

The Pueblo City-County Library District presents

# **21<sup>ST</sup> ANNUAL SCARY STORY CONTEST**



## **WINNING STORIES 2013**

PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY  
**LIBRARY**  
Ideas • Imagination • Information



The Pueblo City-County Library District presents

# 2013 Scary Story Writing Contest Winning Stories

The Pueblo City-County Library District, in cooperation with the Friends of the Library, is pleased to announce the winners of the 21<sup>st</sup> 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.

The 530 entries were judged for characterization, plot, description, dialog, setting, theme and originality. All participants received a certificate of recognition, and the winners received a puppet and a gift certificate to Books Again, the Friends of the Library's used book store.

The judges were Doris Kester, Kathy Mauro, Laura Vance, and Sherry Wingo.

The library wishes to thank the many teachers who supported the creative writing experience by having their students enter the contest.

# 2013 SCARY STORY

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade

Katie Austin	Sunset Park Elementary School – Mrs. Stinchcomb
Orion Birch	Sunset Park Elementary School – Mrs. Stinchcomb
Tegan Pike	Sunset Park Elementary School – Mrs. Stinchcomb
Makyla Roybal	Sunset Park Elementary School – Mrs. Kliesen
William Saint Cuppy	Sunset Park Elementary School – Mrs. Kliesen

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade

Michelle Buttram	Sunset Park Elementary School – Ms. Lucero
Oliva Monack	Sunset Park Elementary School – Ms. Lucero
Dominic Oldenburg	St. John Neumann Catholic School – Mrs. Starcer

## 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

Ella Hauck	Corwin International Magnet School – Mrs. Hocking
Emma Krasovec	Home Schooled
Bryana Lark	Sunset Park Elementary School – Mrs. Sweckard
Johnny Marquez, III	St. John Neumann Catholic School – Ms. Roybal
Kennedy Montoya	South Park Elementary School – Mr. Porter
Madilynn Schloss	Park View Elementary School – Mr. Sena

## 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

Molly Armstrong	South Mesa Elementary School – Mrs. Hanratty
Brandon Atterberry	South Mesa Elementary School – Mrs. Hanratty
Dominick Castro	Sunset Park Elementary School – Mrs. Terry
Clare Oldenburg	St. John Neumann Catholic School – Mrs. Brown
Samantha Stephens	Sunset Park Elementary School – Mrs. Terry
Pete Valdez	South Park Elementary School – Ms. Warren

# CONTEST WINNERS

## 6<sup>th</sup> Grade

Anna Ochs  
Trevor Waller

Sky View Middle School – Mr. McKinsey  
St. John Neumann Catholic School – Mrs. Santisteven

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade

Kayla Galarza  
Grace Keilbach  
Madison Krupka

Heroes'K-8 Academy – Mr. Assaf  
St. John Neuman Catholic School – Mrs. Santisteven  
Goodnight Elementary School – Mrs. Horton

## 8<sup>th</sup> Grade

Dean Gardiner  
Chelsea Greenway  
Nick Knezevich  
Brooklyn Micheli

Goodnight Elementary School – Mrs. Horton  
St. John Neumann School – Mrs. Santisteven  
Goodnight Elementary School – Mrs. Horton  
Goodnight Elementary School – Mrs. Horton

## High School

Breanna Elliss  
Cyann Shostle  
Kenny Walter

East High School – Mrs. Koshak  
East High School – Mrs. Koshak  
East High School – Mrs. Koshak

## Adult

Douglas Kenyon



# The Halloween Surprise

By Katie Austin



There once was a dog named Biter. He's big, scary and has large teeth. He lives with a little old woman that isn't very nice.

Every time Audi, Makayla, and I walked to school, we have to pass the little old woman's house and everyday Biter and the little old woman are sitting on the porch staring at us. It gives me scary dreams.

On Halloween night we went trick-or-treating and the little old woman invited us in for some treats. We told her we couldn't, but that's when Biter started barking and growling and forced us inside the house.

We then figured out she was a witch! She was wearing an old lady costume the whole time. She had green skin, dark black makeup, and was so ugly. We knew we had to get out before we became her and Biter's dinner. We thought of a plan and tricked the witch and her mean dog to play a game called hide-and-go-seek. When they hid we watched them go into the cellar and we ran and locked them in. We all ran home and never saw them again!

# Spooky Dream

By Orion Birch

It was a dark night as we were walking by the cemetery. Suddenly we saw some people. As we got closer they were not people, they were zombies!

They began to chase us. We ran for blocks and blocks. We were screaming so loud, but no one heard us because there was nobody left. All of a sudden, we were lost!

We ran into some spies who were trying to capture the zombies. How are we going to do this? The spies told us that if we sprayed them with a fire hose, they would disappear.

I was still very scared but then I felt someone shaking me and I looked up and it was my dad!

Wow! It was just a bad dream!



# The Claw

By Tegan Pike

On a dark and scary night, when I was doing my homework, I heard footsteps behind me. I looked over and there was no one. I heard pounding in the closet. I opened the door and there was no one. I was like, “What is that?” I wanted to know what the noise was.

I was very scared and then I heard laughing. I was so scared that I ran to the door. I couldn’t get the door open – I was trapped. Then I heard claws screeching on the back wall. I ran to the back door, but I couldn’t get out. I went through the doggie door and I was finally out. The outside lights flickered on and off. The moon was full and shining down on the street and there was a hand crawling without a body. Then I saw a head and then a skeleton. Oh my! What was I to do? After that the whole town went pitch black. There was no one around. Who was going to save me? And then I woke up.



# The Haunted House

By Makyla Roybal

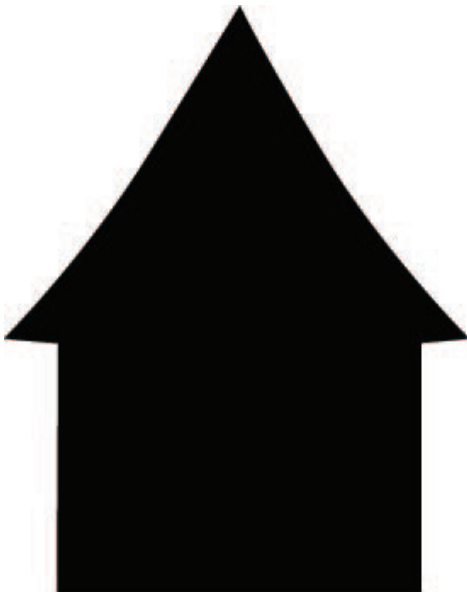
One Halloween night my sister and I were out getting candy, and we saw a spooky house and we went up to it and knocked on the door. The door opened very slowly before I could knock on it. As the door opened we heard strange noises that we could not explain. My sister and I were really scared and didn’t want to go in but we did anyway so we could see what the noises were.

We walked in the house and it was pitch black, but we could see a light toward the back of the house. As we walked further in the house we saw some eyes! The eyes were from a cat -

a black cat that jumped at my sister and I. We were so scared but we kept walking side by side holding each other tight. We could still hear the strange noises and now we could see that the light was coming from the kitchen.

We walked up to the kitchen door and opened it slowly. We saw a ghost! The ghost was in the fridge looking for something to eat. To our surprise the strange noise was the ghost’s stomach growling he was so hungry. He saw my sister and I and he stopped and said, “Hi. “ He didn’t know what to do, but he was a nice ghost and asked if we wanted some candy because it was Halloween. My sister and I were still in shock but the ghost said, “Don’t be scared. I won’t hurt you,” so we took the candy.

I have to say that was the best Halloween that I ever had. People did not believe my sister and I, but it doesn’t matter because we made a new friend and now we see the ghost every year.





# Scary Story

By William Saint Cuppy



Halloween is my favorite time of the year. I always go trick- or-treating to every house in the neighborhood except one! This house is big, dark, and scary! Scary noises come from the house on Halloween. One year, a girl in our neighborhood decided to go the spooky house. When the girl went up and knocked on the door, someone or something scared her hair straight and she ran and ran. I never saw the girl again.

The next year a boy from my neighborhood went up to the spooky house and knocked on the door. This time a Zombie answered the door. The boy was so scared his hair turned white and he screamed like little girl.

Nobody went to the spooky house for three years. Finally my mom and dad went to the spooky house to take the owner a plate of cookies to show the kids there was nothing to be scared of. My mom and dad were really wrong. Something very scary answered the door and they threw the cookies up in the air and ran like the wind all the way home and never spoke about the spooky house again. Year later, my little sister Samantha, who is now ten years old and is afraid of nothing, went to the spooky house and knocked on the door. Guess who answered? A nice old man and woman who love Halloween so much they dress up in costumes every year. Don't we all feel silly that it took my brave little sister Samantha to meet the nice neighbors? Now we go trick-or-treating to the spooky house every year because they have the best candy.

# Puss and The Witch

By Michelle Buttram

It was a dark and creepy night. Puss the cat was all alone. He was happily playing with his bone. It was Halloween night, and every Halloween, he would scare people. But this year, he wanted to act cute and be taken home by a family. As he thought about that, he heard a creepy laugh. "Oh no!" Puss thought, while running around frantically, trying to figure out what to do. He went into his potion room, looking for something to help him. But, it was too late. The ugly witch crept in on her broom with an owl flying next to her. "Yow!", Puss cried as he was lifted in the air "Hiss!" The witch did not even flinch.

Puss was worried. As he soared through the sky, he thought about his perfect Halloween. That clearly was not happening.



As the three made their way to the witch's house, Puss was even more scared looking at the spooky house. As they entered, Puss had his eyes closed thinking "That evil woman is going to cook me. I should not have even had a happy thought about the perfect Halloween." As he heard the door close, he slowly opened his eyes. He squealed when he saw what was there: a creepy Halloween room with nine other cats and two other witches who stood before him. The witch looked at the confused kitty and smiled. "I tricked you, didn't I?" asked the witch. Puss did not respond. He joined the group of cats and started to play. And the witch and Puss were off to scare people. Now knowing that he was safe, he enjoyed the ride. After a little scaring, the witch flew back to the house. Once more, Puss was playing with the cats. He did not even remember the thought of a family. He now had a family, the cats and the witches. It turned out to be the best Halloween Puss ever had.

# The Haunted Night

By Oliva Monack

One spooky dark night three kids Bella, Cody, and Shelby were out trick-or-treating. On their last house with a bag full of candy they knocked on the door of the scariest house of all. A scary witch slowly opened the door as it was creaking.

Shelby suddenly realized this did not look like any witch's costume! The witch invited them inside. Shelby and Cody knew this was not a good idea but Bella encouraged them to enter as well. As they reluctantly entered the house it did smell like fresh cookies and pumpkin pie. But the inside also looked so scary; there was a black cat that crossed right in front of their path. As the witch took the children into the kitchen to get a cookie they saw a big black kettle with something brewing inside. It looked creepy, but smelled good. They did not want to take a bite of the cookie because Shelby and Cody thought it was poisoned. But Bella had already taken a bite and said she was fine so far so it must not be poisoned.

