

Pueblo City-County Library District

30TH ANNUAL SCARY STORY CONTEST



WINNING STORIES 2022

PUEBLO CITY-COUNTY
LIBRARY
Ideas · Imagination · Information



Pueblo City-County Library District

2022 Scary Story Contest

Pueblo City-County Library District, in cooperation with the Friends of the Library, is pleased to announce the winners of the 30th Annual Scary Story Contest. Budding writers, from second grade to adult, were invited to enter the creative writing contest. Mysterious, suspenseful or humorous scary tales of a non-violent nature were judged by the Friends of the Library. Entries were judged for characterization, plot, description, dialog, setting, theme and originality. Winners received a certificate of achievement, a booklet with all of the winning stories, and a \$10 gift certificate to Books Again, the Friends of the Library's used book store. All participants received a certificate of recognition.

The judges were Friends of the Library board members Chrissy Holiday, Sofia Madeen, Melanie Phelps, Ronda Rein, Erik Segall, and Sherry Wingo. There were 1,099 entries this year. The library wishes to thank the many teachers who supported the creative writing experience by having their students enter the contest. We look forward to receiving your work again next year!

WINNERS

2nd Grade

Aleah Otero	North Mesa Elementary School – Mrs. Porter
William Robinson	Villa Bella Expeditionary - Mrs. Bradley
William Tate	North Mesa Elementary School - Mrs. Comfort

3rd Grade

Emilina Ortiz-Rivera	Fountain International Magnet School - Mrs. Cafasso
Ezekiel Saiz	Goodnight School - Mrs. Reneau
Landon Schamp	Goodnight School - Ms. Waller

4th Grade

Natalia Hernandez	Cesar Chavez Academy - Ms. Crum
Marco Juliani	Liberty Point Elementary School - Ms. Easton
Amara Mills	Swallows Charter Academy - Ms. Vukonich

5th Grade

Scarlett Griffith	D70 Online School - Ms. Bohl
Abigail McIvor	Sunset Park Elementary School - Ms. Rangel
Matteo Picicci	McClelland School - Mrs. Hansford

6th Grade

Jennalee Garcia	Connect Charter School - Ms. Roberts
William Gibson	PSAS Fulton Heights Campus - Ms. Martinez
Kip Keilbach	St. John Neumann Catholic School - Mrs. See

WINNERS

7th Grade

Asher Clennin

Kaci Ford

Karlie Toczek

Craver Middle School - Mrs. Moats

Craver Middle School - Mrs. Moats

St. John Neumann Catholic School - Mrs. See

8th Grade

Dane Davis

Noah Johnston

Ella Velasquez

St. John Neumann Catholic School - Mrs. See

Swallows Charter Academy - Mr. Harris

Swallows Charter Academy - Mr. Harris

High School

Wesley Arnot

Joseph Benedetto

Susan Harroun

Swallows Charter Academy - Mr. Harris

Centennial High School - Mrs. Blackmore

County High School - Mr. Grossen

Adult

Kimbra Blackmore

Debra Johnson-Champ

Reagan Hall

Scary Night in the Graveyard

Aleah Otero

It was a dark and foggy night. We were walking in the graveyard when we saw red eyes in the trees. Ghosts were floating all around. The ghosts had red eyes and sharp teeth. I opened the gate and busted out a window. After that, we heard dead people talking to us. Then, a black cat came alive and a snapping turtle came alive too! The turtle had red eyes just like the ghosts. All of a sudden something fell from the sky. It was a mirror. I picked it up and I looked in the mirror at myself and I saw a lady behind me! After I looked behind me, she wasn't there anymore but the gravestone started shaking. After that, the gravestone was closed. It was a very scary night!

The Ghost in the Library

William Robinson

William and Liam went to the library. They noticed something was off. Then they noticed the librarians were not there. The library seemed closed. It was dark and quiet. They heard knocking upstairs and it was loud. It was coming from the third floor. William and Liam snuck upstairs to the third floor and there was a ghost knocking on a shelf. The ghost looked like a shadow. It was all black. They tried to grab the ghost but William just hit the floor. They could not touch it. The ghost ran away. William and Liam realized that the ghost had to be in sunlight. They looked all over the third floor. They found metal vases. The vases had spooky designs. A creature came out of the vases. Williams said, "What is your name?" "John," it said. "I can help you. I know where the ghost went. Over there." He went where the ghost went. There was a shriek and the ghost ran downstairs. William and Liam ran downstairs to the left of the steps. The shadow ghost was standing there. John came and screeched at the shadow ghost. The ghost disappeared. The librarians were back and the library seemed open.



The Spooky Hike

William Tate

It was a dark and spooky night. My mom and I were in the forest on a hike. Then suddenly we heard howling in the distance. Then a thick fog was all around us. Lightning flashed in front of my mom and I. Suddenly I disappeared into thin air! My mom started to scream and started yelling. She yelled, "Where did he go!?" She starting looking for me but there was no sign. Then she heard a creepy sound come from behind her. The wolves started to howl again. Then out came a dark creepy figure. She started running down the hill and tried hiding but the dark figure was too fast for her. It was right in front of her. She noticed something familiar about this figure. It was me! William the werewolf. That is how my dark and spooky night went.

Mummy Terror

Emilina Ortiz-Rivera

It was a cold night on Halloween. I looked at the clock and it was 9:05 p.m. I was at the hotel room exploring the surroundings. I saw a tablet and ordered room service. I ordered pepperoni pizza.

After eating, I went in my car and went to the museum. There was a night shift worker. His name was Larry. He was eating his dinner. His meatball fell off his sandwich and went under the mummy coffin. When Larry went to clean up, he noticed the mummy woke up. The mummy under the moon lit sky. He rose from his coffin. Larry thought it was coworker playing a game. He soon realized it wasn't. He froze and the mummy hypnotized him with the bracelet.

The mummy wanted to have revenge. He used the hypnotized worker Larry to do this. He drove to the store and found the scepter in aisle 3. Then they left to find his enemy to have his revenge.

He finds his enemy back at the hotel. The mummy turns his enemy to slime with the scepter. Larry finds his dream girl and they went back to the museum. They wanted to be together for eternity so they went to a secret room. They set up their coffin. They were under the moonlight and as morning rose, they were no longer alive again.

Larry went to the river. He looked in the river and he fell in. He couldn't get back up. He drowned. He then met the mummies in the afterlife.



Scary Clowns

Ezekiel Saiz

My friend and I were nine years old when we went to the scary circus. We each had five dollars to buy cotton candy which we bought as soon as we got there. We then walked to the ferris wheel. Just ahead there was a big figure in the fog. We couldn't make it out. My friend then said, "Hello?" Then the big figure popped out and it was a creepy clown. He then started to chase us. As we were running both of our cotton candy ended up on the ground where I looked back and saw the creepy clown jumping all over the cotton candy laughing all creepy. I then saw my friend going towards his home. I then got in the ferris wheel as it was slowly going anyway. As I reached the top of the ferris wheel it got stuck. It started to thunder, the clouds were rolling in heavy, the wind was like ice, I could see my breath. I looked around to see if I could see anything, I saw a figure that looked like my friend, I yelled out to him and nothing. Then all of a sudden the ferris wheel started moving again. I got off as quickly as I was able to. I looked around and heard a loud noise coming from the Fun House across the way. The figure was black, it was getting closer to me. I turned and ahhh! I screamed it was my friend. I then let my friend know that I just saw. He said he saw the same thing as he was heading towards the ferris wheel to go back for me. We both saw the black figure again. We then both went towards it, it was Venom! We screamed as the Venom said, "I'm hungry." We ran as fast as we could then there was a huge monster coming towards us. "This way," my friend said. As I ran with my friend, I looked up at the sky and saw what looked like a dragon. "A dragon!" I yelled. You got to be kidding me! I closed my eyes and counted to 30. I then opened my eyes and I was home on my bed. "Could this have been all a dream?" I thought to myself. I heard my mom calling for me so I got up and noticed a ticket for this circus on my dresser. I then went downstairs to see what my mom wanted. As she was standing in front of the door looking up at me, I thought something terrible had happened. She then moved, it was my friend. The look in his eyes only meant one thing.

Behind Closed Doors

Landon Schamp

One Halloween night there was a school called Central High. In the school worked a janitor. He was new and only worked there for six days. It was usually a nice quiet job and he was really enjoying it but things were about to change and he had no idea. That night he heard a lot of noise coming from a door that nobody has been in since 2017. His boss warned him to never go in there because the last janitor that went in never came out. He knew not to go in the room but the noise was too loud. As he got closer to the door, the noise stopped. He should have turned around but he thought it was harmless to peek inside. He didn't see anything so he opened the door all the way. He thought he caught a glimpse of something but it was too dark to tell. He decided to go in. He instantly got a bad feeling and wanted to leave and go home. All of a sudden he couldn't find the door to get out. Something grabbed him. He fought his way out of the grip and spotted the door. He grabbed the door and pulled it open with all of his force. When it opened, he wasn't at the school anymore. He was at his house. He had a bad feeling that whatever had grabbed him followed him out of the door to his house. He couldn't explain how he popped up at his house. So, he called his boss and told him what happened. His boss was mad that he went in the door that he said to never in to. He decided to call it a night and go to sleep. He woke up from a nightmare at 3 a.m. and heard noises in his kitchen. He sprung up out of bed and went into the kitchen. He didn't see. He grabbed his phone to start recording. Then, he got a text message from an unknown number that sent him a picture of himself. He tried to call his boss but he didn't answer. So he decided to send him the picture that was sent to him and he said no. He went to show him the picture but it was not on his phone anymore and couldn't find the number that got sent to him. He was off that day but he didn't want to go home. After awhile he decided to go home anyway. As soon as he walked in he heard banging again and felt a cold hand wrap around his. His boss called the police to go check in him because of the crazy stuff that happened. When he police arrived they could not find anyone at his house. He was never seen again.

