me from its embrace.

I was jolted by another deafening crack and lost all sense of perception.

I wasn't with Kara. There were no figures. No sound. No people. There was... nothing. Suddenly, I was aware of myself, but unaware of where myself was in space or time. I felt nothing around me, but I still felt. It's hard to explain what that feeling was. I can imagine this would be what a black hole is like. An endless abyss of inescapable nothingness.

Then I was back.

A searing light pierced the darkness and I suddenly felt everything again. Distant sounds soon became clear voices of panic and concern. I opened my eyes to see Kara staring worriedly back at me.

"Where am I? W-what happened? Are you okay? Where are they?" I asked frantically and confused.

"You're at the hospital. You had a heart attack in your sleep. What black hole? Who are they?" Kara said, with wide eyes.

A doctor barged in. "The medicine we had to give you was some pretty strong stuff. You're a medical miracle! You must have perished in your fantasy, and your mind may have... confused it with reality." He gave me a smile of relief. Instead of being comforting, though, his smile made my stomach churn. It seemed...porcelain, almost. "It's... hard to explain right now." He scratched the back of his neck. "You were redlining for five minutes. We thought you were gone, but here you are!" He thought for a moment. I'm going to have to run some tests on you. This is a unique circumstance, and we could learn from it," explained the doctor.

He gave me a mysterious, threatening look, and suddenly something came to me. This wasn't a heart attack. He caused it. Everything came back to me. I've been here for more than one day. This has happened before... so, so much more. So much pain. I remembered. For once, I remembered. I've been a part of the Abyss Experiments. I'm in an infinite cycle, dying, living, dying, living... and each time, I'm killed by my own mind. And it's all their fault. They did this to me. I won't let them get away with this. I...I can't. I got up from my hospital bed when the coast was clear and rushed to the nearest exit. The last thing I remember was being at the hospital's exit when someone caught me. I tried screaming, but to no avail. He gave me an injection ...and ...and...

I won't forget this time.

I won't forget.

I won't forget.

Then I was back.



Untitled

Aiden Moss

BOO!

I stood on my balcony gazing out at the city lights, of the great New York, cool breeze hitting my face. When I heard a knock at my door, assumingly the new client who had called me roughly an hour ago. I left my balcony and the lights that ever so captivated me to let my new client in. I opened the door and some broad, dressed in a way that you only ever see or read about in magazines, who was definitely not the man I talked to on the phone, walked in. "Have a seat ma'am." I said whilst pulling out the chair across from the one at my desk. She calmly asked, "You are Mr. Parker, right?" "That's what the plaque says, Johnny Parker, private eye. How may I be of service ma'am?" "Well Mr. Parker I need you to find my son, He went missing a couple of weeks ago." "Alright mam what's your son's name?" "His name is Dwane," tears start to well in her eyes as she tries to mutter out her son's name. "Lewis." "Ma'am I can see that this is hard for you, but I'm going to need you to tell me more about your son." She sniffles while she says, "Ooo...okay." "So ma'am, when was the last time you saw or came into contact with your son?" "The last time." The woman began to break down into tears again. "Ma'am I need you to be strong, okay?" "Okay." She blew her nose into a handkerchief she pulled from the jetted pocket of her jacket, then continued on. "The last time I saw my son was on Wednesday." "Please ma'am date and time." "Okay, and if you could please call me Ms. Lewis." "Of course, ma'am... I mean Ms. Lewis," I said in a calm but flustered voice. "Thank you," she said in a calm but slightly snotty tone, an obvious sign of how things were going to be if she was planning on going with me to investigate, which these rich types all ways want to. "Continue please," I said in an annoyed and also slightly tired tone. "Fine, so the last time I saw Dwane was on November 6, do you need the year too, because everyone knows 1940." "Please describe the events of the day in full detail." "Of course, Mr. Parker." "So, it started like this. I woke up had my coffee, then I woke up Dwane, he got ready for school then we left our house and I drove him to school with nothing interesting happening. Then I dropped him off, when I dropped him off he said the last thing he would say to me which he had said nearly every day, but it means so much to me now." "Which was?" "I love you mom." She totally breaks down bawling her eyes out. "So, the last time you saw Dwane was at his old school?" "Yes, weren't you listening!?" She practically yells. "Well why don't we just go ahead and visit his school?" "Okay, sounds like a smart idea." "Before we go though I'm going to need you to fill out a couple of forms then you and I can be on our way." "Okay." After about 15 minutes of filling out forms and a 10 minute drive to Dwane's school we finally arrived at the school.