Next was a red drink that was bubbling. Bella is always curious so she took the first drink. It was fruit punch! The witch began to show them around the house and the kids just followed behind Bella. Bella acted like she knew where she was going. Suddenly, Shelby and Cody noticed pictures of Bella on the wall. As they looked at the witch's face they realized it was just paint. They asked the witch her name and she had the same last name as Bella. Things were beginning to make sense. As Bella and the witch smiled, they kind of looked alike. As they left the house the kids realized this was Bella's grandmother! Bella obviously knew the whole time.

As they headed home they began laughing and talking about what had happened. They asked Bella why she didn't tell them. She thought that would make this Halloween not just scary, but also funny. Shelby and Cody agreed; this was the best Halloween ever! As Shelby and Cody knew it was not safe to enter someone's house they did not know, or eat something from a stranger, they trusted Bella and knew she would do the right thing, so she must have known that person somehow.

As the kids told their parents the story, the parents just laughed and said they knew and were in on the joke also. They even helped grandma with her costume and decorations while we were at school.



# The New Neighbors

By Dominic Oldenburg

One chilly October day I rode my bike home from school. “Mom,” I yelled. I got off my bike. “There’s a new kid in my class.” My mom replied, “I have good news too. We have new neighbors.”

“Cool,” I said. “Can I meet them?” I asked.

We went over with cookies for them. I rang the doorbell. The door opened. “Hi,” said the new kid from school. I was surprised. “Do you want to play outside with me?” I asked. “Okay,” he said. “Let’s go,” I said. I took off running. “Wait up,” he said. It looked like a small chunk of flesh had come off of his lower back. I was shocked.

The next day at recess there was some broken glass on the playground. The new kid slipped and fell on some sharp glass. It cut him on the wrist, suddenly his hand fell off! All the girls ran off scared. Then the new kid ran home.

After school I quickly ran to his house. I knocked. His dad slowly opened the brown door. “He’s in his roooooom,” he said. I walked in his room and saw formidable zombie posters everywhere. When I looked at him he was a green zombie! Then I fainted. When I woke up I was outside of his room. Then I saw him again. “Don’t faint!” he said. I didn’t say anything. “The truth is I’m a zombie.” I was scared.

The next morning I looked out the window and there was a “for sale” sign in the new kid’s yard. I went to school and when I came back from school and the “for sale” sign was gone. I rang the doorbell and the door opened. I met a new kid and this time I made sure he was a human and he became my best friend.



# The Phantoms

By Ella G. Hauck

Once upon a time very long ago there was a place ruled by hideous black creatures called phantoms. They were very cruel with powers which they used to put people in a deep sleep if anyone ever questioned their authority. The phantoms came from a planet in the farthest reaches of the galaxy, the name of it long forgotten. Nobody knows why the phantoms came to earth. They only know it wasn't good. "If only someone could stop them," everyone thought.

Then one morning a young woman came to the town. She was 6'3" with long brown hair and tan skin. "Hello my name is Lisa. I heard you had a phantom problem," she said. The towns' people were curious about Lisa. Then she said, "I think I can help." She pulled a small bag out of her pocket. "This is phantom dust. It's like bug spray but for phantoms," she told them. Soon a plan was made.

The phantoms had a plan too. Their plan was to make sure Lisa and the towns' people's didn't succeed. The phantoms had always been scared of Lisa and this time they didn't want her to come in and take over. They would unleash an army of phantoms onto the town. "She won't be able to defeat every phantom at one time!" The phantoms had created an army that had new powers and high-tech gear. "Lisa and those foolish towns' people will never win!" They snickered.

As the plan fell into place, Lisa realized that the phantoms had a plan too. She saw a lot of deliveries made to the tower the Phantoms lived in and the streets had less and less patrol officers on them every day. "They have to be up to something," she thought. So they started to quicken the pace. After one week they were ready. Unfortunately, so were the phantoms. That night Lisa stood guard hoping for a sign of what would happen next.

The next day Lisa saw something she never thought possible. A swarm of phantoms burst out of the tower gates but these were no normal phantoms. They had high-tech gadgetry with all sorts of new powers. It was time for action but would she and the towns' people be able to take them? "Well we're about to find out," she said to herself. As they neared the swarm, she noticed a small opening in each of the phantoms suits. "That's their weakness! Shine your lights on the small opening in their suits!" she shouted. "They can't stand the light!" As they did, the phantoms started to retreat. "We're winning!" they shouted.

After that Lisa went to help other towns and the phantoms went back to their planet. From then on the town lived in peace.



# Dracula Squirrel

By Emma Krasovec

One dark, dark, windy, and creepy night, Tony was walking home from school. Tony was very smart. He was six years old and in third grade. His school had very long days that ended at 7:30pm. Back to the story, Tony was walking home from school when he saw a squirrel drinking blood from a little acorn cup. Tony cracked up! Just then the squirrel turned into a giant vampire squirrel. He was burning red with rage! The squirrel roared, "I am Dracula Squirrel! How dare you laugh at me! Now you must pay!" Tony was so scared he couldn't move.

Dracula Squirrel turned into a giant bat and grabbed Tony. The bat flew away to Squirrelvania. (Did I mention that Squirrelvania is where squirrel vampires live?) Anyway, Dracula squirrel said "Your punishment is to be put into a pipe organ forever!"

Tony got tossed up and down inside of a pipe organ for the rest of his life. So smart children, beware, do not laugh when you see a squirrel drinking blood out of an acorn cup.



# The Haunted School

By Bryana Lark

Once upon a time on a very cold Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, there were five kids in the eighth grade that had detention. So as their punishment, they had to stay after school and write a paper on why they got detention and what they were going to do to not end up back in detention. After school the five kids went to Ms. Evans class. As they were sitting down Ms. Evans explained that they needed to write a paper on what they did, why they did it and how they were going to correct it. So once the five kids settled, Ms. Evans left the room to gather her mail from the office.

Not even five minutes after she left, they heard a loud thud and all the lights went out. All the kids screamed with fear. So one of the kids decided that it would be a good idea if they went to look for their teacher. As they were leaving out the door they heard a loud scream coming from the office down the hall. With fear the students ran to go back into the room. As they went for the door, they came to find it locked. Then all of a sudden they heard a loud scary voice telling them that they were all going to die.

The students were scared out their minds! Not having a clue on what to do next, they decided that they needed to get out of the school and hoped to find Ms. Evans on their way out.

As they were going down the hallway, the lights started to flicker and all the lockers started to open and shut! The students holding each other's hands started running. Then the loud voice came through the halls and

laughed telling the students that they were never getting out of the school ever! This had them so scared that they just froze right where they were at. One of the students snapped out of it and began to get her classmates to get out of there. So they made their way towards the exit and as they came to the last hallway they realized that it was the longest, darkest hall in the school. They knew that they had to go through this hall because this was their only way out!

They all grabbed each other's hands, trying to gain the courage to do it. They started making their way down the scary pitch dark hall. Then one of the kids screamed, "What was that?" Something or someone grabbed and pulled her hair! They all pulled each other closer and tighter. Then they all felt a hard push and there was a really loud noise. There was screaming, laughing and it sounded like something was behind them. The students grabbed each other hands tightly and started running as fast as they could. It seemed like the faster they ran the closer it was behind them. The hall was so dark that there was no way for them to see what was behind them.

Finally they made it to the doors and as they ran out of the school the students ran smack into Ms. Evans! They were so delighted to see her! Ms. Evans finally got the five students to calm down; she asked if they were okay and that she was looking for them because the lights went out. She wanted to make sure they were okay! All the students began to tell her what had happened to them. Ms. Evans shook her head in disbelief as each student explained their scary story. The students were just so glad to be out of the school and vowed to never get detention again! Then one by one the students left home with their parents. Little did the students know, that it was all Ms. Evans and their parents doing the whole thing! She laughed as the students were leaving the school and then she thought to herself "Let's see if they ever come back to detention!"





# The Haunted Graveyard

By Johnny Marquez, III

Dun-Da-Da-Dunn.

Once upon a time, there was a group of kids that were a team of paranormal investigators. Their names were Tom, Tim, Jim, Matt, and the leader was Johnny.

Their first stop on this investigation was, "The House around the Block." Now it is known as, "The Haunted Graveyard." They've been on many investigations before.

They thought that this was going to be the best investigation yet. They went back to headquarters to get their equipment and then headed out. On the way to the graveyard they met an investigator named James. He became part of the group.

When they got inside the graveyard they set up headquarters. They set up the cameras and got the thermal cameras and equipment. They waited until it was night. They walked for many hours. Matt said, "It's getting late, we should get back to headquarters." The others told him, "Fine with me."

Jim said, "I will go too, just to keep watch." The others stood there. Jim and Matt walked back to headquarters.

Johnny, Tim, and Tom came to a bridge. Tim said that he would stay there to keep watch. The others walked on. While they were walking Johnny and Tom saw a tree that was broken. As they studied the tree Tim was sitting on a rock where he lost his flashlight. He took his camera and used the flash on the camera to find his flashlight. While he was doing that he found it behind him. Next to his flashlight was a shadow of a pointy hat. He picked up his flashlight and turned it on. He looked behind him to make sure there was no one behind him. He sat back down and looked down the trail. While he was looking he felt someone scratch his shoulder. It started to burn.

He ran down the trail to find Johnny and Tom. He found them and told them, "We have to go right now!" They ran back to headquarters and told Matt and Jim in a hurried voice, "Come on, we have to leave!" They packed up the equipment and while they were in the van they looked at the videos they had recorded. They saw a figure and then it disappeared.

James said, "Maybe it was not a good idea to come here in the first place." Then Jim and Matt said at the same time, "We caught something on the voice recorder." They listened to it and heard "leave" three times. Then they responded, "Why?" The voice answered, "I'm bad!"

They never went back to the place again.



# The Ghost Dog

By Kennedy Montoya

Once upon a time, in a spooky forest in Europe, there was a small cottage and in the cottage there was a chocolate Lab named Cooper. He was a very spoiled dog who had his own room.

On a dark windy night he left the cottage all alone. He was walking down the dirt road and heard growling coming from the bushes. He thought it was just the wind, but then out of the blue a wolf with red eyes came charging at him. Then a Timber wolf named Delilah came out of nowhere to protect Cooper from the red-eyed black wolf. She scared him off by showing her big sharp teeth. Cooper and Delilah continued walking through the dark windy forest and met a bat named Spencer, who decided to join them on their adventure.

While they were walking they ran into a witch named Lula as she was boiling a pot of magic potion that would make you dizzy and make you float in the air. She tried to get the three friends to try it, but they got scared and ran across a river into a cave. In it there were scary spiders and webs all over. But one not-so scary Spider named Randy let them hang out in his cave until the sun came up and it was safe for them to go back to the forest.

Just when they thought it was safe an evil scientist named Trident dog napped Cooper, put him in a cage and “ghostified” him. Delilah, Spencer and Randy escaped and went to get help. Lula the witch saw them and asked what happened. They told her and she offered to help, so she got her magic potion and took it to the evil scientist and said “I will trade you my magic potion if you change Cooper back to his normal self and let him go.” The evil scientist agreed.

