



You Are Here

The Fabius-Pompey High School
Literature & Art Magazine 2016-2017

Dear Reader,

Eight years ago we named the Fabius-Pompey literary magazine *You Are Here* because, like a point on a map, we wanted a title that affirmed your mark, your special, momentary place here in Fabius at a time, realize it or not, when you are young and teeming with potential, a time that flits away before you know it. This, though, your writing and art, your fingerprint of creativity, will always be here as a memento, as a reminder that *you were here*. This year's issue was the result of many hours of work and dedication. We would like to thank the staff—Bekah Warner, Aiden McCarthy, Greg Hall, Emelia Gasparini, Bridget Sullivan—and our advisor, Mr. Neumire. We would also like to thank Mr. Hyatt and Ms. Ashman, who collected terrific art submissions for us. Thanks are also due to Principal Linck, Superintendent Ryan, and the Board of Education for their support in the publishing of our eighth issue, which is an online issue.

SUBMISSIONS FOR NEXT YEAR

We are accepting submissions for next year as of right now! If you are submitting text (poetry, fiction, non-fiction), please make sure you have it saved on a Microsoft Word or Google Docs file somewhere and email it to Mr. Neumire at **bneumire@fabiuspompey.org** or drop off a hard copy in room 139, Mr. Neumire's room. Put your name only on the back of the page. You may also give work to literary magazine staff members or your English teacher. If you are submitting art work, please give it to Mr. Hyatt or Ms. Ashman (photography). They will give you more instructions if they are needed.

We publish one online issue per year on the school website. We will accept everything until we reach our page limit, and then we will begin making cuts once we've exceeded our limit. If you don't want your piece cut, make sure it is school appropriate, proofread, and creative! Each year we will award three prizes for the best submissions.

If you would like to join the literary magazine staff, we highly encourage it! You will need to have Mondays after school available. You should also be ready to edit, type, and review submissions for publication.

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A Cautionary Tale

By Rammi Hanai

Once upon a time there was a small snail village known as The Front Yard. No more than ten hollowed out strawberries' homes dotted the landscape. In this village lived an ambitious snail named August. August spent the days of his meager life moving along leaves and blades of grass with his best buds. They had the best of times together hitching wild rides in the flip flops and sandals of the giants that passed through their hometown. Life was good and all was well.

In The Front Yard, there was a mysterious and barren land known as The Sidewalk. No snail with half a wit would ever slime across it. Legend has it that every snail that made the attempt to traverse The Sidewalk was violently greeted by a small giant, roughly half the size of a normal one.

One day a new family moved to the village. It was very controversial as this was the first slug family to live in The Front Yard. "Go back to the Back Yard" yelled August's old, crusty neighbor, Bill. Maybe they're not that bad, thought August. We should give them a chance. Then the son came out of the house. The first thing you noticed was the smell. It pierced your nose like a nailgun through my dog's head. His hair was flattened back against his neck with copious amounts of grease. He waddled up to August, wheezing heavily from the slime over.

"Wow this town's so lame," huffed the slug, "The back yard is way cooler than this."

"Oh, it's not so bad," replied August. "By the way, my name is August, what's yours?"

"Back home they called me Corndog," smirked Corndog. Corndog turned and looked over to The Sidewalk. "Hey what's that place?"

"That's The Sidewalk, it's really dangerous, you should never go there."

"Pfffh. What are you, scared?"

"I'm not scared!"

"Look at the little scared baby!"

"I'm not a baby!"

"Yeah, whatever you say, baby, want me to change your diaper?" At this moment something in August snapped. Something in August began to feel threatened, something that nobody wants damaged. His ego.

"Fine! You know what? I'm going to cross that sidewalk, and prove that you're the baby!"

It was a scorching hot day and everything was in line for August's honor quest. His shell was packed with some of his favorite dirt, rations of water and food, and an extra pair of pants (just in case). His friends and family gathered around the edge of The Sidewalk and all entreated him to not follow through, and that he should just come back home. Corndog looked out smugly.

As soon as he lay his first trail across the concrete, he felt his underside begin

to heat up. He was fully expecting this, and took various mental precautions to eliminate his crippling fear of death. It was smooth snailing once he got adjusted, both mentally and physically, to the task at hand. He began to wonder why it was even considered dangerous in the first place. There were actually many interesting things in the strange land of The Sidewalk. He saw toy cars, all different types of chalk, and even some pebbles. I can't wait to prove Corndog wrong, he thought.

August was nearly finished with his adventure when suddenly, he felt a great stinging pain on his back. He slowly moved his long eyes up to see the manic, chocolate smeared face of the small giant he had been warned about. The stinging grew more and more intense, and August couldn't bare it any longer. He gazed into the manic eyes of the dwarf giant with agony and fear. He felt his body shrivel up and he began to have flashbacks of his snail childhood, racing up the big oak tree with his brothers and sisters and eating tufts of grass with his good friends who had warned him not to do what he just had done. These were his final thoughts.

August died alone and scared that fateful afternoon. His life was short lived but surely never forgotten, much like the dead leaves of August, drifting and skittering in the wind upon the asphalt of a cool fall evening. We must all shed a tear for August and his tragic death, because although life can be sad, at least you're not a snail who got table salt poured on his back.



- Danielle Murphy

The Blessed Curse

By Lucas Riker

It was the twelfth day in a row with naught but sandbars and coral reefs. With having to buy rations for the crew and repairs to the Blessed Curse, there would soon be no wealth at all aboard. The Captain was sitting in his quarters, quill in hand, scribbling tirelessly, letter upon letter.

"I'm surprised there's any canvas left sir," the Quartermaster's voice startled the Captain slightly, he'd been so focused. "Still no response?"

"Not a scrap, Quartermaster." The Captain's voice was not his own. There was a noticeable lack of energy, of leadership. "I don't understand. Do you think she found another man?"

"I can't say, sir. Maybe you ought to get some fresh air."

"What's our heading?" The Captain headed to the stairs.