The Imaginary Halloween

Natalia Hernandez

It was a cold Halloween night here in Cripple Creek, Colorado. There was a harvest moon shining bright in the sky. I looked outside at all the kids costumes. I saw many cool costumes. I had the coolest costume ever. I was Pickle Rick from Rick and Morty my favorite cartoon show. The doorbell rang and my mom yelled, "Tyler get the door!" She was busy making chocolate cookies and double chocolate brownies for the scary Halloween Dance. I answered the door with a smile. I filled their bags with Jolly Ranchers and Kit Kats. I was anxious and bored waiting to go trick or treating and to the Halloween dance.

Mom picked out a fancy neighborhood to go trick or treating in hopes that I would find a house that gives out full size candy bars. That is like 500 little Reese's put together. I spotted my teacher in a corn costume. Mom told me to say hello. "Hi teacher, I said." I gave my teacher a full-size candy bar that I got from one of the fancy houses. My teacher ate it fast and said she was on her way to dance.

We headed to the dance but first we had to stop at home to grab the sweets mom made. Everyone loves her brownies. They are way better than her cookies. We walked through the double doors and saw decorations. There were fake spiders everywhere. One startled me and I almost fell to the floor. There was a spooky haunted house and I met a friend inside. He told me his name was theoretical. It was hard to say so I just called him Theo. He had a hat with a spider on it. He was really pale. I thought he was either sick or he had really good makeup.

I danced and ate snacks with Theo. We played pin the pumpkin and then my favorite song came on. We played hide n seek in the haunted house. We laughed and hugged after we found each other in the dark. We laughed while we spun each other all night. I noticed my mom was looking at me funny and weird. She kept taking pictures and had a concerned face.

The last song came on for the night. I wish we had five more songs to give some extra time to hang out. I was having so much fun with my new friend. Mom asked me "do you want me to take a picture of you on the dance floor?" I told her I wanted to take a picture with my friend. Mom asked "who are you talking about Tyler?" I pointed next to me. She looked at me like I was losing my brain cells. She took the picture and leaned over to show me. I knew her camera was broken and I told her to get it fixed. My friend was invisible in her pictures that we took. That was my Halloween night here in the cold town of Cripple Creek.

A Bunny and a Magic Carrot Sword

Marco Juliani

One spooky night I was stargazing when all of a sudden there was a bunny walking with a carrot sword. Then the bunny lunged at me. I rolled out of the way before he could grab me. Then the bunny said "I'll give you an hour" and vanished. I was trembling in fear, not knowing what to do. I didn't even know what he wanted from me. I thought for what seemed to be about 5 minutes, "I'll build a hideout at the aquarium down the road." On the way there I picked up materials such as food, bibi blasters, and a grappling hook. The walk to the aqua center was very quiet, it took me about 15 minutes, everything was deserted. I entered the center through the garbage shoot, it was a tricky climb because I had to be in a star position and it was super smelly. It smelled like old sardines. I finally made it to the top. I think it took me 10 minutes to make it through the garbage shoot. I passed the gift shop and heard an eerie sound, kind of like a gurgle gurgle

splurt. I was freaked. Oh I forgot to tell you my name. My name is Tracker. I don't know why cause I'm horrible with a compass.

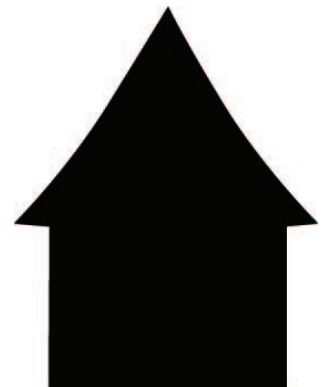
Building a Fort - I was rushing to pick a spot for my fort since I only had thirty minutes! I got one of the tables that they had at the Learning Center. I took the table into an empty exhibit and picked up all the wood planks, string, and paint cans. I didn't know how to build a fort, but I had an idea 'cause in this game called Fortnite I built a fort every single time. I turned the table to its side, stacked up the paint cans, built a small armory, and hacked into the security cameras. I was prepared. I had a sleeve of double stuffed oreo cookies in my pocket and scarfed three of them down. I checked the time. My gosh, I wanted to nap, but nevermind about a quick nap. I only got three minutes! I got my BB gun and got in position, checked the security cameras and I couldn't believe my eyes.

A Skeleton Army - Marching down the floors was a skeleton army! Thud! Thud! Thud! They were coming in at all sides. There were holding bows with carrot arrows and carrot spears. There I saw the bunny. He was hanging from a wire on the ceiling, he was saying, "find him and bring him to me." I knew I had to come up with a plan. I got it! I remembered seeing a skeleton of a shark in one of the tanks. I also remembered that I have a drone that has a flame setting so that at the right second I could burn the wire the bunny was hanging from. Hopefully the plan would work and the bunny would fall right into the drone trap. The skeletons on the balcony were shooting carrot arrows at me with their bows. The skeletons on the bottom were holding carrot spears and surrounding me.

The Plan - It was time for the plan. I didn't know how to trap the skeletons surrounding me. But I had a good feeling that capturing the bunny would work. I set the drone to start burning the rope. The countdown started at 30 feet. Thirty... 25...20. The rope was halfway burned. Fifteen...10...5! Clash after a little bit of turbulence it was clear to see that the bunny was captured! Wait a minute...clash! I could not believe it, the bunny got out and broke the drone it was over.

Plan B - I was ready. I hit a skeleton and it shattered. It made half of the other skeletons fall over. I did it again and it made the rest of the bow skeletons fall over and break. I said to myself, spare the skeletons with spears came and tried to break the glass. I used the grappling hook that I had found on my walk over here and used it to zipline across to the balcony. All of a sudden a dog came and it was biting the skeletons and they all clashed into each other. I looked at the dog holding a tibia drooling. I smiled.

The Fight - All of a sudden the bunny appeared and used its magic sword as a way to get in my head. He kept saying, "Join me or you will suffer." I refused to join his forces. I teleported to the large circled room where the sting rays were held. The bunny said, "Fight me like a man." I was about to grab him when from the stingray pool came out a huge Kraken. He grabbed the bunny and took him underwater. I was in shock, but also relieved. I thought out loud to the Kraken, "Were you the one making the gurgle gurgle splurt noise?" The Kraken answered, "Oh that, yeah I make gurgle gurgle splurt noises when I snore." I asked, "Why were you sleeping? We have a busy day tomorrow, Halloween remember?!" Oh yeah, I forgot, I have a Halloween party at school tomorrow. I got to go home and get some sleep. "Wake up! Wake up! You're gonna be late!" I heard my mom say. I sighed. All that hard work of fighting skeletons and evil bunnies for nothing.



Cris's Adventure

Amara Mills

It was an early morning day and the sun had barely peeked over the horizon and Cris the scarecrow had already put on his hat and was walking to the corn field. But he was sad he wanted a change but he had no choice his master needed someone to guard his field. The one thing that Cris wanted was to have a friend but the only critters that came around were the crows but for some reason every crow he saw would fly away. So while Cris was guarding the corn he thought and thought and thought a little more. But then when the day was over Cris didn't go inside but he started walking in the opposite direction. The next thing he knew he couldn't see the barn and he was starting to get scared. Cris finally got tired and decided to make camp. He made a campfire and a tent out of some fabric he found. Then he went to bed in his tent. The next morning, he got up and moved his tent.

Cris was regretting his choice to leave home and was hoping he would find some friends soon and now Cris was lonelier than ever. Cris was getting tired and thirsty and decided to stop by a river nearby to get some water. He walked over and scooped up some water in his hands when he heard a noise that caused him to jump to his feet. Next he slowly turned around to see nothing until he looked down to see a jack-a-lantern! He was so surprised yet so excited he had finally met someone. But was the jack-o lantern nice or mean. So he decided that there was only one way to find out. But he was still nervous but he didn't make the first move the jack-o lantern did and then he started with a "hi." So they did their introduction and it turned out that the jack-o'-lantern name was Jack.

So Cris asked if Jack wanted to come on his journey with him and Jack said yes! So they continued on there was talking as they went and bonding over backstories. It turned out that Jack had come from a farm a long way away with a similar backstory and now Cris wasn't as scared anymore and he was actually having fun. When it grew dark they got in the small tent and ended up talking all night long. The next morning Cris and Jack woke up to a cool fall breeze Cris forgetting that today was the first day of fall got nervous that they had slept through summer but luckily Jack told him otherwise and calmed Cris down. Then they packed up their tent and headed on with the same type for day for a week the only difference was that they would get food and they would sleep different amount of sleep each night slowly wondering where they were growing curious where they were going but they always assumed that the other new where they were going but neither of them asked so they just kept walking and walking on and until Cris saw a thin stripe of a barn so Cris ran and ran and ran as if he had never run before with Jack on his tail screaming questions over the wind none of which Cris could hear. Cris was so excited he was home and home with a new friend then he stopped Jack skidding to a stop just behind him then they looked at each other and walked slowly forward to Cris's old post and from that moment on Cris and Jack guarded the corn and were never lonely again.