The four friends made it back to the cottage and lived happily ever after.



# The Jack-O-Lantern's Wardrobe

By Madilynn Schloss

It was a chilly morning when Tony leaped out of his bright, yellow bed. He was super excited because it was his favorite holiday – Halloween! He adored Halloween because he loved to dress up in amazing costumes. He looked in his lime green dresser for a costume, but all he could find was a Frankenstein one and a purple ghost. He could not wear those because he was terrified by them. Frankenstein's sharp teeth horrified him and made him squeeze his eyes shut. The gory, purple ghost caused him to plug his ears for fear that it would talk to him the way his crazy Uncle Tommy alleged the ghost of Grandpa Chester often did. So, he decided to look in his ripped up hamper for something happier, but there were no more costumes in there.

Last, he peeked under his bed and found a Mordici-the-blue jay and Patrick-the-Starfish costumes. He decided he wanted to be Mordici and make his friends so jealous.

Once he got his costume on he remembered that he had to get his black cat, Ilene, a costume. He whistled and she scampered over and picked out her costume. She wanted to be Margret the Robin. He crawled into her pink, cat-clothes hamper and retrieved the garment .

It was 7:45 and time to get to school. He grabbed his orange backpack from the couch in the living room. Tony and his lovely cat sprinted to the red and white school bus. Once he arrived at school, all his friends loved his Mordici costume. That day was perfect because he got to make a pumpkin out of clay and was able to trick-or-treat throughout the school. Before school dismissed, he grabbed his friend Jake so they could go trick-or-treating and have a sleepover .

That windy Halloween night, Tony, Ilene, and his best friend Jake went trick-or-treating and collected a lot of delicious Halloween treats. This was not the most amazing Halloween for Tony because he was scared of all the shiny white Skeletons placed creepily on people's front lawns. They made him want to scream and run away but he kept on going.

After trick-or-treating they all galloped towards Tony 's house because Jake was sleeping over and their bags were overflowing with Tootsie Rolls, lollipops, and gum. However, during their night out, they had decided to try to stay up late,

as late as they could. Once they got home, they checked the time on the clock on the kitchen wall. But before they could actually see the time, they all screamed because there was neon green goo all over the clock. Next, they heard a screechy sound. It sounded like it said , "It's me, the ghost." They were all scared to death. It was a real ghost! The purple ghost costume was actually not just a costume at all, but rather the ghost of silly Grandpa Chester dressed for Halloween.

They ran into Tony's bedroom and checked his clock. It was 1:00 a.m. They hid under his green blanket and told scary stories, but all they could think of was the goo on the kitchen clock and the shock of meeting grandpa's ghost. So, they stopped telling spooky stories because they were afraid they would have nightmares. Plus, that silly Grandpa Chester wouldn't quit pestering them to play scary Halloween games. Instead, they played UNO until 5:00 a.m. They loved UNO so much, even grandpa the ghost, and they forgot all about the goo and fell right to sleep.





# Noises in the Woods

By Molly Armstrong

"I have a bad feeling," Julie said to John.

Julie is a smart, easygoing, loving person. John is fearful, funny and brave. They are spending an evening camping at the San Isabel National Forest.

"John, what was that noise?" Julie asked with her voice shaking. "Let's go out and look. Don't forget the flashlight." John answered.

As they left their tent, they spotted a trail of extremely huge foot prints. Julie noticed them first. "OMG, John! Look at those foot prints! What could have made such big prints?"

"Let's follow them and find out." John said bravely.

As John and Julie went into the woods, they heard branches crackling and leaves rustling from farther out in the woods. "What's that?" Julie whispers to John.

"Shh!" John said nervously.

At that minute, a huge, loud owl flew directly at John's head. It made him drop the flashlight. At the second it dropped, it died. Now John and Julie are in the pitch dark and have no way to get back to their camp.

No sooner than the flashlight died, there was a huge crackle of thunder, a bright bolt of lightning, and it started to pour rain.

"What was that? It sounds like someone is calling for help?" Julie asked John. Then John and Julie both started yelling for help.

The sound was getting closer to them. The echo really scared them. John and Julie started backing up into the woods. The rain was still pouring, and they were both soaking wet.

All of a sudden they backed into someone or something in the darkness. "Eeeek!" they all screamed.

As they turned around, they saw their friends, Noah and Molly. "OMG, you scared us to death!" Julie exclaimed.

"We went to gather firewood and got lost in the dark," Molly explained.

"Oh, you're the ones who made those footprints," John said to Noah and Molly. Noah said, "Let's go back to camp."

"Yeah, I'm tired and soaking wet." Molly said. "But we don't have a flashlight," John said. "Wait," said Molly.

She reached into her backpack and pulled out her little bitty book light. By the tiny beam of light, they all made their way back to camp.



# Getting a Scary Package

By Brandon Atterberry

I got a package in the mail one night. It was a large package. My great grandfather sent it to me. It was covered in slime and had skull signs on it and a picture of a pirate. When I opened it, there was a cage in the box. There was a furry ball in the cage. I opened the cage and out came a big, black monster with raging eyes and razor sharp teeth. The teeth looked strong enough to bite through a semi-truck. It had giant feet kind of like Godzilla. He had giant claws on his furry hands. He had spikes down his back and on his long tail.

The monster started to chase me all around the neighborhood. I ran through the woods into the cemetery, jumping over open graves. The fall leaves were crunching under my feet as I ran. The monster's large feet made him jump higher than ever. He chased me into a lake. I swam as fast as I could to get away. He chased me back to my house and I ran into my room as fast as I could. The monster knocked the door down and I ran out the window. I got on my dirt bike and I went out into the forest.

The monster started an animal roundup. He got all the animals to start chasing me. I was being surrounded by animals, so I jumped off my dirt bike and climbed a tree to safety. I jumped onto the monster's back and I was able to control him by holding onto his big, long ears and kicking him with my feet like a horse. I was able to get him out of the forest and I thought if I drove him into the ocean that he would drown. But he didn't. He swam all the way to an island. I thought I was safe so I went back home.

Sometime later, there was a knock on the door. When I opened it there was the monster. I screamed and he put his hands over his ears. I realized he was sensitive to loud noises, so I grabbed my trumpet and started playing loudly. He couldn't take it anymore, and he crawled back into his cage where it was quieter. I ran over there really fast and shut it. I threw the cage back into the box. I took the box outside and burned it. The monster was finally gone.



# Dreams of My Mother

By Clare Oldenburg

John Silvertown inhaled a deep breath and felt a feeling of elation. He was sleeping on a real mattress, on a real bed. After weeks of traveling to get to the Nebraska Territory, and another week of building his new home with his Pa, it felt so wonderful to sleep in a bed again. "John, come down for breakfast," his mother called. John climbed out of bed and went down the ladder that led up to his loft bedroom. He sat down just as his mother planted a platter of steaming hot pancakes in front of him. John wolfed them down and smiled at his mother. "John, we're going to plant a garden today. I have all the seeds ready." His mother smiled back at him.

A few minutes later, John, his mother, and his little sister Suzie were outside digging up a plot of land for the garden. "Mother, what are we planting?" chirped Suzie. "We're planting lettuce, eggplant, squash, tomatoes, and –" John's mother broke off in midsentence. Her face went slack. Suddenly, she toppled over. Behind her, there was a rattlesnake curled into a tight spiral. "Pa, Pa," Suzie shrieked. Pa came running with a hoe in his hands. Pa took in the scene in one glance: John's mother lying on the ground, and the rattlesnake behind her unmoving figure. Suddenly, he toppled over, too. John grabbed the hoe that was in his father's hands. He brought the blade down behind the rattlesnake's head with all his might, cutting it clean off. John took a deep breath. "Suzie, go inside."

John knelt down besides his pa. "Pa, wake up." John shook a bit. "Pa, wake up." John shook harder. "Eglantine..." John's pa muttered. "Pa, wake up!" John shouted. "Pa," John broke down crying.

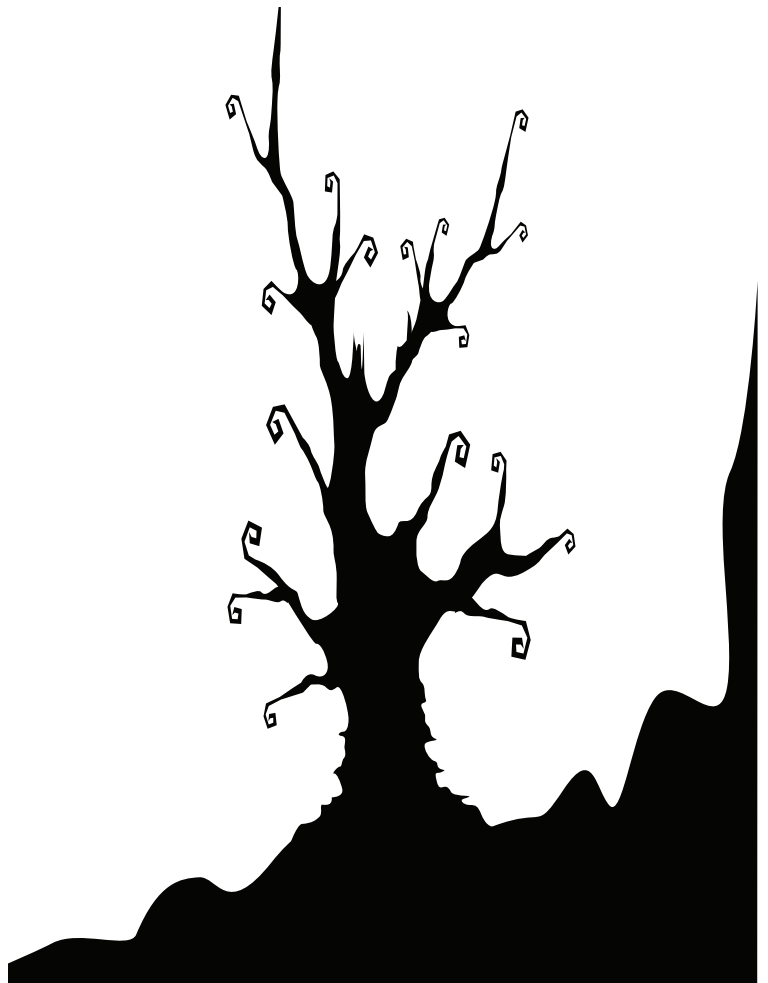
When John's Pa came to, he didn't say anything; he just took his wife's motionless body and brought her inside. "Pa, aren't we going to bury her?" Suzie asked. "Bury her!" John's pa looked thunderstruck. "She's perfectly healthy and she's talking to me. Bury her, what dirt!" There was no doubt about it, Mr. Silvertown had gone crazy.

That night, John was sleeping when he had a strange dream. His mother was speaking to him. "The dead should be put to rest or horrid things will happen," she said. Suddenly she started to change. Her skin grew green. Her hair started falling out. Things started happening that were too horrible to mention. John awoke with a start. He stayed up the rest of the night, for he was too scared to sleep.

The next night, it happened again. John had the dream again, except this time it was longer and even more chilling. John saw Suzie dragged under the ground and his father being reduced to a skeleton. Once more, John awoke with a start.