We walked in and go to meet the principal. We asked him about Dwane, he says he doesn't know him personally, but that we can go see his locker. When we get there, he opens it with his master key, what we find is the most horrifying thing imaginable. A blue faced corpse, Dwane's, stuffed inside the locker.

Don't Touch Me

Jillian Pratt

Friday, October 13, 2004

I was in my college dorm with all my roommates when it happened. Ally told me, "Can you describe to me what happened?" I asked. "Look," she responded with a crack in her voice. She rolled up her checked sleeve and showed me something truly horrifying. On her arm where the words Don't Touch Me. It was engraved in her arm deeper than the Atlantic Sea. "Can you tell me what did this to you?" I asked her as she withdrew her engraved arm and answered me, "The doll. The doll she repeated. "Okay," I answered, "Okay, what doll?" She was as quiet as a mouse and did not speak. Her mom opened the door and Ally jumped out of her chair and skirted to her mom. "The doll!" she screamed, "The doll!" We finally got her settled down enough to get her to the hospital and we had to go home until the next day.

Saturday, October 14, 2004

I was on my way down to our Forensic Scientist when my senior field agent hollered that he had some important news. "We finally got her to talk," he started. "She described the doll to us." "Well, what did it look like?" I questioned this. Josh said as he showed me a picture of a small porcelain doll with black stringy hair, a red checkered dress; long white socks, white dress shoes, and a perfect smile. "She said is jumped up on her." Josh reported. "Take Kate back to the scene and see if you can find the doll then give it to Ziva for inspection. And have Florance do research Ally's dorm room." I ordered and walked into Ziva's lab. "What do you have for me Ziva?" I asked as I placed her Caf-Pow on the table. "Well," she started, "I swept the carpet for blood stains and only found Ally's, but do you know what was interesting?" "I was hoping you would tell me." "Ally's blood was only in that certain area like it was dripped out of a tube." "I'll ask Florance on that. Good Job Ziva." "Well Boss, Ally's report said that there was blood all over the carpet," Florence reported. "Well I think I know why," Josh hollered across the office. "This better be good," I told him as Kate reached her desk and she started, "We...we found the missing blood splatters!" Josh interrupted, "It was in the floor boards under the carpet," Kate said utterly annoyed, but Josh. Ziva screamed as she ran towards Florence. "The doll is gone!" "What? I just gave that doll to you it can't be missing," Kate stuttered. "I saw it. It moved from on my desk to in the fridge." Ziva stammered "It went for my knife collection!" Where is it now?" I asked "I locked it in the safe" Ziva told me. "Florance can you go and get the doll and bring I up here please I want to have a better look." The director said from above. "Yes, director," Florance said as he hurried off to the safe. In the conference room we had Zoe DiNozzo and Jenny Miler, Ally's roommates. "We are glade you made it." the Director started, "As you know, there has been a problem in your dorm room" "Is Ally ok." Miss Miller asked frightened. "Yes, we just have some questions to ask you." the Director continued, "Zoe you were at your mom's house when this happened correct."

"Yes," "Jenny, where were you?" "I was across the hall, in Leesha's apartment." "So, you're telling me no one was in the room with Ally?" "Yes sir." That was not a pretty site. Their alibis all checked out and the doll was locked in the safe for safe keeping.

Monday, October 16, 2004

I woke up to the rudest thing in the world. My cellphone was ringing, and I knew exactly who it was. It was Josh. Every morning he goes to work early and calls me that he is waiting to tell me something important. I picked it up and all I heard was extremely loud screaming. "Josh" I yelled into my phone, "What is wrong?" "It's gone boss." He answered, "What is gone?" I questioned, "The doll!" he hollered. I rushed to work to figure out what was up. The Janitor was lying on the ground screaming. On his arm where the words "Don't Touch Me." We got an ambulance and rushed him to the hospital. It was an eight-hour search for the doll We asked the Janitor if he touched the doll? "No," he answered, "It was 11:35 p.m. and it was out of the safe I went to put it back and it attacked me." "This story is similar to Ally's," Florance whispered. We decided it was no longer safe for us to have the doll. We found it by the Caf-Pow dispenser in Ziva's lab. We put it into an evidence bag and took it to the junk yard and burned it. As it sizzled in the fire, we were all relieved.