The Siren

Scarlett Griffith

Long ago, in the middle of the woods stood a small, old log cabin with boarded windows. This place was once a home to a beautiful maiden and her handsome lumberjack. One cold October night, a tall stranger appeared. She was ugly, old and wicked. She called out to the lumberjack. Her beautifully sung words charmed him into a spell. She was, in fact, a siren lurking to kill as many men as she could. The siren was able to lure him into her lair. After the siren and the lumberjack got to the cave, the siren locked the lumberjack up in a cage and she started to sing again. The fair maiden was heartbroken, she vowed to find the horrid monster, end her for good and save the love of her life.

The maiden gathered her things and she ventured off into the woods to find a witch to help her. The kind old witch brewed up a potion to turn the siren into a tall oak tree. The maiden thanked the kind witch for her help and then continued on to her journey to find the siren's lair. Her journey took her over mountains and into a bear cave where she was almost eaten by a bear.

As she continued her journey through the woods, she came upon an opening into the dark waters that appeared to be the siren's lair. As she entered, she saw this beautiful cave that had lots of crystals but it was also scary because it had a

lot of bats. As he continued walking into the lair she was met by her love in the cage that the horrid monster put him in. When the siren saw the maiden she let the lumberjack out of the cage. She told the maiden that she was a brave woman for thinking she could come to her love's rescue but was sadly mistaken. The maiden begged and pleaded for the siren to return her lumberjack. As the siren came closer, the maiden saw her chance. She flung the potion onto the siren. The siren wondered what silly little juice she was covered with. She began to freeze realizing what had been done. The siren screamed and after a few minutes she turned into a huge oak tree. The spell was broken and the lumberjack ran to the maiden. They returned back to their cabin where they grew together.

Deep Inside Everything

Abigail Mclvor

One day in summer, there was this girl named Savannah, and she had this doll named Megan. They were the best of friends but they had no parents. On January 13th she went missing, and her doll lurked in the shadows trying to find a new best friend ever since.

Ten years later there was a girl that moved in with her parents. They were the Lovato's. There was Eliyana (Daughter), Lucas (Dad), and AJ (Mom). Eliyana explored the house and found her room. She thought "Hmmm...it looks nice. What's that?" She walked over and picked up a cute little doll.

It had a note stuck to it saying, "My name is Megan, and I have a poem for you. Deep Inside Everything, is something for you, Me! We will be the best of friends forever and ever." Eliyana was creeped out. When she went downstairs to throw Megan in the garbage disposal. It didn't splinter. She hit it with a hammer. It didn't crush.

Suddenly, the doll's head turned around by itself with a creepy grin and black eyes! Eliyana made her parents move, but everywhere they moved the doll followed them everywhere. Schools, the elevators, the forests. Finally, she stopped running and she got the jackhammer she picked up along the way. When the doll had reached her she turned the jackhammer on and said, "Times up Megan." It hit Megan. When Megan was gone, Eliyana thought she was safe. But then she heard a faint voice singing "I found you. Hehe. Run!" When she turned around it was louder and louder until it made her ears bleed. Finally, Eliyana felt a tap on her shoulder. She turned around then a voice screamed, "I found you!" With a flash of light Eliyana was gone never to be seen again.



Caterpillar Mayhem

Matteo Picicci

The day was beautiful. The sky was overcast, creating the perfect mood for an autumn day. At Horse Middle School in New York City, students played happily on the playground. However, three were still in the science lab trying to finish their science fair project. “Hey Matteo, can you hand me that vial of human DNA?” asked Chris. “Sure,” Matteo said, picking up the vial with the correct label. They were mixing boy DNA with a caterpillar’s DNA, hoping to create a human-caterpillar hybrid.

Chazzy looked pretty uneasy. “What happens if this goes wrong?” he questioned apprehensively. Matteo responded, “Uhh, I don’t know.” Chris never looked up from what he was doing with the mixture but replied, “Oh, this will be so fun! I hope we win a Nobel prize.” Matteo smirked and rolled his eyes. “You’re crazy,” he said, “This will never actually work.”

It seemed like Matteo was right because nothing happened. Just as they were feeling lousy, the caterpillar’s eyes suddenly grew hundreds of times bigger. It looked like a crazy cartoon character! Within seconds, it had gigantic human teeth. The boy caterpillar hybrid was as tall as a fifth grade boy and as fuzzy as a Christmas sweater. It moved very quickly and grumbled and hissed at the boys in the lab. Matteo said nervously, “That doesn’t look right...” Chris looked at Matteo sideways and said “That’s an understatement!” Chazzy screamed, “We’re all going to die!”

They ran horrified out of the lab but the caterpillar began to chase after them.

The three friends raced through the exit door just in time but Mr. Bob, the science teacher, was not so fortunate. He was still sitting there drinking his coffee and grading a mountain of papers when the caterpillar gobbled him up. Suddenly, the caterpillar-boy doubled in size and then headed toward the playground...

The Creature

Jennalee Garcia



I’ve found it.

Finally, after several grueling months of searching, I’ve found it.

The wondrous creature that I first saw in books has appeared to me at last. Its tall, shadow-like body hangs over me. Its long, spindly arms rest at its side. The creature’s body looks fragile, as though you could snap it like a twig. I know that’s not true. My research proves that this is no ordinary demon, it has the power of over 30 men. Strength and weapon based attacks are useless against this thing. Only a special kind of magic can defeat it.

It approaches me, its body creaking in the process. I now look up onto its face. It looks like a misty black orb, with small glowing eyes. Its mouth has no lips, only slightly spaced teeth.

I’ve made a mistake. It’s mad now. Very mad. The creature’s body transforms. The small, thin body is no more. It’s been replaced with a tall, strong build. Somehow the eyes have shrunk, and rows of razor-sharp fangs began to form.

It gets closer, closer...

The teeth are rotating now. It feels as though I’m looking inside a woodchipper. Closer, closer...

I begin to panic, I shut my eyes. Closer...

I peek down, I’m greeted with ferocious claws. I close my eyes a final time. Before I know it I’m sure I’m in the beast’s mouth. It’s unusually cold, I can’t feel any body heat.

I try to look around but it’s just the same as when my eyes are covered; darkness. It’s tongue pricks me, I can sense it injected me with something, but what?

It was probably poison.

I feel oddly tired.

Am I dying?

Why do people fear death?

The Cinnamon Roll and the Evil Living Knives

William Gibson

Third Person Omniscient, Snapshot Leading, Lesson Ending, Accidentally Wrote a Fable!
[Please read slowly and with emotion to get a full experience!]

I remember, in a magical kitchen, far, far away... there existed the friendliest of food. Our food was always there for us when we needed it. But no vegetable was quite as friendly as Cinnamon Roll. He was there when we were as hungry as hummingbirds, he was there to comfort us in times of need, and he always did his chores. But one uneventful day, Mr.

Cinnamon didn't have the motivation he once had. So he asked the knowledgeable Baguette, "What are we doing here, here in this little room? Why are we here? What are we here for?" The Baguette answered, "Just wait...and the answer will come to you!"

Cinnamon roll didn't understand.

That night, he went to his cabinet, feeling downhearted. "What am I going to do with the rest of my life?" he thought as he dozed off to sleep. The next morning, Cinnamon roll decided, for motivation, to take a stroll across the countertop to see if anything was inspiring. Little did he know that this would be his chance! Halfway across the countertop, he started hearing voices. They weren't that far away.

"First, we go to the utility room," said one. "But the cat is in the way!" said the other. Cinnamon Roll started to overhear their conversation. "Like I was saying, we go to the utility room and turn off the router!" said one. "Then the food goes bad! Heheheheh..."

Cinnamon Roll slinked around the corner, Knives! These guys were arrested for murder and now they've escaped prison!

"Oh no! Those rotten knives again! Oh no wait...can save the kitchen from the knives!

That is just what I needed!" Cinnamon roll thought. "But I need to beat them to the utility room..."

Cinnamon roll went back to his house to collect supplies. The next morning, he felt hesitant, but determined. He set off in the cold, dark living room to the utility room, far from his kitchen homeland. One day, two days, three days went by, but he couldn't find anything.

Meanwhile, the knives knew where the router box was, so they were able to get there a while back. There were thousands of buttons and switches to choose from!

"Where is this button?"

"Wait, noooooo don't press th-" ... And toxic gas filled the room. The vent system was leaking! At that moment Cinnamon Roll arrived! He quickly stopped the gas. "I shall control you freaks!"

"B-but we were just taking a st-"

"Enough!" The tiny cinnamon roll grabbed a rope and swooped around the knives. But one jumped at him and cut a hole! At that moment he realized that he couldn't win in a snap. He had to fight hard. And so even with his creamy white filling leaking out, he threw the knives back and quickly tied them up with a rope!

He just managed to drag them to the police station before he passed out from losing too much filling. A police officer found them! They were quickly rushed to the E.R. They gave Cinnamon Roll a filling implant, and the knives a punishment. That night, Cinnamon Roll went home from the E.R feeling indisposed and drained. After getting medication, he felt slightly better... but just slightly. Hut then he remembered the fight with the knives. It felt so good! He also remembered the words Baguette spoke to him. He did find his purpose! That is, to fight off bad guys! After that, he started to feel better. Hopefully tomorrow will be better! And he dozed off to sleep.

The lesson of this story is that if you work hard, you will be rewarded!