"120 due south sir, like you asked... I wonder if you have a moment, sir?" The Quartermaster seemed to lower his voice, as if to hide something from the ship itself.

"Be quick about it son, I feel we're close to the Cuban shore."

"Yes sir. It's just... I heard some men talking. About you..." the Quartermaster's voice trailed off. "I think the men are planning something."

"You talking about mutiny! Gods be damned if we let such blasphemy occur on this ship, Quartermaster!"

"Aye, sir. But I think it best not to say anything, to have the crew hang themselves. Catch them in the act, sir." The Quartermaster said he would watch the men while the Captain returned to the wheel and kept the course for the Cuban prison on the shoreline.

The single worst prison in the West Indies. The Captain heard stories about the towering monument, stories about how the guards have not a shred of mercy, and how you can hear the wailing of prisoners for miles. He also heard that they conduct various experiments there, something about new-fangled "anti-plague" serum. He didn't care too much about that sciency hogwash, and no amount of words would stop the Captain from getting his hands on those reals. He let his mind wander, right into the future: He would land in England, a rich man, and he would find Mary. Make her take him back. He recalled the events before he left England, and winced. Still a healing wound. Mary may as well have spat in his face, she told him outright that she won't stay with a poor man. After the Captain lost his job at the bank, their funds depleted quickly, and she turned into a different woman. He was willing to try, but she was too used to a posh life.

No mutiny of any sort was going to stop the Captain. He needed that gold. He did have some doubt, however. The rumor of five hundred thousand Spanish reals was almost too good to be true. But it wasn't too good for a plan. At the Blessed Curse's last stop, Central Florida port to be exact, the Captain mailed a special letter, addressed to the Spanish ambassador. He wrote where they were going, told the Spanish where he was going! The Captain's crew were led to believe they were taking

the prison, staying there awhile. So the Captain aimed to take the gold and simply sail off, leaving his crew to the Spanish government once they arrived. He wanted to let the Quartermaster know of his plan, he was a great friend to the Captain. He couldn't leave him with the crew... Once he had it though, once he had the money, he was in the clear, he would be rich. Mary would have to take him back. She'd have to. Then, in an instant, all thoughts fell away. Except one. The Captain felt the most pain he'd ever felt before, exploding in his leg, rippling through his entire body. He fell to his knees, then on his back. His vision began to blur as he felt another wave of pain. This time in his left shoulder. He saw through half closed eyes, a spurt of blood, his blood, fall on the face of the Quartermaster.

"Terribly sorry, sir, but the boys and I have talked." A haunting laughter filled the air. "You and your poxy schemes, I know you never would have shared the wealth with us," the Quartermaster growled with a twist of his hand, knife still in the Captain's shoulder. The crew came to his side, and the Captain saw nothing but hate and hunger in their eyes. Hunger for power. For money. The crew lifted the Captain up, and between his cries of pain, he saw the huge stone structure protruding from the water. The structure he was supposed to have raided. The worst prison in the West Indies. Five hundred thousand reals felt like a dream now. The Captain lost consciousness, and the crew put him on a small lifeboat and sent him towards the isle.

The Captain awoke with another jolt of pain. He was in a cage. A hanging cage, over the edge of the prison! He saw jagged rocks fifty feet below him. Another sting of pain. The taste of blood filled his mouth, as a volley of rocks hit him and the cage. Some guards standing on the breezeway were using him as target practice. In that moment, the Captain simply gave up, gave up on the money, on Mary, on his plan, and succumbed to the pain. He felt his consciousness leaving once more. As he was getting pelted and his eyes were closing, he turned around and saw his ship, the Blessed Curse, in the distance, the sails waving goodbye.



- Sophia Widdekind

**BIG GRIDDLE
AND
JOHN'S TRIP TO THE HARDWARE STORE**
By Greg Hall

“Hey!” yelled John from behind. Big Griddle turned slowly, with a horrible smile.

“What,” he said joyfully.

John slowly walked toward Big Griddle when he yelled, “You ready, BG?” Griddle nodded as he turned and stepped into Frank's ToolPro hardware shop. Slamming the glass door shut in excitement every one stared at the two. They awkwardly took off to the drills and hammer section and the shoppers went out their business. John and Big Griddle had been anticipating this adventure for a very long time, they could not wait to see all the new equipment and fun times ahead. “You ready for some fun!” shouted John. Griddle smiled as they ran through the aisles. Ignoring the old man in suspenders and a buttonup yelling, “slow down!” they finally made it to the drills. While John was staring into the empty aisle, Big Griddle grabbed the Toolco branded drill and pressed the button. They both stared in joy as the metal tip spun vigorously. John had the bright idea to grab the moving piece of metal, and as he did his hand quickly burned and he shouted very loudly. Luckily, only one person saw: the old man in the suspenders. Giving the two a dirty look he kept going upon his business. The two slowly laughed and did it again forgetting the result of the first time.

They slowly moved through the aisles looking for more fun stuff to do when they saw a good friend, his short shorts and blue headband were all too apparent in the crowd.

“Jazzy June!” yelled John startling the people around him. As they stepped closer to June, one man wearing a purple and orange shirt fell to the ground holding his heart in shock.

“Yo, Griddler, is that you!” yelled June in response. The two stood shaking hands in a thrusting motion doing their famous handshake, the pump handle extreme. John stood awkwardly as the two made up.

“So what are waiting for, let's get movin home skillet,” exclaimed Jazzy June. The three took off toward the tape and glue section ignoring and stepping over the man in purple laying on the ground gasping for help.

“So what's chilling? Have you been in much trouble, John!” said June. John stared with his wide eyes and hunched position, “oh, you know it!” he yelled in a soft stupid voice. “Our Frank dog over here was the lead man of our recent operation.”

“Oh, so you went through with it?” said June.

John stared at him and said, “Yea, we finally pranked that stupid neighbour kid.” June high-fived John and kept walking.

Arriving at the tape and glue, Jazzy June shook in excitement. “Let's get started,” he said.