Tuesday, October 31, 2004

No one talked about the doll since the 16. We had no Halloween decorations up and no one was celebrating. We had another case and there was no time for child's play. What we didn't know is the doll was not gone. In fact it is still lurking around today. And the Army Corps of Engineers has never been the same since.

If you're reading this story it is too late. The doll knows who you are and wants revenge. I hope that you sleep with one eye open. She is listening, always. You have no chance of survival

Sincerely, The Porcelain Doll



It's Time

Sadie Ritchie

What how would you act if death came knocking at your door? A lot of people can't answer that question. But... one girl can. Her name is Sadie, a thirteen year old who lives in Pueblo, Colorado. Sadie has lived there for basically her whole life with her step-mother, Deborah, and her biological father, Scott, as well as a beautiful German Shepherd who was her mother's service dog. Deborah had served in the Navy for at least four years, serving as a medic with the CB's in Iraq. She was a different person when she had come back than when she had left. A lot of things happened with her experience in that place, she was sensitive to loud sounds, always having nightmares of her brothers and sisters that fought with her at war. So to sum it up, Deborah had PTSD. Now Sadie's dad, Scott, had also served. But instead of being in the Navy like Deb, he was in the Army as a sniper for two years. Her dad didn't come back with bad PTSD like Deb. but that didn't mean he didn't have the same flashbacks like Deb did.

But Sadie however, since she wasn't in any wars or anything, she didn't have PTSD or bad visions. But she did suffer from depression and anxiety. The reason being, she was passed around from home to home her whole life. She felt like nobody loved her...but her stepmother said, "I promise you, this will be your permanent home until you are old enough to get your own place. I know how hard it is to be passed around. So don't think you are ever alone. Your father and I love you. I know your dad doesn't show it as well as you want him to. But he really loves you. Because you are his daughter." you see...Sadie's Dad, used to spend all sorts of time with her, even with herself moving from house to house. When Sadie lived with her Grandpa, her dad would come over on the weekends and they would always go to a little creek close by their house. Each time they would walk in the water, the trees, until they reached a deep pool of water. And in the pool of water was all sorts of things. From old bicycles to TVs. But then... something changed in her dad's heart... he was now more focused on his video games then really anything else. Deb noticed it and it was starting to make her mad.

It was already Halloween for the Ritchie's (last name) . Now other kids right now would be at school. But Sadie was at home on her computer doing online classes. Her anxiety was too much since if she went to school around people she didn't know, she would have a panic attack. So her mom insisted on her doing homeschool. But, at the very moment Sadie was finishing her last sentence for the scary story she had to write for a contest against all the other homeschoolers. Once she was done, she turned it into her homeroom teacher with an email.

She then logged out of the computer and shut it. She got up out of her chair that was for her desk she used when she was "at school." She looked down at her stomach as it grumbled in hunger. "Hey mom! Can I fix me something to eat please!? I'm hungry!" she yelled across the two story house. Her parent's room was the other side of the building so she had to yell since she was too lazy to get up and walk to their room to just ask one simple question. But she did have a reply, "Yeah! There are some leftovers in the fridge from last nights pot roast if you want to warm that up. But just remember to save some for dad so he can have some when he goes to work tomorrow okay?!" said the echoing voice from the other side of the house. Sadie didn't say anything in return and instead ran right into the kitchen to grab a large plastic container filled with pot roast that she favored so much. She got a bowl out from the kitchen cabinets and set it gently on the stove top. She also got a spoon from the drawers that held all of the utensils in them. After a few minutes of preparing her meal into the bowl she placed it in the microwave for at least two and a half minutes. While waiting she looked out the window that was over the sink.