The Home of Ms. Rose Mabel

Kip Keilbach

It was a dark and stormy night and Carlo came over to go trick-or-treating with me. We hung out for a couple hours watching scary movies and waiting for it to get dark outside. Carlo was dressed as a pirate and I was dressed as a skeleton. After we watched a couple of Halloween movies we decided it was time to hit the streets. Our first mission was to hit all the neighborhoods that gave out the full-size candy bars. After a couple hours our bags became too heavy from all the trick-or-treating so we decided to head back to home base and drop off our bounty and head back out for more of the good stuff. At this point we knew we had to head to a completely different neighborhood so nobody would know we were out for a second trip. This time we knew we wouldn't be getting this big full size stuff but we were okay with that. As we went from house to house, we noticed a ferocious storm brewing in the sky. The winds were picking up and the clouds were building. Every few minutes lightning would light up the sky. We knew we would have to hustle and get our bags packed with candy before the weather would completely turn on us. We decided to take a detour on the way home and ended out on a street we've never seen before. Most of the houses did not have their lights on so we realized we would not be in for a big score. There was an old black, rundown wooden house on the corner that had a very dim lantern burning on the front porch. Carlo and I wondered if that meant someone would answer the door and give us a few more candy bars. "What the heck," I said, "Let's go for it!" Carlo was very frightened by this whole idea but after a quick pep talk he agreed to go with me. We walked up the stairs to the porch, each step making a creaky sound and the porch was missing boards all over the place. One wrong move and we'd be falling through the floor. I reached out to ring the bell and it made a really creepy sound. We waited a few seconds and rang it again. Nobody answered so we decided to just head back home. As we turned around to talk back down the stairs, the door opened up really slowly but nobody was there. We both just stood there in shock, almost unable to move. In the distance we were able to see that there was a huge bowl of candy at the end of the hall. After talking about it, we decided our best move would just be to run through the open door, sprint down the hall, grab the whole bowl of candy, and get the heck out of there as fast as we can. When we ran inside, the door slammed shut. We tried to open it but it wouldn't budge. I looked around the house to see if there was another way out. To make matters worse, the bowl wasn't even full of candy, it was filled with Brussel sprouts! The only light we had was shining through the broken windows from the moon. As we slowly walked down the dark hallways, all of a sudden we heard a scream coming from the basement. Not knowing if it was a trick or not, we decided it would be a bad idea to investigate. Every door we came across was locked and nailed shut, this was not good. Out of nowhere, the phone on the wall began ringing. After a quick discussion, I decided to answer it. "Hello," I shakily answered. It was pure silence except for what sounded like an old lady breathing heavily. After the breathing calmed down I heard a voice quietly asking, "Why are you in my home? I tried to explain that we saw the bowl of Brussel sprouts but thought it was candy. All we wanted to do was grab the candy and get home. She told us that her name was Ms. Rose Mabel and that she died in 1992! We quickly learned that she is now a ghost still living in the house. Now that we were completely scared out of our wits, we promised her that if she let us go that we would never come in her house again. After thinking it over, Ms. Rose Mabel said she would be willing to make us a deal. "Great! Anything, just name it and we'll do it!" we both shouted as we held the phone in between us for both of us to hear. She then explained the door we came in as the only way out and that if we wanted it to open up again, then we must each eat the whole bowl of Brussel sprouts! This was a deal we weren't sure was worth it or not, Brussel sprouts are pretty dang nasty! "Ugh...let's just do it Kip!" Carlo said. I thought long and hard about this, but in the end decided that if that's what it's going to take to get out of this creepy house, that I'm down. We approached the bowl and just the sight of those nasty green globs almost made us sick. One by one, we were able to choke them down. For those awful long 10 minutes we felt like we were eating something on Fear Factor. I gave Carlo the honor of eating the last one and I drank the juice that settled to the bottom of the bowl. I ran back to the phone and told Ms. Rose Mabel that we finished them and that she might want to hurry up and open the door before we threw up. She sounded very impressed with us, opened the door and made us promise to come back every year. We agreed.



The Haunted Barn

Asher Clennin

One cool fall night in 1871, five men were being chased on horseback by the local authorities. The five men had freshly robbed money from the bank. The five men started to bury the money at a tuberculosis burying sight. Fifty-nine years later a barn is built over the burying sight. Stanley woke to a noise outside. He got out of his bed and went to the window. Someone or something was in the barn. He and his family own the barn and the house in Wisconsin. He shares a bedroom with his sister Sally. Stanley was determined to find what the noise was. In the morning he will go find what it was. He knew there was a tuberculosis sight where they had buried hundreds and hundreds of people who had died of tuberculosis outbreak years ago. Was the barn built right over the bodies? Stanley started to think. "Maybe the barn is haunted," he said to himself.

Stanley woke to a morning sun on his face. He got up and went to the kitchen where his Mom was cooking biscuits and gravy. He sat down at the table and read the newspaper. He was shocked to see something surprising in the newspaper. It said, "Breaking news, treasure from 1871 has been discovered in an 1871 newspaper. Its whereabouts are not known but was near a tuberculosis burying sight. There are hundreds of burying sights here in Wisconsin."

Stanley was shocked. Perhaps the treasure was in his barn buried in the earth with the dead. He gobbled down his breakfast and was nearly out the door right when his sister Sally came down the stairs. "Wait, I want to come," she cried. "Fine," Stanley said. They started to walk to the barn which was locked with chains and padlocks. "I wonder if we can get through the window on the side of the barn." No one has been in the barn since his Dad was a kid. They slipped through the window that was broken. They started to walk to the center of the barn where there was a pile of straw on the ground. "Bang," a cat fell from a window and scurried under the big doors. I heard a weird noise last night from this barn and I am going to find out what it is; okay Sally?" "Yeah, but hurry up this place is scary."

Stanley started to walk into the other room. He found a mirror on the wall.

He saw his reflection in the mirror. He blinked and there was a different face. Sally walked into the same room as Stanley; Stanley started talking weirdly; This wasn't Stanley. The voice is very different, Sally thought. Then she knew he was possessed. She asked, "Stanley, can you hear me?" "Who is Stanley, little girl? "My name is William. Get out now!" Then suddenly Stanley came back, Stanley and Sally ran out so fast they could be Olympic runners. Stanley said, "What happened to me, it felt so weird." "Someone was in your body. Like controlling you Stanley." Stanley then said, "If we ever go back then we are going to get the treasure."

They went to bed that night and Stanley was having horrible nightmares. "Run, run, run, run!" someone in his mind was saying. Then he woke up drenched in sweat, breathing very hard.

The next day Stanley woke up and walked down to the Museum of Ghosts and Paranormal located in town. He got info on how to handle spirits. He come back to the barn to confront the spirit or spirits. He stood right in the middle of the barn and yelled, "I am here to dig this money up and take it to help my family." "Show yourself to bargain with me." Then there were nearly 200 spirits surrounding Stanley. "We are gathered here today to agree on a bargain for this thing, human we shall call it. What is your name?" Stanley said, "Stanley John Remington." "Okay Stanley, so you want the money buried with our cold, dead, decaying, bodies? Yes, but I can give your bodies a proper burial." "You would become infected with tuberculosis," said William. "Under one condition you can have the money, you make this place a museum." "Is that clear Stanley?" "If you don't then we will haunt you for the rest of your life." "Yes I will bring the police here." "This will become a museum" A big box shot out of the ground and into Stanley's arms. He thanked the spirits and went into the house and showed his mom the money.

One year later the barn became the most popular museum in the country. After Stanley's dad came back from France he and the family lived happily ever after.



The Dream Chaser

Kaci Ford

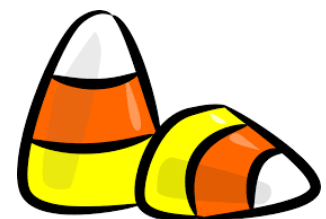
When you first hear of this town you think it is a fun filled place but you don't know the dark truth behind Fallfurt, Maine. It was a normal afternoon late fall when Charlotte Madden also known as Charlie was walking home from school. It was one day until Halloween and Charlie was thinking about what to be for Halloween. When she got home she asked her mom if she had any ideas for a costume and she suggested going to the basement where she had a book of ideas. After Charlie dug through some boxes she found a book called, "Scary Halloween." Charlie went upstairs and asked her mom if that was the book and she said it wasn't but it might be a good book. So after dinner she went upstairs and started to read the book.

She read a few pages and it was about soul monsters and how to release them. "This book is weird," she thought. The next day at school she was asking her friends what they were going to be for Halloween and they all said different things like a witch, vampire and a nurse. They all asked what she was and she said she didn't know yet. During math she kept thinking about the book and why they had it. Later she had to do a report on Halloween and when she was searching it up she saw a picture of the book. When she got home she opened it and saw a page of a person named the Dream Chaser.

She read about him and the book said that he was the most powerful soul monster to ever live and that he takes children's souls to make an army of people to lead to the end of the world. When Charlie saw this she was in shock but at that moment she saw some words written at the bottom of the page that said, "Now take these souls and turn them down as now we will rule the town." She said this out loud then a huge cloud of dust started to come and at that moment everything changed for Fallfurt. The Dream Chaser escaped from the book and was standing in her room and then he started to try to steal her soul but he couldn't. He said, "You are the soul keeper," he then jumped out the window and went to main street where people were trick or treating. She called her friends and told them what happened. They helped research the book and to put him back they needed to burn the book in a blue fire that happens at midnight on Halloween.