BG and him ran down the aisle grabbing glue and tape of all shapes and colors. John standing behind looked puzzled, and then he slowly started to question his friends' actions and why he went through with all their dumb ideas.

“Hey!” yelled a man. John turned and saw a fat security guard. “What are they doing!” he yelled again. John turned confused and to his amazement he saw the two trying to glue their shoes to the wall. In confusion John walked over, in a loss for words he stared and they stared back. The security guard walked over and Jazzy June stepped up.

“Problem?” Said June.

The guard looked at his weak non-opposing stance. “Yes!” yelled the guard. BG stepped up, “show him what is, Jazzy J!” yelled Big Griddle. Jazzy crossed his arms and pushed the guard. Now more angry, the guard stared back and grabbed his radio from his belt. June stood there as the guard called for backup.

“What do we do?” said John. June ignored the guard and took off toward the other aisle.

“Hey!” yelled the guard as the three sprinted toward the grill section.

“Whatever,” he said as he turned and left.

It was dark in the lonely grill section, the broken light hung from the ceiling and the dust gathered on the grills. But in high hopes Big Griddle grabbed a red rubber spatula. Jazzy J stepped over to him and tried grabbing it. John watched as the two fought over the last spatula. As the two wrestled Jazzy June punched Big Griddle and threw him to the ground and they both laughed. John grabbed a brown deck chair and sat, his baggy grey pants waved as he sat down on the cold deckchair. His grey skin-tight shirt wrinkled as he laid back. He sat thinking of the reason they were there and when he looked up, he saw the glare of the old man. He walked toward the three and John stood and dragged the others up. They took off toward the outdoor department leaving the old man in their tracks.

Laughing and laughing, they sprinted into the outdoor section where there was a girl. She had red hair and blue eyes. Her jaw was slightly chiseled and hair long. They all stared at this girl and she stared back. Her beauty was unmatched. She quickly turned away and tried to ignore them. Jazzy June started walking over to her and said, “Yo, what's cooking, baby? I'm Jazzy June,” with a sly smile. She looked with deep eyes and turned in disgust trying to hold in laughter and vomit. Jazzy June, now embarrassed beyond belief, turned and looked at the two idiots laughing harder than ever. Jazzy walked passed them and said, “let's go” in a cracky voice.

Exploring the aisles they saw a refrigerator and oven section. Stepping into it they saw a big black refrigerator with two doors and no freezer. They all high-fived and walked over. Opening up the large door, big Griddle grabbed John by the collar

and threw him into it. Everyone turned to the department and saw Jazzy and BG trying to tip the fridge. With loud screams coming from the vents on the fridge a man walked over. The old man in suspenders. He grabbed BG and threw him off. Jazzy turned to the old man and was shoved to the ground.

“What is the matter with you!” he shouted. Opening the fridge he saw John curled in a tight ball crying. Holding in laughter the man grabbed John and pulled him out. The man had no words to say, he just stepped into the aisle of kitchen supplies. They heard loud laughing of the old man. John, frightened, laid in a ball on the floor. BG and Jazzy were distraught as they still heard the man's laughs. And the whole store stared at the three.

Slowly getting up, they heard yells and saw the fat security guard barreling toward them. “What the!” yelled John. The three stood and stared as the heavily breathing man sprinting at them.

“Go run!” screamed BG and the three took off into the printer section. With the guard slowly catching up they threw things to the ground trying to stop him, but the man was persistent. He was strong but he could not dodge the printer he took to the stomach.

“How did you like that one, flat face!” yelled Big Griddle. The guard quickly gained strength again and stumbled toward them. All running, John had the brilliant idea to climb the shelves to get to another aisle. Doing so they made it to the drills again unseen. John fell off the shelf and the guard appeared from around the corner still holding his stomach. Now cornered there was no escape.

The guard slowly approached sweaty and with the face of evil. He reached over and grabbed a combo nail and staple gun from the shelf. This was no normal guard, he wanted them dead for no reason. All lost for words John picked up a screw driver and threw it at the guard. The guard yelled loudly as it impaled his leg leaving a big rip in his pants.