This routine repeated itself for the next couple of nights. One night, John's mother said something more. "If I am not put to rest before it is too late, all the things that you witnessed will become real." John woke and ran to the body of his mother. He grabbed a shovel and dug a hole. He thrust his mother's body into the hole and buried her well, just as the sun came out.

That night, John had a different dream. His mother stood before him in a white gown and slippers. "You buried me just in time, John. And remember, I love you very much." John awoke with a strange peace coming over him. Then, he remembered the date: October 31.





# Duchess House 2: Dominick and the Frogs

By Dominick Castro

It's the day after Halloween, and my parents are frogs. What am I going to do? I can't have parents as frogs forever. I need to find the Duchess House again, but when I went there the house was gone. I wonder if it only comes on Halloween. For the time being, I'm going to have to live with frog parents for a year. All they do is argue over flies, and it's driving me crazy! Sometimes I put my parents in a box with holes when they drive me insane.

As the year goes by I try to be as normal as possible. I have to make my own lunch, do dishes, clean the house and feed my parents all the time. I just want to be a kid again. Tommy, Luke and Seth come over all the time and help me with my frog parents. It's almost Halloween and I've got to go back to the evil Duchess House so I can turn my parents back.

It's the day before Halloween and we've got to prepare for the witch. I have a secret meeting in my tree house with my friends and my frog parents in my pocket. Luke, Tommy, Seth and my frog parents talk about a strategy. Tommy brings flashlights, Luke brings his walkie talkies and Seth brings the 'smores because we were starving! Mom and Dad want to come along, so they ride in my pocket.

It's Halloween night, and we all head to the Duchess House again to face the evil wart-faced witch. We can't believe our eyes, the molten house is there. As we approach the house the stench is so thick our eyes water. We can't see in the house because boards are covering the windows. We have to take the back entrance because I remember the trap door from last time. I don't want to go through that again!

As we all head toward the back door Luke notices a fog-covered graveyard. We are so scared we start shaking like skeletons. We opened the back door slowly and quietly because we didn't want the witch to hear. We are about to walk in, and Tommy says "I don't think I want to go in there, it's creepy." I say, "Tommy we have to go in there for my parents." So we all put our big boy pants on and go in.

As we walk in the Duchess House it is dark and creepy. The walls are covered in webs and the house smells like moth balls. As we are snooping around we see the witch in the kitchen cooking something. We army crawl away from the witch and head upstairs. We climb two floors, see a dark hallway, and at the end there is a mysterious door. Seth opens the door and we walk in. It looks like a potion room! I think we've found what we're looking for, so we decide to spread out and look for the potion. My frog mom finds the potion covered in cobwebs. It reads "frog-curing potion," so

I decide to put it in my backpack. We head back down the stairs to get the heck out.

All of a sudden, my frog dad sees a big fat juicy fly. My dad jumps out of my pocket toward the fly. I say, "Dad, no!" My frog dad tips over an old crippled vase. Smash!! The vase crashes to the ground. I look at my dad and grab him and put him back into my pocket. My frog mom starts yelling at my dad saying, "I can't believe you did that, only you would do something like that." All of a sudden the witch comes into the room and looks at all of us. The Duchess says, "You came back did you, and with dinner." Tommy screams, "Run for your lives!" So we run upstairs as fast as we can to hide. Oh my god, the witch got Seth. I think the witch is going to eat him. We need to get him back.

Luke says, "Look, there is the witch's wand." I grab the wand and we all race downstairs. As we go into the kitchen we see Seth in the splintered covered crate. He looks so scared! The witch is going to eat Seth for dinner. I scream at the witch demanding to let Seth go! The Duchess says, "I don't think so!" Out of the corner of my eye I see the zombie running after us. We head to the front door. All of a sudden the zombie is gone. Luke says, "Look, the zombie fell down the trap door. Zombies are so dumb."

We head back to the kitchen to face the Duchess. I remember I have the witch's wand, so I pull it out and point it at the witch. The witch gets scared and runs upstairs. At that time, Tommy frees Seth from the splintered crate. I start shooting magic bolts at the witch. She almost gets away, but I get her. She disappears. At the top the stairs was an ugly wart-covered black cat. Luke says, "I think you turned the Duchess into a cat, Dominick."

I look at the time and it is almost sunrise. We have to get out of this house quick before the house disappears and we are lost forever. We start running as quick as possible to get out. I start noticing that the walls were disappearing and we could see outside. We saw the front door and that too is disappearing. We all jump out of the house into the front yard. The sun was up and we all made it. We are so glad to be alive. We did it, we did it! We jump on our bikes and ride home. I give my mom and dad the potion and they turn back to normal. My parents are human again, but they look angry. My parents say, "Thanks son for saving us, but you're grounded!" "I say, "For what?" "For putting us in that box!"



# Fear vs. Bravery

By Samantha Stephens

Being brave isn't all it's cracked up to be. Putting on armor, holding a sword about to slay a dragon isn't bravery, no, that's courage. Trust me, I know bravery. Facing your biggest fear, that's scary, but not the bravery I'm talking about. Try this, have your family depend on you to save them. That is the very same day my life fell apart. Let's start from the beginning.

My name is Lilly Gomez, and I love scary things. I know the scariest stories. I know the ones that are so vivid that it seems it's happening right in the room. I know my friend's biggest fears, and I know how to get rid of them too. I don't have a fear. But I've always wondered what it's like to get scared. Even if my friends jump out to scare me, they don't do a very good job. I'm tough too. I play football with all the boys. I play video games and eat like a pig, but I don't care.

Anyway, it was Halloween and I had the scariest costume planned. It was a zombie from the television show *The Living Dead*. I went to school that day ready to put on my costume at lunch. It was the normal day, pop quiz, the normal drama, getting into trouble, and reading, until lunch. There were monsters and ghouls and the occasional pop star or diva. When I came out dressed in my costume everyone gasped.

Little kids ran, the third graders cried, and the sixth graders screamed. One kid said that I looked like I had a knife in my arm. I smiled, very proud of myself. The rest of the afternoon was crazy! A ton of kids had a sugar rush and some were hanging from the ceiling, but I just waited for the bell to ring.

When I got home I couldn't eat dinner. I waited for my mom to say that it was time to go trick-or-treating. When she was ready, I was out the door before anyone else could move. I zoomed to the nearest house and rang the doorbell. I did this about a hundred twenty times before I headed for my house. I had to give treats to trick-or-treaters, but I couldn't shake the feeling that I was being watched. Before long I went to bed and slept like a log, until 12:30.

I heard a creak, creak. Then a man screamed followed by a woman's scream, then two thuds. I ran to my parent's room and I felt water under my footsteps. I wish it was water. It was blood, and I saw claw marks on my mom and dad's necks. My mother said I should save my brother. I heard my brother shriek, and then there was a thud. I started screaming to try and wake up the entire neighborhood.

The beast didn't expect anyone in our house to be awake. I saw a form come from my brother's room. It was running away. I tried running after it, but it was much bigger and faster than I was. I was close enough at one point to see that it was a werewolf. I don't know what caused that beast to strike that night.

Did I scream out of fear or bravery? I will never know. I do know to savor every moment with my family now. Our lives could have ended that night.



# Scary Mirror

By Pete Valdez

Once again, it was Halloween time and I needed to find a really good costume. My mom and I went to the Halloween Spirit Store in the mall. Once we stepped inside the store, I wanted to try some costumes on. I went to the dressing room and as I was putting a costume on, I glanced up at the mirror and I saw something weird. I looked away and then turned around real fast but no one was there. I finished trying things on but nothing worked so we left the store.

On our way home, I told my mom about the mirror and she laughed and said I had a good imagination. The next day, we went back to the store to try it again. I went back into the same dressing room and it happened again! I looked up and there in front of me was Frankenstein! I did not know what to do. Before I could think or scream, I punched the mirror. The glass did not break, but he was gone.

I ran out and told the store manager. He said I was crazy but he walked to the room with me. He was not happy when he saw the broken mirror. He left, so I took off the costume and as I put my shoes back on, I looked up and Frankenstein was back! He reached through the mirror and grabbed my arm. I freaked out and ran screaming.

When I got to the car, I realized his hand came off and was still on my arm. I screamed all the way home even at bedtime!



# The Haunted House

By Anna Ochs

It was Halloween night when I decided to go trick-or-treating one last time. I wore a shaggy pink sweater, black as night leggings, pinkish red leg warmers, dirt brown boots and a wig as black as a goblin's soul. I was an '80s girl. I walked to every house knocking on every door and examining every costume. I walked up and down the block until I reached the end. There's something about the house at the end of the block that strikes me with the words, "Bad idea, stay away!" I don't know what it is, but there is something wrong with that place.

I took a big gulp and walked up to the door. I knocked and heard a loud moan, I got scared and went stiff. I could barely breathe. My heart was pounding in my chest; it felt like my chest was bursting open. The moan was getting louder and louder every second, I was screaming in my head. The floors started to creak as the moan got closer. The door slightly opened and I felt cold breathing come from behind me. I turned around, no one was there.

I stepped into the house to check it out. It was dusty and there were cobwebs everywhere. The house smelled musty. I saw a shadow on the wall, but no one else was there. I started screaming. I saw it again and I started to think someone was messing with me. I was getting mad, so I started yelling. The first name that popped into my head was Alex; Alex Parks.

He's always messing with me. So at the top of my lungs I screamed, "Alex, you better stop that!" but the feeling of another presence continued to plague me. So I walked upstairs and I felt something on my leg. I looked down and saw a hand latched onto my leg. I was panicking and shrieking; it was terrifying. I tripped and fell. I saw the shadow again, but this time it was not a shadow, it was a person.

Though, not the kind like you and me; it was not alive nor human. It was a dark soul. I suddenly felt pain. Not just any pain, but the dark soul's pain. It blistered my heart to feel that pain. It was burning right through my soul. I got up, but my knees caused me to stumble back to the floor. It said to me, "How dare you come into my house!"

Finally, I forced myself to stand up and stumble down the stairs. I ran out slamming the door. I ran home and I never went back again. I was never quite the same again, knowing now the depths of pain that one soul can carry.



# The Haunted Carnival

By Trevor Waller



There was once a carnival with a lot of laughter, music, and fun until one day it was silent and empty. What happened to the carnival you ask? All we know is that it became abandoned all of a sudden, or did it? Could there be ghosts, goblins, or maybe even the undead? Johnny and his twin brother Bravo went to find out. As they approached the entrance, they looked at each other with a look of fear and asked each other if they would make it out alive or if they would be lost forever. The creaking of the large rusty gate, made them shiver with fear. Once they slowly walked into the abandoned carnival. The Ferris wheel started to spin. How did that happen? What turned on the Ferris wheel? There was no electricity. Could it be ghosts, goblins, or something very bad? They did not know for sure.

They walked slowly toward the Ferris wheel and the music got loud and they had to plug their ears. Then there was dead silence as they looked at each other they wondered what happened. The lights suddenly turned on and the music came back on, but the song was becoming slower and slower and suddenly they heard a different sound. A moaning noise was coming from the top of the ride. It would get loud then quiet and seemed close, then far away.