He was four souls short from controlling the world so they chased him to the old abandoned store where they saw the clock struck 11 o'clock but then at that moment he came across and stole the book. He then started to run away but then stopped to tell them, "I only need one more." Then they got scared and then felt the floor falling into pieces. "Oh, no he must have gotten the last kid," said Charlie. They then found him and found the book on the floor. It then teleported to him and now we can't save the world. He used the souls he took to make an army and control the world starting with this town. They looked outside and saw the whole town worshipping him and following him. But the weird thing is that they were chanting the same thing, "Now take these souls and turn them down as now we will rule the town." Charlie recognized this from the book and said it might have something to do to rule the world. Then they heard it again, "Now take these souls and turn them down as now we will rule the town." It was 20 minutes until midnight the only time the blue fire happens. "We have to find the book," Charlie's friend Sara said. They then looked out the window and they couldn't see anyone, which was weird since they just saw the whole town outside a minute ago. They heard noises behind them and it was the dream chaser taking her friends.

He took them her friends. She could only think of one thing to do: find the book and help the town. She quickly looked around and saw he had the book. She ran to him and he disappeared but forgot the book and then the clock struck twelve and a fire appeared and burned the book. She heard a strange noise from outside. It was him disappearing. Their city was free or so they thought she was too early and he would not leave. But then she remembered that if the book was burned and the sun started to rise he would disappear. She just had to wait a little until sunrise. Four hours passed and the sun started to rise. She looked out the window and saw him shimmering and he said I will be back then disappeared. She saw her family and ran to them and she told them what happened and they all lived happy or so they thought.



What They Didn't Know

Karlie Toczek

When you are the daughter of two criminals there is much to learn. First, when you are born, you are what they call an “inconvenience.” Second, they only care about themselves and you are no importance to them. Lastly, they will do anything to get rid of you. Even if that means killing you. And that is what they did; or so they thought.

It began my seventh birthday. My parents never seemed to notice my intelligence. So when they started acting differently, I noticed. I was expecting them to forget my birthday, like they did every year but somehow, they remembered. It was hilarious the way that they were running around at my command. Because for some reason they decided to put me in charge for the day. They said that they would get anything I wanted. I knew they were just trying to buy my love with money but I wasn't like them. I was a good person. And I wouldn't commit larceny or homicide. I actually had a heart and trusted. But that was then.

I don't remember anything else or that night. It was so long ago, so traumatic. At least that what the doctors say. See I have been going to therapy but that's not the point. I've slowly been remembering the events that occurred that night. I vaguely remember the events leading up to the incident. But I remember how it was done. That night, I remember flashes of light, and yelling. My name being constantly called by voices I didn't recognize. Then being grabbed at the waist suddenly, by someone, something strong, by my father. Falling in ice cold water, and being carried away from the yelling voices in the arms of my father with my mother leading the way. I black out after that. Though the next time that I wake up, it is with this piercing pain in my abdomen. I hear the footsteps of my running parents. I remember in agony from the bullet. I would have died if it weren't for my actual dad. And he may not be my biological dad, but he was there for me.

And he saved me.

His name is Evan O'Brien, and he is a doctor. He removed the bullet, which saved me just in time. He would never talk about it, but I could tell that it bothered him. I couldn't think why though. Because it happened to me, and I never had a problem with it. So, I stopped bringing it up. Though through the years he would slowly explain the details of when he found me. In the middle of the forest with police surrounding the area, him finding me, and taking me in. He explained how my parents were wanted criminals, and why they left me. After that I lived a normal life. I made friends, played in sports, and went to school. I couldn't have been happier. Then 15 years later, I tracked down my biological parents, present day. I am now currently 23, and traveling across the country to find them. You may wonder why I would try and find them after all these years. Well to be honest I don't. Maybe just to show them what I could have been if they kept me. Or show them the scar and hope they realized that they did wrong. Or that they changed. All I know is that I am going and nothing will change my mind, and it must remain a secret from my dad. It would break his heart knowing that I was going to see them. Even after they abandoned me injured, and left me to die.

The whole thing was a mistake. They weren't exactly informed that I was still alive. I suppose that they thought they actually had killed me. I didn't exactly get the warmest welcome. The stood there for minutes just staring. I thought that when they saw me, they would recognize me. Maybe they did, but I don't know, because they didn't show it when they answered the door. So, after the few minutes of just staring and silence, they asked me who I was. I didn't know what to say at first. I stood there and stated my name. “My name is Lexi O'Brien, and I am your daughter. You tried to kill me 15 years ago, but failed. I have come to show you that I am still alive and successful. I have an education, I am athletic, and I have nothing to prove to them. Because you left me injured, and to die. And that is not how families work. That is all I have come to say.” Now it took them awhile to comprehend what I just said. Cause they didn't respond as quick as I thought they would. They were just there, but it was like they weren't there. The just stood there with the mouths open, and seemed horrified by the thought. They tried to deny it, but I showed them my scar. They finally realized that I was still a live, and that I, was their daughter. There were many apologies after that, and how they had to do what they did. For their safety and mine. But I decided just to leave. I started walking away and didn't say anything. They tried to follow once they realized I was leaving, but I was already in the car. Then I just drove away, I didn't want to be there, and I wanted justice for what they did. So, I told the police about them, and then back, just back. Back to my father, my friends, my life, and away from my past.

The Insanes!

Dane Davis

The young children were on their way home from school ready to go hang out together, but then that is when they got a whole new look at life. Out of nowhere they had gotten snatched from the sidewalk into complete darkness. The kids did not know what was going on and freaked out. The moment they were released out into the normal day again they were completely distorted. The amount of calmness the children had was an impressive deal. They began to look around at their surroundings and noticed that they were in Las Vegas, Nevada. They were originally from Los Angeles, California and had traveled all of that way. They could have sworn that it had only been a few minutes. What was in front of them ended up being an abandoned insane asylum labeled, Home of the Insanes.

They dared to venture into the asylum with no fear but that did not last for long. Walking through the fields these children spotted a creature that was foul and not something they had ever seen before. As they started to approach the creature and building it disappeared. This is when the fear had begun to set in and the children started to second guess themselves. Right as they were starting to try and turn around a siren beamed out through the field deafening the children. Little did they know there was an invisible barrier behind them closing them in until they reached the asylum. They figured it out by turning around and the siren stopped. They now heard a low and scratchy voice sounding from a speaker. "Thee who enter the asylum don't leave the asylum." Then the creature showed up again flashing in front of the children forcing them to now be aware of their surroundings. But as they continued on more creatures slid out of the foggy and dark shadows. Despite the fear the children knew to keep on treading forward to try and escape this trashy area of land and get back home to safety. The building nearing them, every step they take the barrier closing in, and they were frightened.

Then eeeee...the rusty old door opens into a whole new reality.

The children were greeted with the amazing sight of a head laying on the ground still dripping blood. It was a recent beheading that had happened just moments before the children entered. All of the sudden there was a vibrant noise of banging and screaming coming from the eastward direction of this horrid place. The intrepid kids willingly strutted toward the sounds they heard. Out of nowhere they were armed with 9mm pistols, each of them, and were ready to shoot anything that came in their paths. Immediately the leader of the pack shot and killed a nurse that had been infected by a patient. The blood gushing out of the body made the kids turned a hue of the blood and decided to move along to go and investigate the noises. Now dauntless at this point they approached the room number 56 where the noise was surely coming from.

As a team effort they kicked open the door and entered with caution, to find nothing. They all split up to cover the room and look for something to prove they heard a noise just a few seconds ago. Then all at once they found a speaker blasting the noise, they turned around and were immediately rushed and pinned down to the bed. Green slob like creatures crept and crawled through the room looking for more people. After being unsuccessful they proceeded to tape the children to chairs together. Little did the creatures know that the kids were armed. They mouthed to each other 3, 2, 1...shoot. The green like creatures' goo was all over the kids and the walls. Each and every one of the kids was grossed out and sitting in the four deaths of these creatures. Disgusted, they all worked to clean each other off and regrouped themselves and kept on moving. At the exact moment they got out of the door, they were trapped again but this time in a cage full of darkness.

An alarm blared out and silenced every one of the children. All of them sitting in darkness disappointed in themselves then heard an announcement. "Wow, I'm impressed young fighters. You have defeated my medium level of troops. Good luck for the last level, if you make it out alive you shall be awarded \$1,000,000 each." They were then released out of the cage into a massive strobe light blinding and freaking them out. There was now an arrow on the wall pointing in the westward direction. On their way down the hall there was a patient younger than the age of ten wheeling around in a wheelchair. He had a knife in his hand and went toward the nurse and cut her head clean off, pouring blood all over him and the head landed in his lap. The kid then proceeded to stroke her hair saying. "My precious, you messed up a large amount." The children, now traumatized, all fired and missed.

The kid whipped around and rushed them with full power ready to kill each and every one of them. It was at this point that the children had realized that this was the final level. They were to live or die in these next few moments. Before they knew it the kid made it to them speeding through screaming. "You're all dead," and slashed all of their achilles. Then, one by one, they shot one bullet hitting the kid square in the head and it flattened the bullet. Finally, all of their blood squirting on each other dropped crying out, "But we are too young to die," and that was when the children faded away into the clouds of smoke.

The Rubber Room

Noah Johnston

Once there was a bunker in World War II. Those who were put there, were tortured day and night, but the worst room was the rubber room. They would torture from every side, up and down and side to side, the walls would close in.