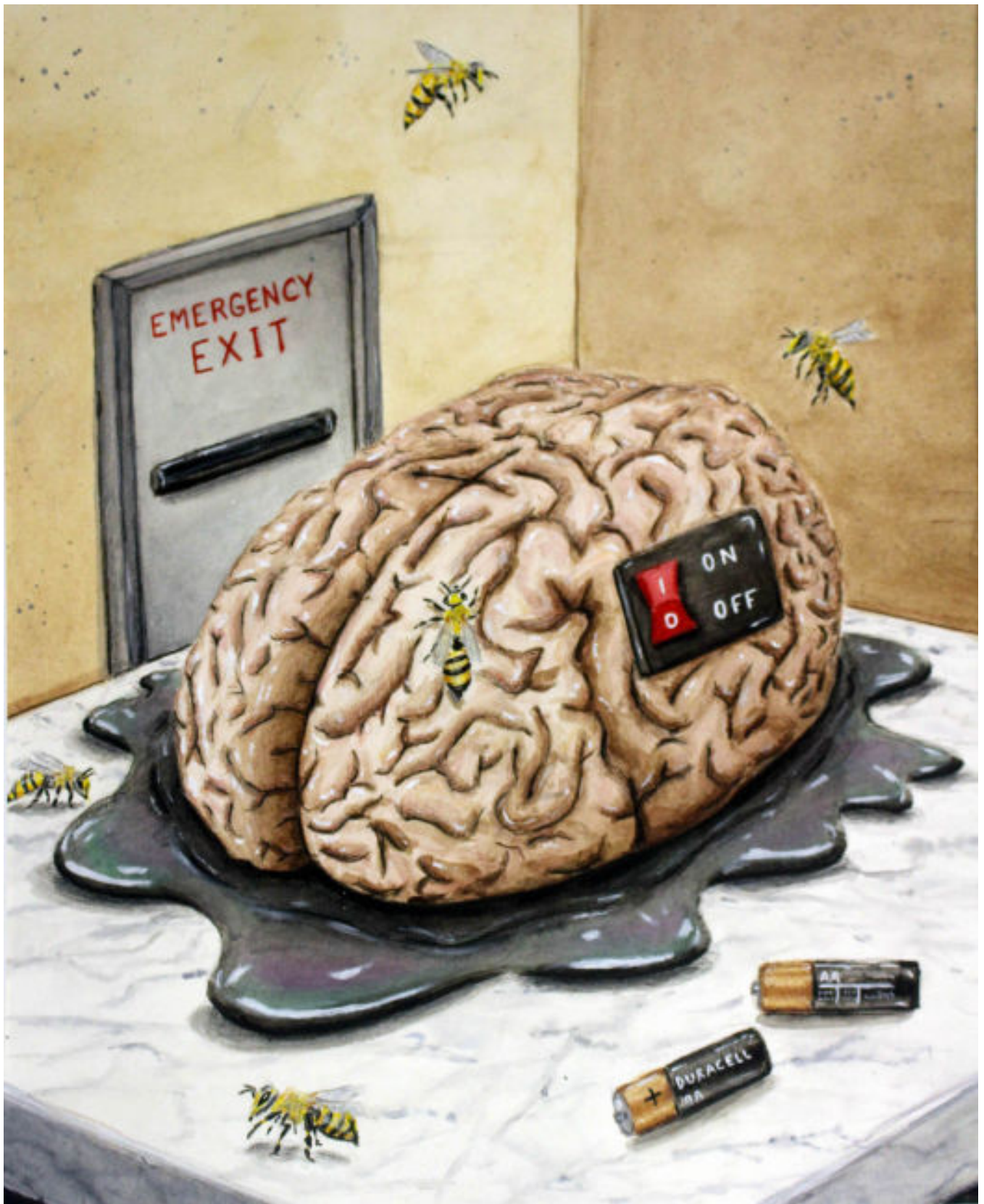
He slowly limped toward the three when Jazzy June yelled, “What the, is he the terminator or something?”

With John starting to cry BG grabbed him by the shirt and threw him yelling at him first. Now John broke down crying.

With the guard only feet away he yelled, “I was nice at first, but I'm not now. You will die!”

The guard approached with a deranged look. All the three teens huddled in a group and he held the staple gun to Jazzy's head. Laughing scarily, he pulled the trigger. Luckily, he was probably the stupidest guard in history as the nail shot from the wrong end it impaled his forehead and he fell to ground dead.

“What the!” yelled John. They all stepped over him and alerted the store manager. Getting off scot free, they left the store with no regrets and they went to Burger King to discuss it.



- Bridget Sullivan

Electric Hamsters

By Rammi Hanai

The apartment was all they could afford. A nine-to-five and a ten-to-three job could barely earn enough to keep the clutter in check. The west wall in the living room was made of a completely different material than the rest, as were many of the laterals. The balcony doors were locked shut and the windows had barred off views of the tiny city below. Dust settled on the stray Science Weekly magazines and old running shoes. Chuck and Sandra's distinct scent of fried food and fabric softener stood quietly in the draftless quarters. Stuffy and stained, much like the flat, was a good description of the lab rat. Chuck always had scruff and hot coffee breath. When Sandra arrived back home, there were times when she didn't even know he was home because he blended in with everything so well. This was not one of those days. Sandra arrived home, and Chuck had already set up some ridiculous experiment. Long hamster tunnels meandered through the kitchen, through the living room, ending in the bedroom.

"Chuck, what the hell," she said as she carefully stepped over each pipe. She saw at least two hamsters in them and became more and more upset. Abruptly, she dropped her bag off her shoulder onto the couch and stomped into the lab. She stood in the doorway and put her hands on her hips and gave him a look of disappointment, almost as if he drank out of the milk carton right in front of her.

"I was going to call you before you got home," he said.

"And what, tell me that our apartment has a rat problem?" she replied.

"For Christ's sake, Sandra, you know they're not rats. You remember how our floor has been having electrical issues? Well, I talked with everyone and they seem to be okay with this."

"I don't believe this..." Sandra said with her hand over her mouth.

"Well, you better, I'm using them to see how much electricity they can produce using this here wheel and battery. Just wait until you see the big one." He motioned toward the set-up on the middle island table with a wrench.

"Okay, let's just assume that this isn't batshit crazy for a second. If you're measuring all the electricity, or whatever, why is the damn hamster Alaskan pipeline in our apartment? How the hell am I even supposed to walk to my own bed to the bathroom?"

"They need to rest and exercise. Not everything is about you."

"Oh yeah, of course. Naturally. How could I be so stupid."

"Oh, be quiet, you love me. You're standing in the proof."

"Just because I pretty much bought this whole lab doesn't mean you can go doing- doing this!" Chuck just kept working at his device, pretending to listen to her.

"Alright, I need to get some sleep. They moved my shift to start at twelve tonight. Can you believe that? You're not even listening!!!" She stormed out of the room, only to be greeted by the tunnels. It really killed her sarcastic attitude, maneu-

vering through hamster walkways.

The next day, as Sandra got ready for work, she saw Chuck asleep on the couch with a half-eaten croissant on his stomach while one of the hamsters nibbled away at it. He was snoring. Loud.

“Look at him,” thought Sandra, “no decency whatsoever.” She grabbed her bags and her coat and was out the door in record timing.

A couple hours later, a loud bang emerged from the lab. It jolted Chuck awake, snorting and mumbling. Before dealing with it, he poured a cup of cold coffee from the morning and gulped it down while itching his gut. He shuffled through the apartment, lazily stepping over the hamster pipes, knocking a few over. When his eyes met his experiment setup, a wave of dismay blew across his face. There the setup was, broken lightbulb and wheel, and there Higgins was, sitting on the lab table as if he wasn't the one who did it. “Damn cat,” he said to Higgins while cleaning up the mess.