She expected to see the back yard, the trees, the grass...but what she saw was a black figure in the back behind a tree. She couldn't really make out what it was or who it was. But what she did notice, was that it was wearing a black cloak and it was taller than an average man. She looked over at the microwave that had beeped. But she looked right back outside. But the figure was gone.



Murky Water

Jazmine Manzanares Romero



There was a young boy named Joshua who loved to swim. In fact he loved swimming so much, he wished to become a fish so he would never have to worry about getting out of the water. But as some would say "Be careful what you wish for." Joshua would go to the nearby river to practice his swimming skills every morning. He would swim from dawn 'till dusk and never get tired.

In the evening after a long, tiring day, Joshua decided to swim. While he was swimming, he felt something biting the side of his leg. It was an unusual bite, because he didn't feel any pain - only discomfort. Thinking maybe it was just a leech or maybe a small fish.

As he went home he started to feel weird, thinking nothing of it. Later he passed out while he was eating. Strangely enough, he woke up near the river. As he looked around he found a fish skull bone, carved in it the words "The curse of the murky river monster has been passed on to you as you are the most innocent soul in the River Valley." confused he was unsure if he was dreaming or wide awake.

A tidal wave of questions stormed through his head, but the thing that bothered him the most was how was he going to live from now on. Then he looked into the clear river waters and screamed with horror as he saw himself covered in seaweed-green scales, fins instead of limbs and a horrible monster face with fish lips and eyes as dark as night. The clear waters turned murky as can be.

Though he fell into a complete shock, he managed to think rationally and dived into the river and began to swim in the direction of the nearby village. Though he fell into a complete shock, the overwhelming urge to eat something rather unusual occupied his mind as well as his instincts. That thing was indeed, human flesh.

He dove into the river and swam towards the nearby village seeking to quench his overwhelming hunger desire. The local fishermen had been sitting in their boats for hours in order to make their living. Everything was going well except for the 10 foot man - eating monster that was coming exactly their way (Joshua).

A fisherman was looking at his float as it started to wobble. Then suddenly it sank, pulling the fisherman along with it. Only a few bubbles rose from the water as the other fishermen watched in horror. Amazed at what had just happened they could not find any rational explanation. There couldn't have been a shark in freshwater. It's just not possible... Waiting anxiously in fear, suddenly something unseen, jumped high above water level for all eyes to see.

The grotesque creature was like nothing they had seen before. It's evil eyes and green scales made the fishermen run in panic - but that was exactly what it had hoped. Soon began a massacre - the clear waters, turned red, murky and human remains floated on the top of the water. The boats were sunk to the bottom and nothing was left of the fishermen.

It didn't last long until the village's population realized what had happened. Eventually they were forced to pay tribute to the river monster if they wanted to use it for vital needs. Thing is, their forceful contribution was of no materialistic value. It was human life. Day after day, month after month, the years passed. The village became deserted and the monster was in need of flesh but was also stricken in years. He had no choice but to move to another village and find a pure soul to continue the curse.

One day, a small boy decided to go for a walk around the coastline of the nearby river next to his village. Extra-ordinary circumstances led to him getting bitten and reading a skull bone, with the saying "The curse of the MURKY river monster has been passed on to you as you are the most innocent soul in the River Valley" carved into it.

And what happened to our river monster you may ask? With its last breath it pulled itself ashore and lay there looking at the sun. "The world is a rotten place and not one pure should will be left uncorrupted!" - Joshua said. Then he lay still on the rough sand. Days later some people found the rotten remains of an innocent young boy laying by the river... at least we can say Joshua got what he wished for. Or did he?

The Birch

Nathan Morris



It was a normal day in Oregon the weather was unbearably hot and people were minding their business. The air was hot and stung at the nose; everything seemed to be void of water. But most didn't realize that a dark presence is right above their head. A young boy by the name of Edward is walking along a dirt road near some woods on his way home from school when he hears a rustle. At first he thinks it's just a deer so he stops and waits to see if it will cross his path.

What he gets instead is a jack-in-the box on wheels. As the toy winds up and the music starts to play Edward can't help but feel like something bad will happen soon but is fascinated by the toy. When the box's music stops and the jack-in-the box springs out he lets out a little giggle. It seems normal at first glance and Edward relaxes thinking that it is only a prank from some friends in the woods. "Whoever you are, come out of there, this isn't funny!" he still can't shake the uneasy feeling laying in his gut. When he feels something slithering up his leg like a snake climbing a tree he quickly looks down and a root from a tree is wrapping him by his leg.