This is my story of surviving it. Now listen up, for this is important when I was young I lived in a big luxurious house in Berlin, Germany. One day the Nazi's pulled me out of my house accusing me of giving information to the enemy of course the accusation was from my neighbors, they despised me. They threw me in the rubber room and it was a terrifying room. The room smelled of kerosene oil, body sweat, and poop. A single lit torch hung on the wall. The only light in the room was from the flames, the only heat also came from the torch. The dim light revealed concrete walls, blood splatter and a hole in the floor where one could relieve themselves. Why they called it a rubber room didn't make sense at the time, there was no rubber anywhere. I was left there for hours, days and completely lost track of time. The only human contact was a hand that would slide a plate of rotten food through an opening in the bottom of the door. The sounds of others being tortured echoed through the halls outside. I knew my turn was next. I went mental, I began talking to people that weren't there. I was starving, losing touch with reality. I longed for comfort and the room turned into rubber walls, soft rubber walls. Everywhere I looked there was rubber and honestly I was crazy at that moment. Then I saw a dark figure and I ran towards that figure because of the lack of human interaction and then everything went dark.

Last thing I remember is a dark figure who came in through a hidden door. Somewhere, I don't know exactly where but he pretty much came out of nowhere. I woke up in the rubber room and the only thing I could hear were the footsteps and gunshots that were happening above the bunker. I fell asleep again and I was in a cage this time then I heard footsteps coming, then the door creaked open and then I woke up.

Nazi's in the rubber room arguing what to do since the War was ending. The Nazi's were panicking and I might be set free soon, or so I thought, but then I passed out again. When I woke up I was in the rubber room again and saw a glimpse of fire kind of like a campfire that was putting a little smoke in the air and the dark figure was present. I could feel a light breeze and saw the fire go out and then there was a tunnel right in front of me dimly lit. I had a torch in my hand and a lighter in my other hand and I couldn't control what I was doing, but I lit the torch and started walking down the tunnel. I saw bones everywhere on the floor of the tunnel. Then I saw a table and heard someone talking in the distance. I heard, "Get out," in a really raspy voice. Then everything went dark and I felt someone nudging me saying, "The war's over," and the guy saying this had an American flag on the shoulder of his suit. I blacked out from exhaustion and woke up in an Army hospital.

Everything went somewhat back to normal after that but I still to this day don't know what exactly happened in that bunker through those days or maybe years that I spent there. I was also given back my house or what was left of it and I had to get a new job and my only son survived that moment or as some people call it World War II.



Amber Alert

Ella Velasquez

My pencil tapped against the paper as I was thinking, I thought about everything possible to keep me from doing something productive. I thought about my yellow wallpaper slowly rising off my wall, the book that I have not touched in months because I have been too “busy” and how my unmade bed looks so perfect for closing my eyes and falling into a dream. I thought about how my desk filled with clutter from my childhood. But I loved to think how small my room is, which is weird because most people like large spaces but the yellow wallpaper, the piles of books left untouched and the clutter filled in the small space was perfect because there is just enough room for me.

That perfect thought was broken from a loud siren noise coming from my phone. It was alarming, I guess that’s what it’s supposed to do. I picked it up but I didn’t read anything because I had just realized I had gotten nothing whatsoever. I heard a grumble from my stomach that was telling me I am hungry. I pick myself up and walked to the kitchen slowly. I called to my mom to see what she is going to be making for dinner. “Mom?” I asked again. “Hello?” I look in her room there was no one there, it’s not like there were more rooms she could hide in, there was my room and my parents room and then the kitchen that was connected with the living room. I checked outside just in case my mom decided to do some gardening or something but no. My mom’s keys were still there and she couldn’t walk anywhere. It was like five miles to anyone we know or the market. I was alone.

I reminded myself that I have a phone and went upstairs to see if she had called, there was just the stupid amber alert I ignored it yet again and tried calling. The line rang over and over and then I heard a voice.

“Mom?” I begged.

“Your call has been declined,” said the other line.

“Are you kidding me?” I turned off my phone and was stuck. I looked out the window to see no one, no one to help me or otherwise I looked at the hard concrete from people to walk their dog or riding a bike or whatever there was no one. A lump crawled up my throat. I wanted to cry and scream. “I don’t know what to do.” I thought I missed the thought about my wallpaper and the clutter and the bed and anything is better than this thought. I picked up my phone and called one more time and there was no answer. I looked at my lock screen on my phone and the picture of my dad and my mom stared back at me.

In front of the picture was one new notification I clicked and the amber alert popped up in front of me. I studied the alert carefully. It read, “Fifteen-year-old girl, 5’4 height brown hair.” Then what it read shocked me. My eyes widened and I felt the pumping of my heart in my ears as I read my name. Where am I?

Corruption Peer Review Draft

Wesley Arnot

December 25, 2006 21:00

I hate Chicago, the winter is so cold. But here I am. I still can’t believe that my boss transferred me here. I get that they chose me because I have no family to leave which makes me a prime candidate for a transfer. I really do understand. It seems crazy though, since I just got diagnosed with terminal cancer. As if I don’t have enough stress! My boss must have a heart of stone giving me the transfer because when I brought up my diagnosis he just said, “You better move before you set up with your doctors so you can just start and finish with the same people.” Making my first day be Christmas just proves my theory that my boss is evil; even if I am Jewish.

December 26, 2006 01:00

Where am I!? The last thing that I remember was being at work in the bathroom. Oh god, my head hurts so bad. I think I must have fainted and hit my head on the sink. The doctors said that it could be a side effect of my treatments. But that

doesn't explain where I am. I can't believe that my diary is still in my pocket. I am glad it is though, or I would be really freaking out. I am in a cement room. There are broken pipes on the ceiling leaking something that smells horrible. The sound of it dripping over and over again on the floor is really driving me insane right now. It's extremely cold. A weird fog seems to be filling this room. I can't see more than a few feet in front of me and I can't stop thinking about what might be hiding in the fog waiting to get me. There's a slight wind but I can't tell where it is coming from and it doesn't affect the fog at all. Seriously, the fog isn't stirring from the wind at all. When I woke up I had been leaning against a wooden box. I think I am going to open it.

December 26, 2006 01:45

I changed my mind; it looks more like an underground parking garage. I was barely brave enough to walk a few feet into the fog when I almost ran into a pillar just like the underground parking garage at my work. Obviously the one at my work isn't filled with a menacing fog and isn't completely abandoned. I have looked through the box that I had been leaning against and it's filled with old school supplies that seem to have been watermarked from a leak in the sealant. What's weird is that the books are dated in the future but they look really old! Someone must be playing a prank on me. I have no family though and since I just moved here I don't have any friends. Who could have done this to me? What am I doing here? My heart is pounding in my chest and I don't know what to do!

December 26, 2006 05:00

I can't stand the dripping anymore, so I have started walking through the fog. Every second I keep thinking that something is going to reach out and get me, nothing has though. It took a while but I finally found a wall and I believe if I follow along the wall that I will eventually find an exit. There's something in the corner of my vision. Something must be following me. Every time I look directly at where I think it is, there's nothing there. I've only had one chemo treatment but it has really impacted me, I have practically sapped all my energy. It is taking all my energy to be able to keep taking one more step. My assumption was wrong though. I haven't found an exit but I have found a doorway. I need a small break so I am resting near the doorway. I can't be sure but it looks like an IKEA of all things and I hate IKEA. These places are endless. At least I know that I should be able to get out at some point, or that maybe someone will find me when they come to work. I'm surprised I haven't set off any alarms.

December 26, 2006 07:00

I have been walking for so long. I am starting to think that whatever has been stalking me is all in my mind. But how can I test that theory? I am pretty sure I just saw my boss through the fog in the distance. I can't be sure but I'm nearly positive I have. As soon as it registered in my mind who it was, he was gone. The fog isn't as bad here but it's still present so I didn't see where he went. I've got this horrible feeling in the pit of my stomach. This doesn't seem like a bad prank anymore. Something awful is going to happen.

December 25, 2010

Dear Chicago Times Editor,

My name is George Arnot and I am a Private Investigator. You may remember that you ran a story on one Jorge Jones a few years ago. He went missing without a trace and was never seen again. The landlord for Jorge Jones (pronounced George) hired me to find out what happened to him. Jorge rented a rather expensive apartment from my client. My client originally believed that Jorge's disappearance was just an attempt to skip out on his lease. The contract between my client and Jorge was for 12 months and a court ordered that my client honor holding the apartment for Mr. Jones for the full contract because he was never pronounced dead. In my attempts to find Jorge, I was in contact with his boss at the time. His boss is the head of the Police Officer's Association. This journal was recovered from inside his desk at the station where he worked, I will be notifying my client that I am off this case. Do with this diary what you will.

*Sincerely,
George Arnot*



Jack Lorenzo, Private Eye

Joseph Benedetto

Cold March rain hammered down on the craggy coast, the last rays of the setting sun filtering through the rocks obscured by the dark clouds. Water streamed down a steep rock wall on one side and cascaded down into the ocean on the other. The downpour drummed on the top of the cab as it cruised down the precarious seaside road.

I had received a visit to my office some hours earlier from a man representing a wealthy, “Mr. Andrew Baxter,” who owned a secluded manor far out on the coast.

Claimed that some valuable antiques of his had gone missing, and he wanted a private appraisal before calling the Law Jockeys. An ornate, wrought iron gate glistened ahead in the growing gloom.

“This it?” The cab driver asked.

I nodded and handed him his fee. Stepping out into the roaring deluge, the cold weight pushed down on my hat and against the warmth of my coat. I moved up to the gate, now flanked by rocky ridges on both sides. Behind the gate, a small security shack sat on the right side of the road. A man emerged from it and approached. He had wide pale eyes under his hat and his wiry frame was draped in a thick raincoat.