“Good thing the full-sized wheel is coming today. Good luck trying to knock that one over, you little troublemaker.” Higgins replied with an innocent meow

“Oh god, don't give me that shit, Higgins. You know what you did.”

Chuck picked up the fragmented mess and carried it to the trash, when suddenly, he heard a knock on the door. He quickly jumped over to the door and peered through the seeing hole, and there stood a young mailman with a clipboard. Chuck immediately jumped back, startled, and cracked the door open. “Large package for Chuck Harrison?” said the postman.

“Ah yes, that would be me” he said, relieved, as he opened the door wider.

“Sorry, that damn fish-eye lens on the door makes you look freaky.”

“It's quite alright sir, happens to the best of us.”

“No it doesn't,” thought the both of them. Chuck finished signing the clipboard just as the postman beckoned his comrades with the dollied package.

Once the box was in the flat, Chuck immediately began to tear it up in sheer excitement. Ten minutes passed and all the pieces were lying on the floor of the lab. Another ten passed and it was all assembled. Chuck stepped back and wiped the sweat from his brow and thought, man, what a beauty. Although it took up a third of the dainty lab, he figured it was much better than the other one. The wheel towered over him as he thought of how many of his little subjects he could fit on at once. Chuck was almost as frantic hooking it up to the electrical system than he was when he put it together. He was motivated by pure passion, and the fact that Sandra would be home soon. He emptied all the pipes and rounded all the hamsters up in a pen next to the wheel.

“You ready, little guys?” he said to the horde. Quiet squeaks and chirps emerged from the enclosure. All of their tiny heads were fixated upon a leaf fold of lettuce dangling in the front of the device. Quickly, Chuck gathered the hamsters and placed them in the center of the wheel. They began to move as fast as their stubby feet could. The lights in the lab, as well as Chucks evil scientist laugh, began to increase in intensity as the hamsters sped up. The wheel started to rattle and the hum of the

electricity sounded like a spaceship about to take off.

The very next instant, the electrical scientist heard the front door open. He scrambled over the table and started to nervously fidget with the wires. His fingers began to sting with electricity as he was on the verge of seizing. The next thing he knows he's pelted on the back of the head and hears a loud crack.

"SANDRA!" he said, rolling on the floor while holding his head in pain, "SANDRA, I'M DYING! HELP!"

Sandra appeared in the doorway and began screaming and swearing. The room went dark. The couple started to hear loud thumps and squeals on the walls. A couple seconds passed and the lights returned. Sandra and Chuck looked in utter horror and disgust at the entrails and blood strewn across the white walls. The wheel rattling slowed. Tickticktick tick tick tick-tick. Tick... Silence.

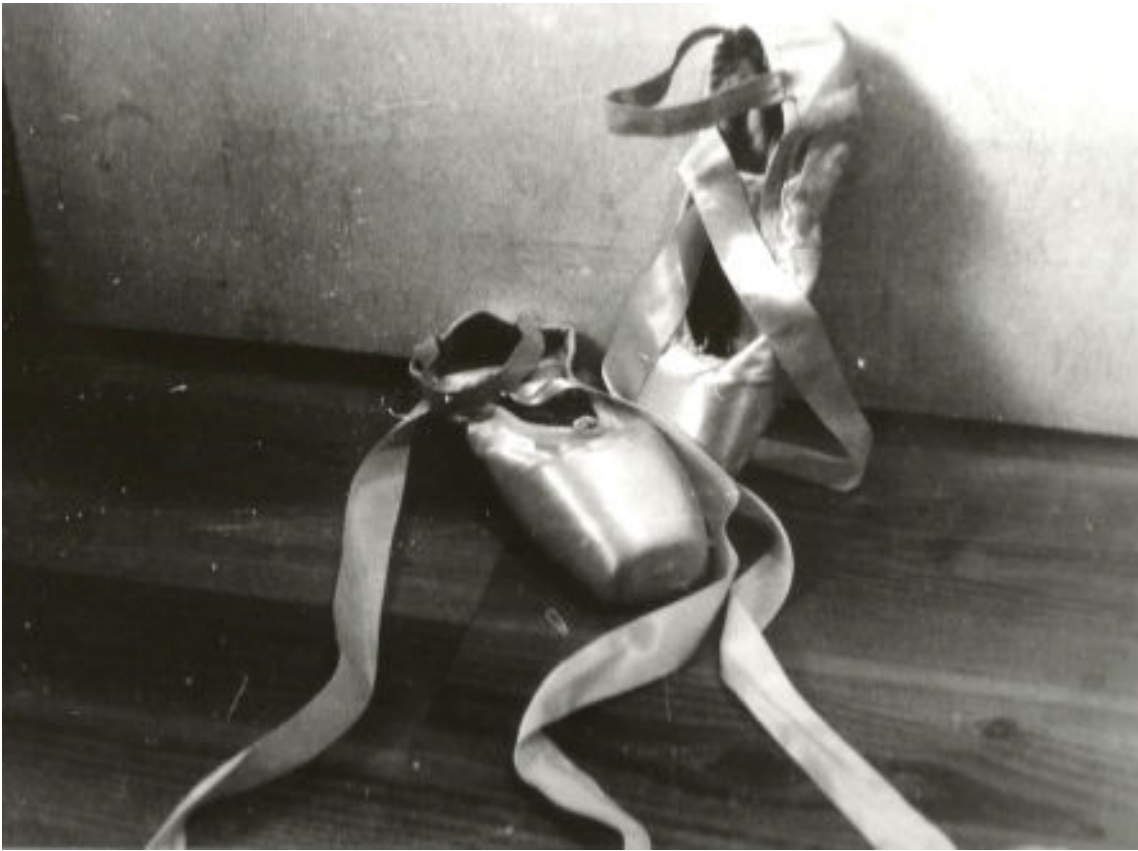
"Oh. Oh my god. Chuck I'm gonna be sick."

"Oh my god! Sandra I'm not dying! I'm okay!"