A quick and loud scream scares the neighborhood dogs and a few who were outside at the time. Beatrice is of the few people who heard this scream and decides to chase after the sound recognizing the voice as Edward's. "EDWARD WHERE ARE YOU!" Beatrice screams as she runs through the forest. She can't help but hear a different set of feet running with her not to far away. This brings her to an immediate stop to look for the person or thing the steps were coming from. As she looked she didn't see or hear anything anymore. As she looked around the trail she could see clear signs of someone struggling against something.

Unsure if someone or something would come back she hides herself in some bushes and waits. As minutes turned to hours she began to hear faint steps and rustles "Edward?" no response so she buries herself in foliage to better conceal herself. As the rustles get closer she can see nearby leafs start to dance around on the trail rearranging without any sort of interference to cover the struggles trail but as the rustling got closer Beatrice could tell this isn't human.

When the beast had finally come out of the woods and on to the trail Beatrice couldn't believe what she was seeing it looked to be a birch tree with humanoid features with the top of the head which looked like tree canopies. An accidental shift of the body sent the beast into a alert state a loud hiss that no human or animal could create echoed through the woods and the monster started to make a clicking noise almost as if it were using echolocation. As it became more and more suspicious of the noise the beast quickly picked up the toy it had used and slide away almost as if to levitate on a wave of branches and roots making sure to cover all traces of it being there.

After Beatrice found it safe to leave her hiding spot she ran all the way home to tell everyone about what she will remember as "The Birch" when she returns she is covered in bruises and scrapes and tells everyone willing to listen what she saw. Naturally no one believed her so she vowed to capture it and bring it back to town when she got home she grabbed a fire axe and a flashlight and ventured back to the woods she marked all of her turns with a quick chop to a tree but every time she marked one she heard a distant screech. After walking a few miles into the woods Beatrice started to smell something rotting... something dead. As she slowly traveled toward the stench she found the mangled and torn remains of something. When she saw and smelled the rotting corpse already maggot infested she felt sick to her stomach and gasps.

She could barely make out if the remains were even human but when she found a piece of Edwards shirt on a piece of meat. After walking another mile she could hear the wailing of The Birch and knew that this would be her chance to capture it. As she charges toward the sound screaming with her axe ready she finds nothing but a clearing surrounded by birch trees. Then she hears something she hoped to never hear. The jingle of a jack in the box played as the toy rolled out of the thick woods. , soon after there were multiple versions of the toy appearing out of the woods all withering down to shape into saplings of birch trees.

Back in town someone heard a scream and looked at the forest only to disregard what they had heard as some kids playing in the nearby park. When Beatrice woke up she felt something warm running down her face and arm. When she regained her vision she found she was bleeding from multiple parts of her body and was being held down by roots in the shape of a tall chair. When she looked around she could see multiple humanoid trees watching over her every now and again looking back at her "Why are you doing this... what are you?" She asked but the trees just clicked, but it was different this time she could hear a small voice hissing "She needs to be fed." Then she saw the last sight she'd ever see. "I'm so sorry this happened Beatrice." Edward said as he heard the final scream Beatrice would give as the roots tear her apart.

Rough Beginning

Kalena Muller

"I should probably take my pills" I thought to myself. It's a new day in Killington, Vermont where I just procured my very own one-person dorm room in my college, Binghamton. I can't help but shiver at the thought of living on my own, but once again I crave being a solo adult.

It's Tuesday morning, 8a.m., I solemnly decide to spruce up my living space. I bend over to grasp a bundle of dainty, decorative string lights shaped like miniature lanterns, and suddenly my posture begins to stiffen. Muted footsteps inch their way to my ears, immediately causing my brain confusion and panic. My imagination runs wild: Is it a burglar? I didn't invite guests over, did I? What if it's a demon? I pause, my mind goes blank. The silent footsteps creep closer and closer behind me. I tum around with a pale, white face and sigh with heavy relief.

"You startled me! How did you get in here little guy?" I cry.