“What’s yah business here?” he asked in a thick Bostonian accent. “P.I.,” I answered shortly.

“Mr. Baxter’s expecting you,” he said, rubbing his stubble chin as he flipped through a ring of keys.

I trekked up the mile to the manor through the downpour. The sloped path fell away into a rocky gorge on the left. The right side had a tall rock wall. The entire place was surrounded by high gray cliffs. Even uphill, I wouldn’t have minded the climb if the weather hadn’t been so rough. The wind ran through the countless jagged rocks, distorting into a piercing howl.

The gargantuan manor rose over the last hill, nestled in the cliffs. The path widened to the left until the edge of the gorge was perpendicular to the manor’s elaborate face. A mud hut should have looked like a castle in that rain, but the looming ornate mansion filled me with a foreboding, sudden dread. It looked well-kept even in the storm, but there was no light except what was coming from the door, which was ajar. Being in this business for fourteen years, I’d made my fair share of enemies, and for all I knew, this “Mr. Baxter” could very well be a cover to catch me unawares.

I paused for a moment and examined the area around me. Nothing else seemed out of the ordinary, but I could barely have heard a freight train through the savage wind. I continued, but I’d been in too many jams to let an impulse so strong be completely disregarded; I approached the large oak double doors with caution riding shotgun. Peering in, the foyer was lavishly decorated and finely tiled. I saw no clear sign of malign or immediate ill will, and, being honest, I was wet, cold and ready to get out of the rain. I took one more quick glance at the room and judged that my hunch was sufficiently satisfied to continue its investigation indoors. I pushed the heavy door a bit wider and slipped through. A peal of thunder sounded in the distance.

I stood just beyond the entrance, my hand still on the open door. There was a wide staircase on the left of the room, a double door behind it on the right, and doorways on either side. The walls were papered in a rich maroon reed pattern hanging with many ornate frames. A chandelier hung from the high ceiling, casting a glimmer on the brown marble tiles. Still, something was not right here. The rug on the staircase was out of place around the landing. Many of the paintings were crooked, and one was even face down on the ground.

The place looked searched to my ignorant eye, and I was careless. I pulled the door closed to get a closer look, and it creaked like falling timber. It startled me, but I didn’t realize the nature of my mistake until I heard a rapid scraping noise from the second floor and the light of the chandelier suddenly went out.

Suddenly, a lanky creature bounded animalistically down to the landing. I got one look at its empty black eyes and contorted limbs before it leapt furiously down the stairs, an airy wail issuing from its jawless mouth. I flew for the exit, but I could not have heaved the door open fast enough. Turning, I saw it mid-air, bladed forelimbs extended. I caught one of its single clawed arms as it slammed into my chest with the force of a workhorse. The other arm connected with my right shoulder, catching mercifully in my thick coat.

We crashed through the doors into the raging storm. My back struck the stone forcing the air from my lungs. Everything was a blur of hard stone, pouring rain, pallid skin and cold breath. The creature was hunched atop me, one claw pinning me to the ground by my coat. Wheezing and wailing like the wind, the creature’s other claw railed savagely against my grasp. I fought to keep it from my face. Something clattered away in the struggle. A stone! My left hand shot

out and grasped it, bringing in down on the creature's bald head. The thing faltered, and I swiftly placed my feet against its sickly ribs, and kicked with all my strength. The lithe monster sailed over my head, through the rain, struck the edge of the ravine, and careened with a shrill whistling sound to the crags below.

Suddenly the wind hushed. The sudden lull sent a chill down my spine. I picked my hat up, and a great chain of lightning illuminated contorted, pale, unnatural forms scattered all across the barren landscape, staring in menacing silence.

The Lunch Slayer

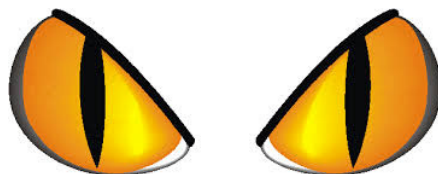
Susan Harroun

"Come on hurry," my friend said to me as we made our way to lunch. He had wanted to see the new lunch lady. We rushed to lunch and got in line, "Do you smell that?" my friend asked. I was confused about what he was talking about until I took a whiff and smelt it. The food smelt amazing for lunch. I had never smelt this good before I started to get excited. Our three other friends met us in line and all I could hear was the cafeteria buzzing about how good the food smelt and tasted. We finally went up to the food. I looked up at the new lunch lady but jumped a little when I saw her. She looked scared. I grabbed my food, said thank you and then left fast. We all sat down at the lunch table today. We had chicken, mashed potatoes, and a roll. We have this a lot but it never smelt this good but when I bit into it, it was even better my mouth exploded with flavor I was impressed. Lunch finished and we went to our next class as we were walking in the hallway one kid fell to the ground and we all started to panic. A teacher came over and called 911 while she checked his heart beat. There wasn't one. Soon paramedics came rushing over to the kid and took him away. We all prayed that he would make it.

The next morning, I woke up to a text from my friend. "He didn't make it," I read when I opened my friend's text. I felt bad for the kids' parents. You would think after that they would make us stay home but nope school is still going no one knows what killed the kid but it freaked everyone out to walk by the spot he passed at. The morning went by fast before we knew it, it was lunch time. And once again as we walked into the lunch room it smelt amazing we ran over to get in line so we were some of the first there. We grabbed lunch which was mac and cheese today and sat down. We had finished eating when a bunch of commotion started behind us. We turned around to find two people had fallen on the ground in a panic. We called 911 again and again. And just like last time in the morning we woke up to the news that they had not made it.

Devastation fell over the school as multiple people started to pass out and die mysteriously at school till one day we put it together. This all started to happen the day we got the new lunch lady. All the deaths happen during or right after lunch. The number of people started to add throughout the week. First it was one person on Monday. On Tuesday it was two people and on Wednesday it was three people and so on. We gave our theories to the police and after we did the next day they came in with a search warrant. What they found shocked and scared us all. The new lunch lady had a bottle of poison in her purse when the police asked what it was for she had admitted that she had been putting it in students' food as revenge.

Everyone was confused until she explained it. Sixteen years ago her daughter had been going to school here until one day she had a problem with her heart. She ended up passing away in the cafeteria and the school did nothing but call the police. The school swept it under the rug like it was nothing and she didn't like that. The lunch lady explained that she was getting her revenge and she did. As the police took her away she had a big smile on her face that will forever haunt me.



Martha's Backyard

Kimbra Blackmore

Martha Mulhaney loved her backyard and every single thing that was in it. "Ooh, look at this," she cooed to her husband as she perched above an intricately-crafted web that had ensnared some unsuspecting victim (who was unrecognizable in the cocoon tomb spun from spider's silk).

"I heard a new bird song coming from the tree today," she crowed to the neighbor (who frankly didn't give two squawks about Martha or her backyard).

"That silly old squirrel did a backflip in mid-air," she chattered on the phone to her girlfriend (who only pretended to care because she needed to borrow money from Martha).

Sometimes Martha didn't say anything at all. She often spent entire days in her chair outside, facing the big blue spruce tree, watching the birds and squirrels and field mice come and go. On at least three occasions, a pale yellow butterfly floated by, and Martha's heart soared with a child-like sense of wonder. Martha believed her backyard was filled with magic, and she was absolutely enchanted by it.

Even as Halloween crept closer, and the days became shorter and colder (and the nights became longer and darker), Martha stayed in her chair for hours at a time, where she delighted at the marvels of nature in her beautifully bewitched backyard.

She wondered who might stay through the winter. Would the field mice still be there in the spring? Would the squirrels (who had fattened themselves on peanuts and walnuts provided by Martha all summer long) emerge from the frost for another season?

She imagined new visitors would have to stop by for a spell; there would undoubtedly be some creatures passing through on their way to other places. And they would have to eat. Would any of those wayward travelers stick around? Martha was excited to find out.

One dark gray morning, Martha stepped out to fill the bird feeders. As she flitted back to the porch for another cup full of bird seed, she scraped her arm on a protruding piece of metal on the chainlink fence. "Darn it!" she winced. (Martha was quite clumsy, so she was used to getting hurt, but she always seemed surprised when it happened.) It was more than a little knick: she could feel the warm liquid flowing from her punctured flesh; she heard a few loud splats as her blood hit a stone on the pathway.

Martha darted into the house to clean her wound. (She was back outside and back to her tasks within a few flutters of a hummingbird's wing.) Just as she finished scattering two handfuls of peanuts around the backyard for the squirrels and blue jays, she heard a loud rustling in the tree.

Martha stood at the base of the big blue spruce and looked straight up. The tree stretched at least 30 feet into the sky. Far up in a cluster of branches, Martha spotted something she'd never seen before. Her heart leapt with excitement. It was a dark purpley-black creature squatting on a branch. Martha squinted and shifted her stance to get a better look; the animal shifted its stance too. As it moved sideways (apparently to get out of Martha's line of sight), the branch creaked under the being's weight.

Martha raced into the house. She ran past her husband, who was reclined in his easy chair, watching the morning news. "Slow down!" he yelled as she bumped into a wall.

"Darn it!"

"You're going to hurt yourself," her husband muttered.

"I think I saw a new bird," she chirped as she flew to the bookshelf in the adjoining room. She grabbed a large hardcover book and flipped through it. "Nope," she said. She exchanged that book for another and quickly scanned the pages with the same result. "No," she sighed as she shelved the book. "That's not it either."

Martha paced back and forth in front of the bookshelf, tapping her lips repeatedly with her index finger.