- Sophie Kirkeby

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- Julia Taubman

Legs Are Overrated

By Joey Alnutt

Legs are overrated. And I'm sure Forrest Gump would have told you the same thing if you asked. And much like Forrest Gump, I've had a very hard life. I was born without legs, and don't ask me how that's possible, because I have no idea. But I'll tell you what, people are cruel, at all stages in life. The first time I ever felt truly different because of my minor situation was at my kindergarten birthday party.

“Mom, when are all the kids supposed to be coming?”

“I'm not sure yet, Nathan, hopefully soon, the invitation said 1:30.”

“How many kids do you invite?”

“I invited your whole class, Randolph, relax, people will show up. I think I hear someone pulling in the driveway right now, go check.”

I quickly wheeled my way out to the front yard to see that there was indeed a car that pulled in. It was a kid named Jacob, he wasn't the coolest kid I knew, but I was just happy someone showed up.

“Hey Jake, you're the first one here” I said excitedly.

“Yeah, and I'll probably be the only one,” he muffled under his breath.

I pretended not to hear him say that, because I knew he was kind of a dick, I just figured I would just wait it out until the rest of the class came. But that never happened. So I was stuck with Jacob. He theorized that people were afraid that if they came near me they would also lose their legs and be “wheelchair freaks.” I told him he was a jerk, and then he called his mom, who came to pick him up about 10 minutes later. I was pretty sad that nobody else came to my party, but I was really more happy to have Jacob gone. But while he was leaving my mom and his mom were talking, and she invited me to Jacob's birthday party, which was the next week, and my mom accepted, so now I have to go.

However, despite what you might think, it wasn't all bad, and it's there where I found my passion, climbing. We were at some weird place, I can't remember the name of the place, but it's one of those places that kids always have birthday parties at. It's one of the places with a mini golf course, a rock climbing wall, ya know, stuff like that. And right when we got there, everyone was immediately intrigued with the rock climbing wall, including myself. It was so colorful and appealing, so naturally a huge line amassed. I wheeled up to the back of the line, and as you can imagine, I immediately was bombarded with sassy remarks, and Jacob was the one to begin the onslaught.

“This line is for people with legs,” Jacob said, barely able to contain his laughter. Immediately after he said this, all the other kids began to erupt with laughter as well, I think I might have even heard some parents laughing. I pretended I didn't hear it, because I was embarrassed, and I just wanted to prove to everyone that I could climb the rock wall.

I watched the kids one by one climb the rock wall, some were successful, and managed to ring the bell at the top, and others plummeted until their safety harnesses saved them. Then after what seemed like hours it was my turn.

“You ready, Buddy?” the employee said as he put my harnesses on. He was hesitant to even let me try at first but after some pleading I convinced him. I gave him an affirmative nod and he told me to begin climbing. “Now remember, if you can't do it or get scared just drop down, the safety harness will protect you.”

“Thanks,” I said, “but I won't be needing any safety harnesses” I said, full of confidence and pride.

But I was very wrong, because I made it onto the first peg, but my arms weren't strong enough to pull my whole body up, and I looked like a miserable failure. All the kids once again started to laugh at me.

“No legs Nathan, no legs Nathan!” the kids all chanted. Some of the mothers tried to calm them down and lightly scolded them, but I think some of them thought it was funny themselves.

That experience changed me. I didn't want to be known as “no legs Nathan,” and while I knew I couldn't just magically get a pair of legs, I wanted to prove people wrong, and show everybody that I was capable of something.

So after a lot of begging, I convinced my parents to let me start working out (my upper body and core, obviously), and I began to take lessons in climbing. I didn't want to just be an ordinary casual climber, though, I wanted to take things to the next level, and I set this goal early on. So I began to train in both strength and climbing, and after years, I finally started to make progress. And in ten years, at the age of 15, I was able to scale cliffsides, mountains, you name it. And I did it all without any safety harnesses or anything. And I actually got some local attention for this, my name and story were in the paper, but this brought nearly no attention to me, I wanted more. I needed to do something nobody has done before.

“I know what I'm going to do Frank,” I said in a very serious tone. Frank was my climbing coach, he was a great guy, and he supported me for the most part in everything I did, however he did think I was crazy.

“Yeah? And what is that?”

“I'm going to climb the empire state building.”

Frank choked on his water, a signal to me that he thought it was crazy, which is how I knew it was perfect.

“You are not going to do that, please tell me this is another one of your far-fetched ideas.”

“No, Frank, I'm dead serious, it's only a couple miles away, and I know I can do this, please just trust me.”

“Ya know what? What the hell, let's go.”

“Music to my ears Frank, that's why I keep you around.”

“Actually, your parents' money does, but whatever you want to think.” We both let out a chuckle, and began to plan.

It was March 6, 2015 when I decided to finally do this. It was a cold but clear day, nothing I couldn't handle. Me and Frank made sure to let nobody know what we were doing, we knew the attention would come fast enough once I began. And somebody would have probably tried to stop me if we told anyone, so we just kept quiet.

I did my best not to draw any attention, and I wheeled up to the building and latched on, and began to climb. Immediately, I started to draw attention, people were yelling and pointing, but I was just drowning them out, my adrenaline was taking over, and I felt more alive than ever. I climbed and I climbed, and a huge crowd amassed, news crews and all. There was even a helicopter that was filming the scene. When I got to the top, it was the most glorious moment of my life: I knew that this would finally make people realize that I could accomplish something, even with no legs. I proceeded back down to the ground, and began my journey home, I couldn't wait to see the newspaper and all the news reports the next day.

The next day, however, is when I lost my faith in humanity completely. The headline of the paper read "Man with hilarious legs climbs building like an idiot, read to find out if he died." And the news reports were all very similar, news reporters almost sit out their coffee they thought it was so funny to them.