They continued to search for the source. Was it a ghost that was scaring them or was it a goblin? They were very confused. Then just as they were getting used to the noises something started to run after them through the carnival. It was dark so they decided to split up and meet back in the old circus tent in the middle of the carnival. There they saw a bunch of old costumes. Some were small and some were large. They saw a werewolf, a witch, a ghost, and a goblin.

They asked each other if they should try them on to blend in with whatever was chasing them. Just as they decided to try them on, they were frightened by the sounds of a witch. "Do you believe in witches?" asked Bravo "No," said Johnny. "Well you should," said Bravo.

The brothers were shaking with fear as they heard the witches fly above the old circus tent. They could see them flying one by one on their broom sticks. They told each other this can't be real, they are just myths. Johnny and Bravo decided to each put on a costume and get to the nearest building with a locking door. Johnny wore a ghost costume and Bravo wore a goblin costume. They split up once again.

When they left the tent they were instantly spotted. What was following them? They ran into the haunted arcade. The arcade game turned on and off very quickly. Then all at

once they shut off for a brief moment then went back on, but only one at a time. Each played one word and they said "Why are you here? You must leave now, there is grave danger." Terrified, they were shaking and squirming around in the dark trying to turn on the lights until they each felt something with four legs. They felt a wet nose and a wet mouth with a lot of teeth. What could it be? Johnny felt his way around until Bravo was next to him and asked him if he felt something like a dog and Bravo said "I really find it hard to believe it is just a dog, maybe it is a werewolf." Johnny said, "No, I have smelled that scent before."

Again they decided to go to the next place. This time it was the haunted house and of course they were being followed by a ghost from the Ferris wheel, the witches from the circus tent, and the werewolf from the haunted arcade. They wondered what was next. Was it going to be just as scary as all the other places? As soon as they entered they were surprised by the bright flashing lights on.



Bravo told Johnny finally we are safe, but just as he said that they were covered from head to toe by a white substance. It was getting very sticky. "I don't think we can get out of this one," Johnny told Bravo, "We just have to think."

They were able to break free by leaving their costumes behind. As they ran out of the haunted house they were surprised by all of the carnival rides and lights being turned on and the music playing very loud. They stopped in their tracks as the creatures got close to them. They were trapped by the werewolf, the ghosts, and the witches. Johnny and Bravo were back to back ready to cry when all the creatures stopped and said, "What are your names and why are you here? You shall never leave." Johnny said, "You don't scare me." The werewolf said, "What do you mean?" Bravo replied, "Yeah, we are not afraid of you."

Just then the witches started to giggle and laugh and said, "Would you like to come to my house, Johnny and Bravo, for some witches brew?" They looked puzzled until the ghosts said, "Gotcha! It is us, your teammates from the basketball team."





# The House on Widow Woods

By Kayla Galarza

It was 3:45 as my friends and I got off the bus. As we were walking home my friend Colt wanted to go to the house on 1627 Widow Woods Street. My friends Jared and Brenda didn't know the house.

Neither did I. So we decided that tomorrow night we'd journey to the house.

The next day, my friends were at their lockers talking about our trip to the house this evening. Some people heard what we were doing. So, the word was out. Around the school were a couple of kids that came up to us. One of the kids said, "We heard you were going to the house on Widow Woods."

"Who told you that?" Brenda replied, "The word's out," said the kid.

Once the kids left we got on the bus heading home. Once we got home we packed our jackets and our snacks. When we were done getting ready we made sure we didn't forget anything and we left. On our way there, we saw the clouds

getting darker, the wind getting stronger and the sky going pale.

After 20 minutes, we finally reached it. The address of 1627 Widow Woods was where my friends and I stood. Watching...listening...waiting. There were myths about this house. Myths about it being haunted. But, my friends and I didn't believe.

We opened the door, and walked in. As the floors squeaked, our eyes wondered at the cobwebs on the chandeliers and stairs. The house was bare, nothing was in the house. Except for one thing. Sitting on a shelf was a doll. "This must be the doll that guards the house," Colt said. "What?" I replied.

"You don't know?" Colt continued, "People say the doll watches the house, and you can feel the eyes watching you."

"Whatever," I replied.

"It also symbolizes bad luck, and hatred," Colt said. "Look!" Brenda exclaimed.

"What?" Jared asked.





A note was sitting next to the doll. I grabbed the note and began reading.

"Thee who touches this doll will face serious consequences." "Wow, what a way to welcome guests in!" Jared shouted.

Then, we continued walking. It was 9:03 p.m. and we were done exploring. We walked down the stairs and Jared was walking slowly behind.

"What's wrong Jared?" Brenda asked.

"I don't want to leave." Jared shouted out. "We should stay the night." Jared thought.

My friends thought it was a good idea. So, I had to agree.

That night we each had a room by our gender. So, me and Brenda were in one room and Jared and Colt in the other. None of us went to sleep. So we all went and wandered around. There were over six rooms in the house. Hours went by and we were all bored.

"Hey, we should play hide and seek," Jared asked. "I'll count!" shouted Colt.

We all ran upstairs, trying to find a hiding spot. We all found one close to each other. Brenda hid by the doll, I hid behind the curtains, and Jared hid under the bed. We heard Colt counting "17....18....19....20. Ready or not here I come!" He looked everywhere downstairs, and into the first bedroom. Nothing. I moved but he didn't see me.

He yelled, "I give up!"

No one believed him. He went downstairs and yelled it again, "I give...."

But he didn't finish what he was going to say. After a few minutes we heard a scream. It was Colt's voice! We all got the chills.

"He is just kidding you guys," Jared said pleading that he was right.

Suddenly, there was a big bang. Then.... silence. We looked and looked but nothing. It was 12:00 a.m. exactly. Still no Colt.

"What happens if we don't find him?" Brenda asked. "We will," Jared continued, "Just give it time."

Hours and hours passed. Still no Colt.

We were all worried. We went outside and thought he was outside exploring. But no sign. Suddenly, we heard Brenda scream. Jared and I rushed to her. There she stood with a speechless look on her face. We followed her eyes and she was staring at the grave yard behind the house. We couldn't believe what we saw. Brenda ran inside and ran upstairs. Jared and I tried to catch up with her, but she was too fast.

Then we couldn't find her. Did Brenda disappear? I thought to myself. Jared and I let our fear take the bravery out of us. We packed up our stuff and we left.

That morning we went to school and we saw Brenda and Colt. "Where were you guys last night?" Jared asked.

"Who are you guys?" Brenda replied. "Oh, I don't know?" I said sarcastically.

The bell rang. Jared, Brenda, and Colt disappeared. Then, at that moment, I realized that I only dreamed the whole thing. I was relieved. I opened my locker to get my books and inside was the doll from the house. Just sitting there smiling at me.

Then suddenly it said, "Come again."

# You're Next

By Grace Keilbach

I was walking home from school enjoying the crisp air of autumn. The leaves were just beginning to turn colors and fall onto the cold hard ground. I was taking my time, being careful to take small, graceful steps to ensure that I could enjoy this beautiful stroll as long as possible.

A small leaf had just fallen into the palm of my hand when I happened to glance down and spot a small, torn up journal. I bent down and picked it up, being careful that the pages stayed bound together. As I continued on my walk home, I decided to speed up so that I would get home faster and would be able to read the book before my mother got home. I walked up the front porch steps, and slipped in the door. I was later to discover that the small mistake I had made out of curiosity to bring the journal with me had made the difference between life and death. My fate had already been decided then and there.



After grabbing some leftovers with my name, “Ginny” labeled on it in my mother’s messy handwriting, I turned into my bedroom to steal a glance at the strange journal I had happened to stumble upon. I untied the neatly-tied bow that had kept it closed and began to read the forgotten stories written on the innocent pieces of paper. It read:

*“October 19, 2012. It has been roughly a year since I found this thing, this key to death. But over the year it has kept me company and without being able to write my story upon these pages I would not have been able to stay sane. As I look at my reflection staring back at me I want to cry. These bruises that cover my body now seem like old friends instead of unwelcomed strangers. The cuts on my wrist that he has given me no longer sting with pain and the bleeding has stopped almost completely. Today is my last day alive unless a hopeless rescue comes to find me, and to think this is all because I picked up this journal. The entries before mine let me know that I wasn’t the first and that I won’t be the last. He’s coming to get me, to get me for the last time. I must go and I will face my death with courage. Whoever is reading this I’m so sorry. Good bye forever, Annabeth May.”*

With shaky hands I quickly slammed the book shut. What kind of sick twisted journey was that? October 19, 2012 was just one day ago. I took some deep breaths and tried to calm myself down. I couldn’t shake the feeling that this wasn’t just some mentally-disturbed girl that had written this for “fun.” I couldn’t shake the feeling that this scary story was true. The fact that I was supposed to be next, next in line to be murdered according to this random stranger named Annabeth was insane. Stuff like this only happens in movies; I tried to convince myself with no luck. I’m only 13 years old! How could something like a diary entry control my fate? Well sitting there, on my comfy bed, in my own house, that’s the last memory I had of life, life as I knew it.

I didn’t understand. The next thing I knew I fell unconscious and woke up laying on the cold, hard, ground of someone’s cellar. Not knowing how long I had been laying limp on the floor with blood covering my body like a blanket, I began to cry. Not out of pain or fear, but of knowing that this was real. The only thing I had to comfort me was a pen and the same journal I had found, now with a new coat of blood covering.

Days, weeks, and then months pass of being alone and deprived of the things I used to love so much. I can vividly remember the day I found this wretched journal that ordered my death sentence. It wasn’t fair. My time on earth is almost up all because of a message written on paper that I so happened to find. I have no fear for it has turned to confusion and anger. Why me?

October 19, 2013

I’ve given up all hope of rescue. It’s been about a year since I’ve been here and don’t ask me where, for I don’t know and would like to keep it that way. All of the fear of knowing this day would arrive is gone. I want to die to escape all of the pain I’ve been through. I am ready to welcome death as a friend, and you should too. I’m sorry to inform you that you have no future. You will never get to live the rest of your life. There is no escaping your fate now that you have picked up this book. I’m sorry that I have to deliver such grim news to you on such an innocent little piece of paper. You may guess that my tragedy is yet to strike again because I regret having to tell you that you are next.

# Dark Reasoning

By Madison Krupka

What if I told you I had the will power and desire to infect your mind with a baring plague of dark fears? I can blow your mind with anxiety and the real secrets behind my doors. My dark fears will make you question anything and everything. Not only will fear get to you, but you will never want to ride up and down my rusty shaft ever again. Once you realize the real fear that I bring upon you, it will substantially affect and haunt you forever. I'm old and run down and you really don't want to be going up and down me in the dark, do you? Noise will crawl up your skin like nothing you've ever felt before. Goose bumps will ride up your body like bugs. As soon as the noises and chill take over your mind, then the darkness will substitute for a figure of your imagination.