"Describe it to me," her husband prodded with feigned interest, still reclined in his chair.

"Well, I didn't get a very good look at it," she said. "But it's big - bigger than an owl for sure - and it's all black."

"Hmm..." Martha's husband absent-mindedly replied with his eyes still fixed on the television.

“I think I’ll try to lure it down with some food,” she said, already partly out the back door.

“Good idea,” he said to the empty living room.

When Martha returned to the backyard, she was startled to see the creature on the ground, lapping up the blood she lost earlier. Martha could also see that the animal was an unearthly iridescent black, and it was much (much) bigger than she thought.

She took a step backward, keeping her eyes on the beast. As she reached behind her for the door handle, Martha smacked the top of her hand on the door jamb. “Darn it!” she whisper-yelled.

The creature stood up and stretched out its arms to reveal shiny black wings that spanned over 10 feet.

“I knew you were a bird!” Martha exclaimed as the monster turned and folded her into its wings. Then it swallowed her whole.

(“Darn it!”)

The Mirror Meeting

Reagan Hall



In those first moments of fleeting consciousness, I could hardly remember my own name, much less how or when I’d fallen asleep. I found just enough strength to rise, at least to my knees, and everything within my line of sight rested gently into focus at long last. Judging by the soft, ominous glow of moonlight being subtly restrained by sheer curtains, it must have been the middle of the night.

I took a seat with weary legs in front of a now apparent mirror that hung on the closet, puzzling over it for a while as my reflection stared back at me with the same inquisitive expression. I didn’t recall there ever being a mirror on this door, or in my room for that matter; but that was not what really troubled me. The longer I continued to look upon my duplicate, the more foreign it seemed to become, until eventually it felt as though I was looking at a different person altogether. As my gaze grew in intensity, so too did his; when I raised a hand, he followed suit without hesitation, but it all seemed more like a charade or a well-prepared pantomime than a proper mirror image.

For what was probably several minutes, I watched him with a hawk’s glare, refusing to avert my attention for even a moment. His visage grew cloudy and narrow as my eyes dried up, demanding that I give them a moment of reprieve. I ignored that ever present urge and allowed it to be consumed by my new unfounded obsession with seeing him blink; the flaring of my temples meant nothing compared with the satisfaction that was sure to come when I finally found him out.

I almost didn’t notice it. So heavy was my concentration on the act of keeping my eyes open that the twitch in his features went practically unnoticed, but then it happened. His face convulsed and his lashes fluttered uncontrollably; tears welled and fell down his cheeks without abandon, soothing his strain as he rubbed them out with frantic swipes. It was too late though. I had caught this uncanny impersonator in the act, and he was well aware of it.

His eyes grew large and fearful, developing a tremble that soon spread to the rest of the body in turn; and I stood up, happy to find that I had fully regained my mobility. My double hesitantly followed my example, and then proceeded to watch me approach the mirror with uneasy intrigue. Whatever semblance of a threat he might have posed in my mind was subsequently dashed by his current demeanor, and I was quick to take pity. Nevertheless, I was also in dire need of some answers at this point, and this was the only person that might have them; so I steeled myself and greeted him in what I hoped to be an affable enough manner.

“Hello...?”

He cocked his head to the side as I spoke, much like a dog that’s quite invested in what you have to say, despite having no idea what it means. I suspected that the barrier separating us might be hindering my voice, so with cupped hands around my mouth I tried again.

“Can you hear me?”

As if in response, he pointed at one of his ears and shook his face, which still wore that same terrified expression; and an unexpected surge of guilt came upon me. Despite the frustrating circumstances that allowed for this encounter, I meant him no harm; but it was rather apparent that communicating as much would be no easy task. I decided that a direct

approach was best. Placing my hand upon the mirror's chilly surface, I made an earnest attempt at showing that I bore only a desire to understand; but that effort was rather poorly received.

At my touch, he recoiled violently and shook his head in vehement disapproval; but I dared not to relent, and he likely understood this. With what looked to be the full extent of his courage, he composed himself, took a step closer to me, and inhaled deeply, covering his side of the mirror with the fog of his breath and partially obscuring himself within it. Before I could ask myself what was going on, he began frantically scrawling a message of some kind into the condensation. There was an occasional pause between certain letters as he neatly traced them in reverse, though it did not take long to discern what was meant by them. He came to an abrupt stop and stepped back to show that he had finished, casting a downward glance as I examined his handiwork.

YOU SHOULDN'T BE HERE

I stood there for a second, completely dumbfounded by the blunt assertion. This was my room, after all. Where else should I be right now? He seemed to take note of my bewilderment right away, hurriedly removing the original statement and replacing it with another as I looked on with curious concern. There was hardly the same degree of deliberation in his hands now; they were haphazard and shaky, and the resulting script was little more than a jagged scribble.

YOU NEED TO GO

The double did not wait for me to react, not this time. The sentence was erased as I read it, and without looking away from me, he breathed on the glass once more and wrote but a single word.

NOW

I shot up in bed and was met with the glaring warmth of a new morning. My first instinct was to look to the closet, and the mirror that should not have been there was gone. Promptly, I stumbled out of my room and down the hall, falling over myself as I stormed the bathroom and clung to the sink for support. Gaping at the grimy looking glass on the wall with feverish intent, a near identical restroom revealed itself to me; nearly so because my image wasn't in it. He was gone.

It's a New Day, A New Year, My New Fifth Graders

Debra Johnson-Champ

The first day of every school year, I anticipate and visualize a perfect upcoming year with a perfect class of eager students ready to learn. While a few disappoint for a myriad of reasons, I still stop, peek at my new class outside lined up, close my eyes and say a little prayer that this class will be my best ever. Today was no different.

I exited the back door where all the third, fourth and fifth graders were lined up in their new school outfits carrying bulging backpacks stuffed with school supplies and wearing endearing toothy smiles. I had made a decision to 'roll up' with my prior fourth graders and become their fifth grade teacher because I had enjoyed them so much that I couldn't bear to part with them. Actually I didn't think I was quite done with them. I needed one more year with this group before letting them take wings and fly to middle school.

I had formed some very close relationships with many of my prior students and their parents. My kids were combining with two other fourth grade classes to form this class that was to be equally divided between myself and Ms. Hugo. Some of my former scholars would be venturing off to Ms. Hugo's homeroom but I would have each and every one of them before the end of the day as I would be specializing this year teaching math and writing to all fifth graders.

I looked around and spotted over a dozen of my students from the year before and I smiled. As I looked over the forty plus kids lined up behind the fifth grade banner, I felt an odd shiver run up my spine. I wrapped my arms around my body wondering how in the heat of August could I possibly feel chilly. Perhaps I was coming down with the 'beginning of the year crud' as it is commonly referred to. No time to think about that for very long as I heard the morning bell.

Ms. Hugo had her class and was marching them through the double doors and as the end of her line passed over into the fifth grade hallway, I led my group of 24 to our classroom. I held the door to room 36 and greeted each and every one of them. I reminded them to “sanitize” as I had for over a year since we had returned from our stay-at-home Covid time. Everyone complied without complaint. That was odd as I had always had a few that refused to follow directions, but today I welcomed this perfect class with open arms. This really was going to be a spectacular year.

Our principal knocked on our open door and when I turned to welcome him in, I heard a low murmur from the class. When I turned to settle them down to listen to his annual first-day greeting, the sound grew louder but surprisingly no one’s lips were moving. He began his speech and the noise grew louder. I placed my index finger on my lips to indicate that we needed to be silent, and all my students smiled that same sweet toothy smile I had seen outside but the noise continued. I looked at the principal and he was smiling as well. He seemed oblivious to the noise the class was making.

I tried to listen intently but found I simply couldn’t. The noise was permeating every cell in my body. He droned on and then turned and announced that this was the most attentive class he had ever greeted in his fifteen years of being a principal. Was he joking? Couldn’t he hear that noise? I walked him to the door and he again thanked me for having such a special class. I looked across the hall and saw Ms. Hugo slumped against her door. She was pale and her hands were cupped over her ears. Our eyes met and while I couldn’t leave my class, I knew she was having difficulties too.

When I turned around, the noise had become ear shattering. I shouted, “QUIET!” Not a single child reacted. It was as if they didn’t hear me. I shouted louder than I had ever shouted. No reaction. The noise continued until I realized I had tears streaming down my cheeks. I heard a tapping at my windows that ran the length of my back wall. The blinds were drawn but one of the young boys sitting in the back stood and went and raised them. Outside, dozens of familiar but not familiar faces peered into our room. Were those parents? I recognized a few but as I made my way to them, I realized they were somehow different. I opened my door to the parking lot to speak with them, and they were making noise too. I couldn’t make out what was being said but I did see that a couple of them were carrying what appeared to be a mannequin. A mannequin that was dressed like me and oh....good....god....looked like me!!!

As I turned around, all the children had formed a wedge and were moving closer, trapping me between themselves and the group of parents outside. I heard a familiar voice speaking to me above the din. The school nurse was patting my back and telling me that everything was going to be okay.

“Relax Ms. Crump. You just need to take it easy. These kids are special. We call it Covid Consequences or CC for short,” she spoke softly as she gently but firmly ushered me around the crowd as the parents entered my room with my doppelganger mannequin.

As she sat me down in the counseling office, I saw I wasn’t alone. Ms. Hugo and many more had joined me. One of the third grade teachers kept repeating, “We’ll be okay. It’s just the first day. We’ll be okay. It’s just the first day.”