And that brings me to where I am today, it's a month after the whole ordeal, and I've given up. I am just destined to not do anything good in this world. I stopped seeing Frank, and I no longer work out, but I still live my life. I'm just going to go about my life with as little human contact as possible, because they're all horrible. I decided to go out and get some milk, however that day, so I set out to the convenience store that is less than half a mile away, it was fairly nice out, and I enjoyed seeing nature on a nice day. But somewhere along the way I heard the screams of what sounded like a young boy. I wheeled my wheelchair as fast as I could, and come to find out, a little boy was stuck in a tree because he was trying to save a stray cat. "Don't worry, buddy, I'll save you, just stay where you are. I'll save you." I quickly scaled the tree, and rescued the young boy with ease. As I brought the boy down I was met by his overjoyed parents, who were thanking me left and right.

"It's no problem, guys, I was just being a good person."

"We can't thank you enough; we saw him one second and then the next he was gone, and then we heard the screams, and rushed down here. Is there any way we can repay you?"

"Oh, god, no, I'm just happy to have done a good thing," I said with a smile on my face, this made me feel genuinely happy, I made a difference in a family's life.

"Well, I'll be on my way now, you folks have a nice day."

"Wait!! The mother shouted, our boy has something he wants to say to you!"

"Well, what is it?" The boy scurried over to me and whispered in my ear.

"You have funny legs."



- Erin McCann



- Darienn Clarke

Two Wolves in Sheep's Clothing

By Stephen Trail

"I remember the event very clearly. The robbery started at 2:40 AM and ended, abruptly, at 2:51-when the police came. The robbers all panicked and ran behind cover. The rest of us dropped to the ground covering our heads. I saw two guys escape with duffle bags slung across their shoulders. Everyone else was shot within a minute."

My lawyer scribbled something down onto her notepad. When she finished, she looked up at me, signaling for me to continue.

"The gun that they found on me wasn't mine. I was a bystander not involved in the robbery in any way. I was cowering behind a desk when I found myself face to face with one of the robbers. He handed his gun to me, threatening that I had ten seconds to find him a magazine before he would use me as a human shield. I had no choice but to get up. The second I went to search for ammo, the police outside saw the gun in my hands and mistook me for one of the criminals."

I looked down at my scarred torso, staring bitterly at my damaged body. "I'm lucky they only shot me three times."

Cathy, my lawyer, gave me a sympathetic look. "The state will cover your health bills, if your lawsuit against the police is successful, you'll have even more money. But if you really want to win, you'll have to give me more details."

"I know, I know, but why do you need more details? All the thugs were shot, and the two that escaped were killed in a chase later, right?"

Cathy nodded. "Right, everyone was caught, but the money they stole hasn't yet been recovered."

I rubbed my temple. "Gee all I remember I already told you, can we focus back on the lawsuit at hand? I need to pay for all these surgeries." Reluctantly, Cathy gave in.

For the next hour we discussed my plan of action. We went over the basics. The cop who claimed to have shot me was named Henry Wild. His chosen deliverer of my pain was a Glock 22. The other bystanders in the bank were fine, minus a few cuts and bruises. I even got some local attention from the press, meaning I had the public's sympathy. We planned on taking our case to court very soon, with the goal of suing the state for five million dollars. The thought of becoming rich excited me. It clearly excited Cathy as well. "We've made good progress today Mr. Thomas, our next meeting will be the day after tomorrow."

The next day I woke up in my hospital bed in a cold sweat. My bullet wounds horribly ached and my head was swimming. There was a knock on the door. "Must be my nurse," I thought to myself. I didn't respond, thinking that my nurse would just let herself in. But then I heard the knock again, "come in!" I groaned. It was Cathy.

"Hello Mr. Thoma-

“Please, my friends call me Tom,” I interrupted.

She smiled pleasantly. “Very well, Tom.” She sat in the chair opposite my bed. “Let’s get back to the matter at hand.” She said.

“Right.” I sat up. Temporarily forgetting the three holes in my chest. Pain flared and I immediately lay back down, letting out a very unmanly yelp.

Cathy looked at me in shock. “Tom! Are you alright?”

“Yeah I’m fine.” I was lying, judging by the look on her face, she knew I was too. She called for a nurse, who came in hurriedly wheeling a cart with some plasma. My heart was beating faster and faster, this proved to be extremely painful. My whole chest felt as if it were about to explode! The nurse quickly gave me some morphine while Cathy watched worriedly over her shoulder. The morphine helped, and I passed out.

It was a week before the hospital let Cathy come back in. When she finally returned, she didn’t speak for a few minutes. “That episode was worse than the last.” She finally said.

“I’ll be alright,” I responded. “I have a major surgery due today, they’re removing the last bullet fragment from me.” I tried to smile. It came out forced.

“Well I won’t take up very much of your time Tom,” Cathy said, unpacking her notes. “I know exactly what I’m going to say.”

We shifted discussion to planning the lawsuit. But Cathy seemed intent on focusing on the robbery. Cathy looked to be slightly urgent. “What’s wrong?” I asked.

“You seem uptight.”

“Oh it’s nothing, don’t worry.” She said quickly.

Cathy kept asking more questions about the robbery, and I was starting to feel uneasy. To make things worse, the time for my surgery was rapidly approaching, and Cathy showed no signs of wanting to leave. She kept bombarding me with inquiries.

“Where were you the day before the robbery.”

“My house.”

“Did you know any of the criminals?”

“No.”

“What was your reason for being at the bank?”

“What’s this got to do with the lawsuit?”

She ignored my question, continuing with, “some witnesses claim that the moment you were shot, the man who instructed you to find ammo yelled something. Do you remember this?” I shifted uneasily in my hospital bed. I began to figure out where this was going. Cathy looked at me straight in the eyes, “they claim they heard him yell your name, Thomas. You said only your friends call you Tom.”

“You’re one of them, your story was a lie.” Cathy got up and barricaded the door. No one could come in. Not even the people who were supposed to open me up today to remove the last bullet, lodged next to my heart. I knew that if they didn’t come in the next few minutes, I would die. I looked at my “lawyer” and realized she wasn’t a lawyer at all! She was probably an undercover cop, sent to investigate me as

soon as the reports of me being on first name basis with the thieves surfaced. I knew I was busted, but I tried to get up. I had to unblock that door.