When the figure of your imagination gets deeper in your mind you will become horrified of the dark and hallucinate things that are just figures of your imagination. Or, maybe there is actually something in that darkness that's just intensely staring you down. But, the ecstatic thing is; only I know...

Most people are afraid of spiders and snakes, but the handful of people who are afraid of strangers are my favorite kind of people. There are a couple of people crammed together in a dark confined space with no access to the outside world. If I happen to just "accidentally" get stuck or unexpectedly stop, you are unfortunately left with unknown people that could potentially kill you. Let that sink in for a while and see if you still want to take a shortcut and be lazy but still ride me to your next destination.

For the citizens who can't be enclosed in confined caged spaces, you are going to have real trouble with me. I can fit about seven people, occasionally eight and most of them are touching shoulders and can hardly breathe. The fear will eat at your spirit until you break. Once that happens you will go mentally insane and never want to step a foot inside of me again. But frankly, I am okay with that, less people for me to haul up and down my old and unfixed shaft.

Last, but certainly not least, is the agonizing fear of heights which I'm famous for. My small windowless space is like a tomb of death and once you set foot in me, I shake and bounce all the way up and down my small weak strands of thin cables. Most people who are afraid of heights won't step foot in me, but the select few that will, are extremely brave and mega risk takers. At any second, my cables could break into two pieces and you could be on the top floor plummeting to the basement of the building to your death in a matter of seconds.

The most fantastic part about all of this is that I *control* everything! I have the instruments to make unfortunate things happen. If you are planning on catching a horrifying ride in an elevator to your next terminus, remember that it could be your last. Once you step foot inside of me, reconsider and think about why you are doing so and is it worth the risk? Then make a list in your mind about the darkness that will haunt you until death. The strangers that will mentally and physically take advantage of you and make you suffer. Think about how the tight enclosed and confined caged space will and can trap you forever.

Most importantly think about those not so sturdy and powerless cables that are in the control of me and could snap at any minute leading you to the drop of death. As soon as you step inside of me and leave the rest of the world to the other side of the doors, remember, you may never return!



# The Curse of The Lonely Howler

By: Nick Knezevich

It was a night like any other night. Oh! Where are my manners? The name's Tom. Tom Owarra. Anywho, where was I at? Oh, yes. Me and my friend Zeek Willberge were out frog hunting one night when Zeek saw a cotton tail dash off in the woods. It was the biggest one we ever saw, had to be at least four feet tall. Zeek was the kind of guy who was always looking for a quick buck, so he quietly walked in the woods and I stayed looking for more frogs.

A couple of minutes after he left I heard Zeek scream. It was a blood-curdling scream. I spent all night looking for him and calling out his name. All I could find was his coon skin hat, thought it was real when I first saw it. Come morning I called 911. It took them an hour to reach me. With the help of bloodhounds, me and the cops searched for my friend. Within a few minutes we followed the dogs to a clearing and there we found Zeek's tracks, torn up pieces of his shirt, and coyote tracks.

The dogs and police kept looking while I stayed to look for more clues. On a low-hanging branch about two feet above the ground was a tuft of white fur with some blood stains on it. I smelled the fur; being an expert of the woods I knew that only one animal had that smell, a coyote. Since it was white it had to be an albino. Me and the cops searched all day for Zeek, we never did find the body. After the cops left I went home, I grabbed my knife and gun. The hunt was on.

I walked through the dark woods looking for any signs really peaceful in the woods at night listening to frogs croak, and watching the coons fish. But I didn't have time for the

After a couple hours of looking, it grew quiet. It isn't quiet. With all my senses keen I was still. Then I heard the a coyote. At my feet lay some white fur and a trail of coyote the anger rise through my body wanting to avenge my dear through the woods like a scared deer.

Jumping over logs and running fast, finding more and The tracks led me to the fence. That fence was what separated desert.

I heard the same lonely howl come from a strange rock far into the desert and the tracks led that way as well. When formation I saw a cave, within that cave I could see glowing me. It had to be him since albinos have red eyes. I fired my gun into the cave then about a half a dozen bats flew out of the cave blinding me for a second. He scampered up the rock. I climbed up after him; about ten feet up I dropped my gun. But I still had my knife. I cornered him at the edge of the rock; it was twelve feet to the ground so he couldn't go anywhere. Then I lunged at him and wrestled him to the ground. His long sharp claws drove into my flesh and he bit into my arm. He had dog breath. With my eyes closed I swung the knife at him. I heard a whimper and he let go of me. When my eyes opened at my feet lay the body of a dead coyote. I carried him down the rock and through the woods to my house. There I spent the next two days stuffing him. I had him posed mouth open snarling on his hind haunches. Then I went to bed. I slept for a few minutes until the shattering of glass woke me up. When I got up I saw a broken window, the coyote gone and a note on the floor.

The note said:

"Dear Tom I want you to know that I am okay, but don't come looking for me. Nice job on coyote. Couldn't have done a better job myself. I'm going to tell you what the fellow that I met after killing that rabbit told me after he bit me. Few fall victim to this curse. It's as rare for it to happen as albinism. Even, rarer than for it to result in an albino. But it isn't all a curse, quite fun actually. But you too will come to the curse soon. The curse of the lonely howler. Sincerely, your friend Zeek Willberge."

I looked up the hill in front of my house to see and hear the shape of a coyote as he howled lonely to the moon.



of the coyote. It's the owls hoot, peacefulness. natural for it to be lonesome call of tracks. I could feel friend Zeek. I ran more pieces of fur. the woods from the formation not too I reached the red eyes staring at



# Trial and Error

By Dean Gardiner



I woke up one morning cold, tired, confused, and also tied down. On either side of me there were 10 or 20 kids. What was happening? I heard a voice, “VAM, now testing subject number 22.” I looked down to notice that there was a 23 branded on my wrist. I looked to my left and saw that my best friend Bryce was number 22.

This strange man was in a lab coat and he came over to Bryce and gave him gas so he would pass out, then put him on a hospital bed and took him away. One hour later the man came back and said, “VAM, take subject number 22 off the list, he is deceased.”

I couldn’t believe it, my best friend dead. Just last night we were on a bus with about fifty other kids heading to Paladasi’s Private School for Boys. Wait, every other kid in here was on that bus. A million theories started rushing through my head. Was this a scam? Did my parents purposefully sign me up for this? Am I dreaming?

The man walked to his computer and said, “VAM, now testing subject number 23.” She answered back “Yes sir.” My heart stopped, that was me. Was I going to die?

The man pumped gas into me and put me on the hospital bed. The next thing I knew, I was chained to a table. My arms were sore; he had been sticking needles into them and drawing blood. He had been injecting me with something. I don’t know what it was but it made me dizzy, very dizzy. I heard the door opening and I instantly closed my eyes, pretending to be asleep. He said to me “Little boy, you may be the answer to all my problems, your blood is healthy and your immune system is strong.”

He was about to stick another needle into my arm and as the cold metal of the needle hit my skin I turned my head and bit his hand and I screamed at him, “What are you doing to the boys here?!”

As he walked to the sink to wash his hand from the blood gushing out, he said calmly, “Trying to make the world a better place.”

“What? How? What do we have to do with it?!”

“You see, children are more durable and also, they are less susceptible to diseases. This is why I have ‘kidnapped’ you and the other boys, so I can make some kind of formula to make people like myself more like you so we can live longer, be healthier and enjoy life for just a bit longer, this is my goal.”

I didn’t know what to say, so I lay there silent, with nothing on my mind except for one thing To get out of here and tell the police about what this man was doing.

Once again he gassed me and when I woke up I wasn’t with the other kids, I was in my own room, free to roam. It also had a bed, television, and even a mini fridge stuffed with treats and drinks. Where was I? Was I still in the custody of this strange man? I tried opening the door, but it was locked. In the corner of my eye I saw a camera zooming in and out observing me to make sure I didn’t make any suspicious moves. When I saw this I knew that he was watching me, I was nervous, how was I going to get out if he was watching me?

I heard footsteps coming down the hall, and they were moving fast, this couldn’t be the man, the man was reasonably old maybe in his older 50s, he had blonde hair with streaks of gray. Also, he was short, 5’4” maybe? So this could not be him. Whoever it was, they were young, fast, and in a hurry. I quickly hid under the bed in case it was someone coming to test on me again. The door started to open and a shiver of fright went down my spine. It was not the man or anyone that would harm me. It was a boy that has lived on my street for six years but I still did not know his name.

“Wait I know you. You’re the boy who lives on my street, what’s your name again?” he asked.

“Justin, what’s yours?” I said back still in shock that finally somebody was not trying to hurt me.

“Emile, we have to get out of here. I see some sort of door at the end of the hall.”

“Well then, what are we standing here doing nothing for? Let’s go!”

The door was still open from when Emile came in, and as we walked out the door he looked to the left and then to the right to see if there was anyone in the hall and then said, “This way, come on” as he pointed to the right.

We were sprinting as fast as we could and I saw it, the door, but before the door to the exit was another door. It was very suspicious because it was stained with some sort of green liquid, it wasn’t dried or anything so you can tell it was being used. I stopped but Emile kept going, He looked back and said “Come on, what you are doing?” but as he said this the door opened behind him and it was the man he grabbed Emile and Emile screamed “Get out of here, save yourself!”

The man was too distracted keeping Emile contained so I was able to slip by him in this narrow space and get out of the door. Sunlight. I was free, or was I?

# From Above

By Brooklyn Micheli

Through the dim lighting and the misty fog I could faintly spot an indistinct figure. I felt as if my feet were somehow stuck, somehow non-existent, refusing to budge from the sidewalk corner. As this blurred physique advanced towards me, my heart began to pound rapidly against my ribcage. His blue veins weren't hard to spot under his pale skin. The fog served as a shield around us, blocking others from seeing in. His eyes went blank as he asphyxiated me, clearly aware of the acts he was performing but not wanting to be emotionally attached. I couldn't escape; all I could do was struggle. Life slipped out of my grasp, as unconsciousness peered over me and my mind went into a black void.

8 Days Later

There is a place between heaven and earth where the clouds close in around you and you are completely shaded from the world below. Only a few visit here, some are fortunate enough to catch a glimpse of it in a dream while others never get the chance to be exposed to this kingdom. From here you have the ability to see and hear any conversation below that you desire. I am lucky enough to possess these powers. I am lucky enough to be an angel.

As I sit in this haze, I peer below and spot him. The stiff form as he walks portrays a certain edge to his appearance – his musty grey hair and his eyes. Many say, “The eyes are the windows to the soul,” and in this case I would have to agree with that quote. When he killed me I was able to see for a split second the color of his eyes change. At first they appeared as a blank hard stare, but then the color faded into a soft hazel. It would be much easier to straight-up ask him why he murdered me, but that is impossible because I am dead.

His strides are long and stretched as he makes his way down the street. The street on which he murdered me. His name is not very original nor is it over used. His name is Phil. Phil Montgomery. He comes across as a mysterious man, which he is. His motives are unknown. Phil isn't aware I am watching him slowly walk to that haunting corner. I observe as he stops swiftly at that corner. He stares down at it, probably replaying the memory of him killing me over and over again. He glances left, then right, checking his surroundings. Then he gazes upon the sky and raises his hand to wave as if signaling me. His feet start to move once

again, this time in a quicker manner. He is now breaking into a full-out sprint.