A scrawny, matted tabby cat struts across my walk way eventually meeting my ankles. Maybe he snuck into the lobby and made his way around the building. Gently he pressed his cold, damp nose up against my bare leg. I assumed this gesture was his way of saying "you are mine now".

"I guess you can stay, I wouldn't want you out in this horrid storm anyway." I express, speaking to him like he's a human being. He weaves his slender body through my legs while I continue to renovate my interior.

Abruptly, my phone screams with high pitch alarms. An alert on the screen reads: Severe thunderstorm warning, seek shelter immediately.

I grit my teeth and clench my fists. I rush down to the main lobby full of employees to ask if everything is okay. My eyes dart to the nearest window when suddenly a monstrous lightning bolt strikes a narrow oak tree creating an ear-piercing ring. I scream in terror when one of the branches falls slamming to the ground. I squeeze my eyes shut as hard as I can until I can't stand the pressure. When I open them, I realize I'm not in the lobby anymore.

"Where am I?" I scream, but only silence follows.

I spin my body around facing the opposite side and my eyes widen. I appear to be right back to my original dorm room. My hands slowly shift up to my open mouth covering it to muffle my sobs.

Then my phone bellows again with sirens. I glance at the bolded words, peeking through my ring and middle finger that enclosed my eyes. "Severe Thunderstorm warning, seek shelter immediately." The words taunt as the color from my body fades away. I dart out my door leading into the hallway. Darkness spills into an endless tunnel of hardwood flooring. Dark figures imprint their blackened faces in my brain. I sprint down the descending corridor for what feels like an eternity. Am I in a nightmare? Eventually I find myself surrounded by the silence of dead air. The feeling of emptiness cradles my frame as I break down in tears gradually folding to embrace my knees. My mouth widens with sorrow demanding myself to mourn once more, only to discover my voice doesn't exist. Through my blurry, tear filled eyes I recognize an orange figure. A cold, moist nose presses against my outer thigh producing little bumps to spread all over my pasty skin. I extend my shaking arm to pet him but as I got closer he bolts and vanishes. I feel like I'm losing my mind.

As I sit there pondering my situation, my eyes direct their attention to the large window next to me. A blinding lightning bolt violently strikes the frail oak tree a foot away from the building causing a thick branch to crash aggressively against the ground. I close my eyes and keep them tight until I can't stand the pressure, but when I open them I'm still situated where I sat originally. I cautiously begin to rise to my feet glaring around the dark, haunting lobby.

"Hello?" I snap with a hoarse throat. The air feels heavy as I roam the corridor and carefully place each step. I hesitate, feeling the sensation of hot breath resting on my shoulder. I slightly turn my position to identify what it is, and behind me are faceless, blurry silhouettes hovering over me. My body goes into shock, and collapses landing on the pitch-black carpet.



Fluorescent blue and red lights flash vigorously in the dark night as paramedics rush into the main lobby of Binghamton. A young woman lays motionless on the floor surrounded by students attending the college.

"What happened?" asked an EMT to a college student near her.

"Her name is Kelsi, I've only known her for a couple of months," she explained, "I guess when she was little she was trapped out in a severe thunderstorm when a tree branch broke from a lightning bolt striking a tree and it fell hitting her in the head. The force of the branch hitting her head caused extreme mental damage to her brain leading to the need of medication. She must've forgotten to take her medicine this morning, causing her to hallucinate and relive the traumatic event over and over again."

Ghost in the Cat

Charles Woods

I know what is crossing your mind, “Oh great, another ghost story.” Well if you have ever heard a story quite like this, I would love to hear it. Be prepared as we step into the young life of Jason King.

It was a normal September day. Jason was walking home after a long day at school. He was looking forward to seeing his pet cat: Sam. Jason finally gets home and is greeted the same way he has been when stepping into his house since he found Sam at the local animal shelter.