Within moments he appears to be on the front steps of my suburban house or what was my house when I was present on this earth. I wish I could go back to my home, be able to once again sleep in my bed, possibly revisit my old Nascar in the garage, even hold my most prized possession, my late wife's ashes. Phil approaches my front door and pulls out a set of keys from his pocket. My keys. Opening the door he creeps inside and I watch as he wanders through my home. As I spy on Phil, I wonder what is going through this man's head?! How did he get my set of house keys? How does he know my address?

As I focused on these questions I hadn't even realized that Phil was now making his way towards my basement. His feet screeched against the hardwood floor. Phil made his way towards the mantel that hung on my office wall. His hand ventured out and snatched up the jar my wife's ashes were secured in. Twisting around on his heels, he fled from my basement and up my third floor master bedroom. I observe as he carefully sets down the remains of my wife on the bedside table and begins to raid my clothes. He strips off his lavender button up dress shirt and pulls my old college sweatshirt over his bald head. Kicking off his loafers he pulls back the white comforter on my bed and hops in my sheets. The jar then makes its way into the bed with him. His finger traces the rim of the jar. He inhales the scent of her ashes, his eyes roll back into his skull and he sighs with pleasure. After a few brief minutes I can see his breathing go steady and a light snore drifts into the air as slumber takes over his body. It hits me like a ton of bricks, he never wanted me, he wanted my wife. My wife was his motive.



# The People of the Masks

By Chelsea Greenway

Halloween, the only night we can be anyone we want to be. While Halloween is a favorite holiday for some, it is a terrible nightmare for others. It is a night when nothing is quite as it seems. Some people say it is a night when a door is opened into our dimension. And when the moon is full, like it's supposed to be tonight, some people, or creatures should I say, are able to enter through that door. It is a night when everyone is concealed by masks so you never know if you're talking to a person or a monster. You never know who is behind the mask.

It was the afternoon before Halloween and I was just putting some finishing touches on my costume. I wanted to have the best costume ever. My costume consisted of a mask and a vintage looking dress making me into a princess-like character. It was perfect. I finished trying on my costume, but I was getting tired. Still wearing my mask, I decided to take a nap before I went trick or treating.

It was 7 o'clock when I awoke to the phone ringing. My parents weren't home because they were at an office party. I was exhausted but ready to get going. I had no idea who would be calling on this holiday but, I picked up anyway.

"Hello?" I said into the receiver. "Is anyone there?"

All I heard on the other end was deep breathing that gave me chills down my spine. Scared, I quickly hung up. "Well I wonder who that was," I murmured.

Realizing I was still wearing my mask, I went to take it off and refresh myself but was stopped when the phone rang again. My heart skipped a beat. Who could it be? Was it the same number as before?

I hesitated before answering. "Hello?" I questioned the person on the other line. There was no reply except for the same heavy breathing. My name was softly said. "Patricia," the mystery voice sang. I threw the phone onto the couch.

I ran to my room petrified. My parents were still at their party, so I couldn't interrupt them. Everyone else was probably trick-or-treating. Suddenly I realized I still hadn't removed my mask. I began trying to pull it off but it was stuck. No matter how hard I tried it wouldn't come off. Finally I looked in the mirror and I was taken aback to see my own reflection. The once beautiful mask I had just made hours before was now hideous. I looked like a monster.

Now I was thoroughly terrified. Not only was I scared of the mystery voice but I was also scared of myself. What had

happened to me? Not knowing what else to do I ran outside into crowds of trick-or-treaters. I began to run with no set destination in mind. I just needed to hide from all the people in the masks. But how could I hide from myself?

As I began to cry I heard the same voice I had heard over the phone. Having nothing to protect me and being all by myself, I felt like all hope was lost. "Patricia," the voice sang out into the evening air. "Patricia, come to us. We can save you." Feeling as if I had no better option I followed the voice to an abandoned field with only a door standing in the middle of it. The voice once again rang out, "Patricia, we can save you; all you need to do is go in through the door." Finally having enough of all this I screamed, "Who are you? Why do you want to save me? Are you not the one who did this to me? Why did you bring me to a door in the middle of nowhere? How can going into it save me?"

The voice didn't respond for several minutes and I felt myself losing my sanity. At last it said, "We are The People of the Masks. We did nothing to you. You have been chosen. This door is your only hope, your future. It is a portal. It will take you to people like yourself. People who will accept you. The People of the Masks are waiting."

"What do you mean we?" I demanded. "Who are The People of the Masks? And what happens if I don't go through the portal?"

"The People of the Masks are the ghosts and goblins, witches and werewolves, and basically all the monsters that you know of and more. There is no one voice. We all are the voice and without the portal you will perish," they replied.

I was at a loss for words when I looked down at myself. Only I wasn't myself anymore. I had fur all over my body and claws coming out of my fingers. I was a monster too. That's when I made my decision, "I am now one of you. I am a part of The People of the Masks."

"We are glad you came to that decision by yourself. Now come through the door. And remember, you never know who is behind the mask."

I walked up to the portal containing the nightmares of millions, the ones that haunted me just years ago. I would now officially become someone's nightmare. Accepting my fate, I stepped through the doorway.



## 70 Years Later

I have lived in this dimension now for 70 years, but it still seems like just yesterday that I walked through the doorway. In these years, I learned it is humans that wear the masks. We let our true selves show despite our name. We are The People of the Masks, but it is humans who hide behind masks. On Halloween nights when the moon is full, much like the one when I first came to the other side, I visit my former home, remembering the phrase, “You never know who is behind the mask.”



# Join Me

By Breanna Elliss

Abigail. That was the name that kept replaying over and over in my head. Every night for multiple years, I had seen a girl in my dreams and all around her was the whispering of her name as well as the phrase, "Join me." She didn't look real. Her skin had the complexion like that of a porcelain dolls, and her hair was too perfect to be real. Each night she would stand there in my dreams with her head down. Until one night she lifted up her head to reveal her face, and that's when all my troubles began. I had always believed that dreams could not harm you. But from the first time that Abigail showed her face, I had a feeling that my beliefs were no longer true.

Once her face was in sight, it was obvious that her eyes were nonexistent. They had been replaced by terrifying holes filled with emptiness. Each night when I saw her lift her head, I was instantly awakened, sweating and panting. Each time that I saw Abigail, she became more frightening. Something would be added such as a cut to her temple, or blood trickling from the emptiness in her eyes. I wanted to stop the dreams, but whenever I mentioned them to anyone, they grew worse until I realized that keeping them to myself was the wisest thing to do.

One morning, I woke up and staggered to my bathroom mirror, still in a daze from my surprisingly peaceful slumber. What I saw made me come to my senses. As I stood gazing into my mirror, I realized in terror that Abigail had replaced my reflection. I reached for the faucet, turning the hot water on full blast. I repeatedly splashed my face until the water became so hot that I could no longer stand it. I returned my gaze to the mirror, where everything was normal except for six words written in steam on the bathroom mirror, "Join me. Join me. Join me." This reoccurred each morning, and the bruises and scrapes that were on Abigail began to appear on myself as well. Abigail was changing me. When I saw her, I was no longer myself. I tried to fight her, but she took me over. And I no longer had a choice but to do what she told me to.

Eventually my teachers noticed my cuts. I had no choice but to blame my parents. I loved them, I really did, but Abigail had control over me. Eventually, I was taken from my family and moved into foster care. At one home, I was awakened by one of my dreams and left to use the restroom. As I passed the mirror, I did not even give it a glance, for I knew what I would see returned to the room that I shared with five other children to find that they had been replaced

by Abigail. They spoke in unison, "Join us. Join us. Join us." I began screaming as two Abigail clones in their nightgowns rushed to my aid. More came with a stretcher and restrained me. One stabbed a needle into my neck and I don't remember what happened after that. I woke up in a padded room.

Abigail ordered me to stay calm, and I couldn't resist. I was eventually relocated to a regular hospital room. I saw my family. Abigail ordered me to tell them my last goodbyes, and I knew what was coming. I told everyone that I loved them and that they shouldn't worry about me. Everyone thought I was crazy, but at least I saw them one last time. Abigail said she doesn't give many people that chance. She said that I was special. She told me that I would take her place when she was done with me. I didn't know what that meant but I didn't want to find out.

I went to sleep on my final night only to be woken up by a familiar voice. Abigail was talking. I couldn't make out her words; all I know is that soon, she was sitting on my chest. I tried to breathe but it was impossible. She pressed her cold hard lips against mine and I was unconscious. When I came back into consciousness, she was sitting on me eating something. I couldn't see what they were at the time, but I am now aware of her meal. They were my eyes! Abigail was eating my eyes. As I realized this, Abigail applied a huge amount of pressure to my chest. This caused me to open my mouth, gasping for air. As soon as I did this, one of the eyes was shoved into my mouth and I blacked out. But before I did, I heard many children's voices chiming, "Join us. Join us. Join us."

I am now one of their army. Abigail's job was to collect fifty children for her army before she could enter the next life. I was her fiftieth and now I have to take her place. Whenever I try to revolt, they attack me. I call them the "No eyes." I don't have a choice, unless I want to stay an eyeless slave for eternity. So now I must haunt children's dreams. I do not want to do it, and in truth I hate it. But whatever my next life is has to be better than a place where eyes do not exist. So every night, I enter children's dreams and orchestrate the whispering of my name. Until, as Abigail did to me, I drive those poor helpless children insane.

Maybe one day, I will enter your dreams and you will hear my name like I heard Abigail's. I will add you to my army and I will be one person closer to entering my next life. Until then, I will leave you with six simple words, "Join me. Join me. Join me."



# The Kiss of a Nightingale

Cyann Shostle

I walked down the eerie hallway. The dampened earth mashed between my feet. I could feel the harsh thump of my heart against my chest. The fatigue was finally setting in again. I must have run a mile from whatever that ravenous beast was. It almost looked like the eyes of his; subtle yet yearning for the feeling of science. A faint drip from above has sprinkled over me; I'm too tired to care for this heavenly rain. The dark cloaked me once more, the only light was that of a crisp moon, but even that was fading now. My body fell with a thud and I could feel the sharp jagged hands on my ankles and the slow imprint of my body's imprint being dragged across the dusty narrow hallway. Nothing was left now, no more fighting.

Nothing is ever left when he finds me once more.

I awoke to the heavy-paced breathing of the beast I encountered from before. My body ached with pain head to toe. My once luscious fiery red hair was now soaked with the loose soil and crushed adobe of that heinous dungeon. The creature came closer until I could feel the rugged off-beat heat of breaths against my frail, small white neck. Its slowly-paced footfalls were like an entrancing slope of fear, the sound of steel boots against sheet metal, when it spoke, "Hello Luscinia."

I couldn't speak, not a single muscle in my body was budging. In a paralyzed state I stayed unwilling.

"I understand that you cannot reply. The IV attached to your arm is not willing to your limbs."

The voice, that voice; it sounded so familiar. But it was rougher than before, like he had stayed in the mountains and caught a long everlasting cold that scarred his throat. My eyes peeked over the hill of my slender nose. A dark mask hid his face, I knew. The scarred tissue of his face was hidden under that ever so familiar black tengu mask. His muscular build stood just inches away from my left shoulder but the dimensions of what he was wearing was enclosed behind the dim yellow shining light that was coming in from somewhere beyond what I lay on.

"I am Lucifer. I am the owner of this lovely kingdom you have locked yourself away in. But I don't believe you'd forget that in such a time my darling. Now, I'm sorry for the leisure circumstances but I can't have you escaping on me again now can I? Don't worry the fun will begin soon, I promise," Lucifer said compellingly with a sly grin and

a small faint maniacal laugh. He pulled at the edge of his beautiful tengu mask and it fell to the floor with a grace. I couldn't lift any of my scrawny limbs; dead weight. The skin of my body, once velvet, now seared against my bones between the freezing cold hospital cart for a table and my body pressure. My malnourished body was clung to by the torn linen rags like that of a toddler to his mother's side. I took the time to evaluate the situation when he disrupted my bemusement.

"When I found you in that stale-aired dungeon, my heart ached at the sight of you. No movement was present and my specimen lay broken and bitten by what seemed the fearsome of death. But when you twitched, and fretted awake slowly, I knew. I knew that I had found you once more. My lonesome road was now over and the new experiments would be brought to life! You put much effort in running this time, yet again my dear Nightingale. You could never run far from me my darling dear you know that. Your chemical make-up won't let such a thing," He said with smug and greed lingering in his daring yet soothing voice. He touched my face and his familiar warmth cooled my intent. My eyes drooped-lower, lower, down, closed.

I awoke in a large plush bed. The smell of fresh night air danced beneath my nose. I, Luscina Nightingale, was entranced in his grasp once more. The over filling glow of white rose petals laced the room when he entered and spoke, "I've brought you the tea of the Nightingales, my love, to replenish what you have lost," he said as he lifted the tea to my lips. The smell sang to senses like the males of the nightingale birds that sang to the ladies at night. As I drank to replenish, I couldn't help but feel like I was losing more than what I was to be gaining. While my lips grazed the ivory tea cup at last sip, a splitting pain jittered up my spine like over radiated cancer. Distraught, I looked up at his evil grin once again and remembered; remembered the millennia spent tortured and abused, running in circles in that sick and twisted heart melting smile of his. Remembered of our mortality and the power he'd used over me to compromise a vast portion of mine, the demented experiments on sanity solely chemical based. Once more my eyelids lulled shut to the sound of a giddy little boy with a new toy.

Pain shrouded my body. All ability to coherency was lost. I was lost again between time and space, floating in the

millennia that was ahead of me. The chemical experiments with my sanity, the abuse of my once highly-rated mind now deteriorates in the hands of a psychotic amateur scientist's lab. My entire body twitched back to life. I glimpsed around my room, to the calendar and back. No time was lost. Nothing was lost, in the years I've lived, nothing was finally lost and my never-ending dream came to a halt. I reached down to my bedside and wrote in the journal that lay there to the familiar smell of cooking pancakes.

"It was just a nightmare. They're never just nightmares..."



# The Black Tapestry

By Kenny Walter

The cold shiver of night seeped through the walls of the castle, creeping through halls, and climbing up the back of the tapestry, until it reached Klaus Verrit. It slid up his back, and exhaled winter onto his neck. Quickly, he turned around searching for the culprit, but to no avail. Then he returned his attention to the gouged tapestry that depicted the very piece of land he stood on now, "The Black Castle." But he sensed something strange about the masterpiece. Its linens were perfectly lined with the stone walls, so, naturally, Klaus began to pull the tapestry back when the castle's door knockers suddenly slammed and echoed throughout the house.

When Klaus arrived at the door he swung it open to find a package marked to him, a small parcel that looked like it held some type of jacket. He picked it up and shut the door, but now something had changed. The kitchen table was slightly off center and was now only slightly visible from the front door. Klaus rushed in and found nothing in sight of the large room, but he still knew something was wrong. He placed the parcel on the table and raced into the hall, the light of the German countryside reflecting its moonlit glow dancing upon his blonde hair. When he reached the tapestry, he noticed the castle was suddenly tinted to a darker black, almost a perfect representation of a perfect night sky.

He ignored it and continued his journey to the outdoor maze, the only other possible place for an intruder to hide. Klaus walked through the back door and into the maze, flashlight in hand, and fear in mind. He tip-toed through the brush as a bead of sweat slid down the side of his face. At the junction stood a fountain with a trail of red coming from its left side, and leading straight to Klaus. He turned and noticed the trail double-backing its way from where he came.

Now Klaus was running. The bush was closing in on him now like spiked fences, and he nearly didn't make out from the thorns of despair that desperately threw out their hands in hopes of keeping the lost fools who dare enter, when suddenly from the house, a glass could be heard hitting the floor with such intensity, it filled Klaus up with absolute anger. He rushed back through the door, down the hallway, and past the now soaking-wet tapestry. But this was not his concern. Someone or something had broken into his new house, had led him on a wild goose chase, had somehow passed him directly in his own maze, and was now destroying the inside of his house.

Klaus raced into the kitchen to find a white orb floating above his table, brighter than a white spotlight, right as it

flew straight into his table. He noticed now that his package was opened and was at the other end of the table, tattered to pieces. He

approached slowly and carefully picked up a note that was previously connected to the package. As he walked he read, "Dear Klaus, Your condition is extremely fragile, so we can't let you move into the new property your uncle has left you."

Klaus looked around now, confused, his heart pumping, and kept on approaching the ever-so-far parcel and read further, "For now, your schizophrenia can only be treated with isolation, and you are to stay on these premises until you are cured. We're also sorry to say that your family has still not replied to your letters. But do not fret; we'll gladly be your new family. Your family, The Staff of Hall B." Klaus threw the note down, and raced to the package to find a strait jacket set within the tissue, with a bottle of pills laid on top. Klaus, now weighed down by his tears, ran back down the hall to the front door, but had to stop, for the tapestry was now ruined. Its glorious fabric was stained, and depicted an older hospital looking building with dark spires and darkened windows. Klaus fell to his knees with a dull thud and saw that something bright was behind the tattered mess of a picture. He flung the tapestry up and a light blinded him immediately; he went unconscious.

When he awoke, he was strapped to a padded wall, in a padded room, with his uncle in a doctor's uniform standing in the opposite corner, merely nodding and jotting down notes on a notepad. "Please," cried Klaus, "release me from this hellish nightmare!" The doctor looked up and merely said, "I wish I could, but I'm not a miracle worker." Klaus now let out a scream of absolute terror and desperately wriggled in his chains with intensity.

"Someone come get this one. He's hallucinating about the past again. And send him straight to electroshock therapy, which should calm him." Men in white now raced in with a strait jacket, and quickly and carefully put the flailing Klaus into it very tightly. As they escorted him out, Klaus yelled, "Soon! I'll be cured very soon Dr. Geisteskrank. I promise!" As soon as he was gone, a nurse approached the doctor asking, "Will he?" and he merely replied, "Let's find out," and a mad grin spread across his face as his eyes proceeded to look directly at the lobotomy table.





# The Day the Tumbleweeds Attacked

By Douglas Kenyon



Fall had arrived again! You could feel it out here on the eastern plains of Colorado, especially this year. For the first time in a decade, the plains were green from all the summer rains we received. However, today felt and looked odd, there was something more than the season changing.

The day, a Thursday to be exact, was like all the others before it, driving and peddling my wares to the families and communities east of Pueblo, Colorado. On a normal day, I would navigate my way over country roads, leaving dust trails for miles, searching for ranches and farms to sell them ice cream. You see, I was the “Ice Cream Man from Hell”, a Schwan’s man!

As I loaded my big yellow truck, I always got in trouble for calling it that because it was Aztec Gold, the fall winds had begun to gust. This was not unusual for this time of year out here. As I climbed in behind the wheel to fire up the freezer on wheels, the wind swirled in front of the truck picking up dirt and gravel, throwing it all over me and my truck before I could close the door. Once on the road I began to feel uneasy, an unusual ominous feeling of alarm rooted in my gut or as I was soon to find out, an uprooting fright.

Along the drive I began to notice changes to the familiar terrain. Fall had begun to leave its mark, changing what was once green to red, yellow and brown. Leaves, mixed with dust and grass would hurry by the windshield and then turn and bounce off the glass. I could see tumbleweeds race by the truck as it sped along the dirt roads to the next driveway and delivery. It was as if they were avoiding my truck at all costs. At times, it even felt like they were pursuing me!

In spite of the winds pushing me in directions I wasn’t heading, I made it to my destination and made the delivery. Upon returning to my truck of treats, I discovered it to be buried on one side with those pesky tumbleweeds. They had piled up enough to cover the passenger’s side of the truck. Not that I’m a horticulturalist, it seemed as if these dead weeds were alive! They fought off my attempts to remove them, poking, scratching and hanging on to anything they could find. I did prevail but I took away the menacing message they sent.

With that stop behind me, I brushed off my imagination and like the postman, I continued to my next and last stop. This isolated country road was narrow, lined with barbed wire fences on both sides to keep the cattle in, a deep gully in the middle and 90-degree left turn at the end. On a good day it was piece of cake, of course, a la mode.

The sun was creeping down behind the mountains, giving Colorado another Bronco sunset. As I marveled at the view, tumbleweeds began darting in and out from the front of my truck. They began to bounce off the sides of my truck, making scratching noises as they fell away as if they were trying to hold on. My instincts told me to keep moving towards my last target, it was just the wind playing tricks on me. The gully approached as did more tumbleweeds. I watched these tumbleweeds jump over the road not letting anything get in their way on their trip to wherever they were going. They pelted off my truck, again hanging on as long as they could. It seemed like they were looking in on me, trying to tell me something. I wasn’t stopping to find out!

Emerging from the gully, just a left turn away from the last stop, on the horizon, I couldn’t believe my eyes. These wretched tumbleweeds were forming a barricade on the corner. They were mounting the fences using each other to ford the man made barrier. The first ones in sacrificing themselves on the fence as the next ones rolled over their fallen comrades. They seemed to entwine themselves to block my advance. By the time I entered the corner, the road had become blocked with their carcasses, thwarting my journey. Panicked now, I threw the gears into reverse only to find they had surrounded me, halting me in my tracks.

I closed my eyes; my mind imagined the worst and contemplated the future of being an ice cream man. Were these abominations of nature really alive, ready to pounce on me? The uproar became deafening with all the scratching, squeaking, banging and sounds of my heart pounding in my ears. Then with one last loud blast of the wind that shook the truck, all fell silent. I sat there for a few moments to compose myself and assess the damages. When I finally stepped out of the truck, the hoard of tumbleweeds had disappeared along with my entire load of ice cream! As I looked off into the distance shaking my head, there was one final gust of wind making what sounded like a whistle out of an old spaghetti western!

There is a moral to the story, next time when someone or anything waves me down to stop, maybe I should.