Next to his front door is a table. Every day Justin would walk into his house and find Sam sitting on top of this table. Sam would let out a loud meow and jump onto Jason’s backpack and stay there purring all the way to Jason’s bedroom. Jason then did his homework and watched movies and played with Sam until he laid down to go to bed. Jason laid in his bed with Sam curled up by his head. Twenty minutes later Jason’s window slowly slides open and a light cold breeze drifted in through it. Along with the breeze came a dark mist. Jason took no notice of it as he slept peacefully. Sam on the other hand quickly shot up to his feet and hissed. He jumped off the bed and walked up to the mist that had taken the shape of a woman. The mist proceeded to hiss back at the cat. It then suddenly lunged at the cat. But it did not attack the cat. It instead entered and disappeared into Sam’s mouth.

Jason awoke to the blaring sound of his alarm clock. He rubbed his eyes and looked down at his legs. Sitting there was Sam. Sam just stared at Jason with a dead look in his eyes. With a confused look Jason asked, “Are you okay Sam?” Sam sat there staring for a second longer. All of a sudden out of Sam’s mouth came a loud, “I’m fine Jason!” Jason jumped out of his bed but did not stick the landing. After all, he’s not the cat here. “D-did you just talk Sam?” And the award for scholar of the year goes to you Captain Obvious,” said Sam in a sarcastic tone,” It wasn’t your lamp Jason, of course it was me.” Jason screams as loud as he possibly can. But he stopped as soon as he saw Sam fall off of his bed laughing. “Haha you sound like a six year old girl!” said Sam as he rolled on the ground. Jason tried to pick up Sam but he brought his hand back to his body with three scratches on it. Sam jumped back onto Jason’s bed and gave him a look that could drop an elephant.” Don’t ever touch me without my permission, boy,” he said with a savage voice.

Jason decided to get ready for school but kept a watchful eye on Sam. He grabbed his backpack and headed out the door. On the walk to school he thought about what had just happened. How was he speaking? Why was he being so abusive? What happened to Sam? Where did the sweet cat go? When did he start talking? So many questions ran through his mind that by the time he was able to focus again he was already at his lunch period. He sent a text to his mom telling her he wasn’t feeling well. His mom came and picked him up from school and dropped him off at home. When he walked into the house he noticed a difference was there. Sam was not waiting for him. He looked in the kitchen to see if maybe Sam was eating or something in that manner but he wasn’t.

He went up to his bedroom and found Sam there laying on his bed muttering to himself. He couldn’t quite understand what he was saying so he ignored it and hung his backpack up on its hook. “Hello Jason,” a familiar and chilling voice came from behind him,” You’re home early.” Jason flips around trying to hide his discomfort.

“Oh. H-hi Sam.” “What’s wrong Jason?” “I-I’m not feeling well”

“Are you cold? You seem to be shivering.” “No. Sam I need to ask you something.”

“Of course Jason. You can ask me anything.” “What happened?”

“Whatever do you mean?” “Last night everything was normal, but this morning all of a sudden you’re acting creepy, talking and making fun of me. What gives?”

“Well Jason, some secrets are best kept as just that; secrets.”

Jason couldn’t get out of his room faster. He ran down the stairs into the kitchen. He grabbed a snack and sat down at the table. He thought about what Sam had said. “Secrets are best kept as just that; secrets.” What did he mean by that? What is he hiding?

“Wat does it mean?!” he screamed. “Are you alright Jason?”

Justin tried to ignore it “Jason? Jason? Jason!”

Jason turns around and sees a woman dressed in all white.

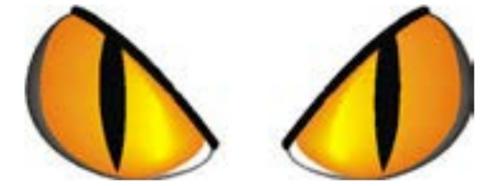
“It’s time for you to take your medicine. You know you are my favorite patient right?”

To be continued.



A Hair-Raising Tale

Marlene See



I have a steadfast rule: Never walk anywhere, alone, after dark.

Unfortunately, this dark, moonless night was to be an exception to that directive. I was traveling home from a long and tedious meeting, hoping against hope, that I would arrive safely before the impending storm arrived, when a massive creature darted across the winding road, not ten feet in front me! I immediately veered to avoid hitting whatever it was; consequently, I was propelled off from the road and landed on a pile of rocks. I’d heard an axle snap like a dry, brittle bone and I knew that I had a lengthy trek ahead of me.

I grabbed my Maglite from the glove box, crawled out of my SUV and headed towards the road. Now I was faced with a dilemma-do I continue the way that I had been traveling or take the short cut which would take me past Old Man Wither’s house? (He is long departed, but rumors still run rampant of his shenanigans to this very day).

Suddenly, it started to rain and lightning sizzled as it snaked across the indigo sky, revealing possible shelter in the distance. As I approached, it dawned on me that this was the very place I had wanted to avoid. The decrepit house was leaning to one side, just like the Tower of Pisa. The clapboard siding was weathered and devoid of paint, enough shingles were lacking as to remind me of jack-o’-lanterns’ teeth, and paned windows broken like a jigsaw puzzle missing myriad pieces. I gulped and inched my way forward. It was then, I realized the entry door was wide open, a black, gaping maw, ready to swallow me whole, wavered for a moment or two before cautiously proceeding up the warped, creaky porch steps. Hesitating for a moment on the landing, I glanced at my surroundings. Enormous webs stretched everywhere like cotton candy wisps. Spiders, appearing as hairy lumps of coal with multi-jointed appendages, inhabited those webs, hoping to entangle a morsel to snack on. Bats, hanging upside down by their tiny clawed feet, occupied the rafters and were listening carefully for prey. Determined to proceed, I tiptoed guardedly towards the beckoning doorway. My nostrils were overtaken by the acrid, dank, and musty odors the ancient dwelling emitted. Surely, no mortal being had inhabited this place in ages.

It was raining in earnest now as another electrical charge zig-zagged through the heavens. In that instant, I perceived an archaic figure in the deep shadows of the room. It was hunchbacked and cloaked in a tattered, threadbare garment that reminded me of moth-eaten gauze. Long, gnarled fingers were clenched around a twisted walking stick for support. As it turned towards me, I observed scraggly gray hair and sunken eyes, void of life, materializing from inside the hood. Fear enveloped me like a cold, wet blanket. My heart started pounding like a jack hammer trying to escape from my chest! This must be Old Man Wither’s phantom and he was rapidly approaching with upraised, bony arms attempting to encircle me! I instinctively knew that I had to escape this place immediately! I spun around, flew out the door, leapt down the stairs, and bolted across the immense yard!

Not bothering to care where I was heading, I passed a timeworn, crooked, decaying oak tree. Shortly thereafter, I stumbled into a small stand of maple trees that engulfed a small, private cemetery. Moss covered tombstones stood like sentinels guarding their long-forgotten buried inhabitants. Stepping gingerly to avoid waking the dead, I meandered around looking for another exit. I certainly didn’t want to leave the same way that I came in, just in case my pursuer was still lurking about. In the distance, a dog howled, “Ar-rooo” and in response a nearby cat hissed, then growled a throaty, “Mer-row.” A shiver ran down my spine and the hairs on my head stood to attention; a chill traversed to the tips of my stubby little toes. I could have sworn that an icy hand was tapping eerily on my right shoulder. As I fearfully turned to see if I was being confronted by another soul, I exhaled a sigh of relief and chagrin when I realized that it was a boney branch blown about by the wind.

Suddenly, a twig snapped nearby! I knew that wasn’t caused by the wind. Someone or something was approaching and it was definitely time for me to vamoose! I glanced to my left and fortuitously spied the route of escape that I had hoped for. Forcing my legs to move and my feet to carry me forward, I took off like a marathon runner in hot pursuit of a trophy. In this case, the trophy was my very life! In my haste, I didn’t notice the low-lying tree stump, directly in my pathway, until I stumbled over it and was catapulted forward. I remember landing face down with my breath being knocked out of me causing a loud oomph sound.

I must have blacked out as the next thing I recalled was the feeling of being jostled along and shoved into the trunk of a waiting car. For what seemed like eons, I was trapped like a caged animal as we navigated the countryside. The vehicle came to an abrupt halt which caused me to hurtle forward, coming to rest against the far end of the trunk, adjacent to the back seat. I rolled over, trying to escape, and felt myself falling, falling, falling... With a jerk, I opened my eyes and found myself lying on the floor beside my own bed. I shook my head a couple of times to clear the fogginess. Was I a victim of my own overactive imagination or did this hair-raising tale really happen?