“Admit it Tom, you’re a criminal. A hardened one at that, you must know where your friends took the money.” I heard people pounding on the door. My surgical team was trying to get in to save me. “You know where the money is, because you helped steal it. Tell me where it is and I’ll let the doctors save you.” I was nearly unconscious due to the pain.

“Yes I know where the money is, nearly \$500,000 dollars. But I’m the last one left alive of the group, I’ll not betray my brothers.” I looked at Cathy through half open eyes. I was beginning to die. It satisfied me that at this moment, while I lay dying, that the money was in the hands of someone who could be trusted. I regretted, however, that I never got to go through with that lawsuit and become a millionaire. My last thoughts were interrupted just then as an entire operating unit rammed the door open and came rushing in. I could barely make out their figures. I could see them yelling at Cathy in panic. I began to lose all feeling as I was wheeled out into the hall, towards the operation. It was too late, I was going to die, but my secret would live.



- Bridie Larkin

Hassan
By Kira Kascha
Based on the book *The Kite Runner*

I am Hassan

I wonder if Amir has realized that I know he was there when Assef and his friends confronted me after the kite-fighting tournament. I wonder if he realizes that I know he stood by and watched it all happen.

I hear Amir's voice mixing with the soft rustle of the leaves of the pomegranate tree we sit beneath, the story of Rostam and Sohrab floating up from the pages that are covered with mysterious symbols that somehow form a story.

I see three boys leaving a dark alley where another remains, watching as blood trickles to the ground, streaking snow that had been glistening white only moments before. He collects himself before shakily trudging home with a blue kite clutched in his trembling hands.

I want Amir to stop pushing me away. I want things to be like they used to be between us before Assef used his brass knuckles to punch a hole through our friendship. I am "incapable of hurting anyone" (10), so if I am bothering Amir and he really wants me to leave him alone, I will.

I pretend that I stole from Amir. It is easier to be forced to go than to depart with no visible reason and I would never do anything to get Amir in trouble. I feel pleased with what my life has become. God has been good to me. I have an incredible son and a lovely wife to bring me great joy each day and I have a thousand reasons to be smiling.

I forget about my mother abandoning me and welcome her into my family with open arms, forgiving her for all she has done and caring for her until she regains her strength. I worry about what Sohrab and Farzana would do without me so "every day I thank Allah that I am alive, not because I fear death, but because my wife has a husband and my son is not an orphan" (216).

I cry when I discover that Baba has died because he "was like my second father" (208). My grief allowed me to conclude that Farzana and I were meant to return to Kabul with Rahim Khan.

I am good at reading people, even though I haven't been able to read words on paper

for most of my life. I know what to say because I can tell what people need to hear.

I understand that my place is in the hut, not the house. “It [is] a matter of ihtiram, a matter of respect” (208). I am a Hazara servant, not a wealthy Pashtun and I will continue to play my own role, not Amir’s.

I say that people mean the things they tell you and that you should respect everyone, even those that don’t respect you. I think that people can change. “I dream that lawla flowers will bloom in the streets of Kabul again and rubab music will play in the samovar houses and kites will fly in the skies” (218).

I try to make sure my son “does not grow up stupid like [me]” (217). I teach him so I can make sure he will not be illiterate like his grandfather and me. I hope that Amir will write back to me so we can reconnect. I hope that he has finally gotten past what happened all those years ago. He is my best friend and I don’t want to leave him alone anymore.

I am Hassan



- Liz George

Saving Tandal

By Aidan McCarthy

A Thunderous boom shook the ground, Auirin stumbled backwards and put her hand on the ground. “Rothunn! Where the crap did you go!?”

Rothunn rolled out from behind a boulder, “I’ve been stuck back here the entire fight! See if you can get someone to take out those archers!” He pointed at the steep wall of the keep, demon's lined the battlements and were launching arrows into the army of Kaarfelar.

Auirin turned her head towards some of her regiment, “Marra, Koorin, Joatar, take out those archers!” They nodded their heads in understanding and started shooting at the Demon's. Rothunn looked around the corner and started running up the field, jumping over corpses and debris. More booms shook the ground and soldiers screamed out.

Rothunn was knocked over and yelled out as a rock the size of a dog landed on his legs. “Oh come on! Why does this always happen!” He punched the rocks angrily and sighed.

Auirin sprinted up the field and crouched against a pile of debris, “Ok! Signal the siege!” A nearby horn-bearer blew into a warhorn and shouts echoed out from the line of Kaarfelar about half a mile back.

Rothunn puffed out his cheeks and grunted as he pushed up on the rock. His forehead rippled with veins and he squeezed his eyes shut. The rock barely moved and he sighed. A soldier ran by and Rothunn looked up anxiously, “Hey, Trodir, help me, help me get this rock up!” he said while reaching up.

The soldier sighed, “How come I didn’t get assigned to Auirin's group?”

Rothunn looked up as Trodir pulled the rock off, “What's that? What did you say?”

The rock rolled onto the ground and Trodir drew his sword, “You’re welcome.”

Rothunn stood up and brushed himself off, “Oh yeah, thank you, young man.” Trodir began running up the field again. “I’m nearly ten years older than you!” he yelled over his shoulder.

Auirin watched as the operators loaded the artillery with dozens of clay pots filled with boiling oil. “Heads down! Find cover!” one of the operators yelled, the soldiers within earshot ducked down and the man cut the rope holding the basin down. The clay pots lifted into the air and arched across the sky. Most of them crashed against the wall and drenched the demon's with the hot liquid, the screams echoed across the field.

Rothunn was getting close to the wall and didn’t hear the warning. He heard the clay pots clanking against each other in the air. “Oh Crap! When did we send those in!?” He screamed and jumped as the pots hit the ground around him, sending shards of clay and oil flying in all directions. “Telvæ’s Breath! That stings!” he

shouted as a shard of clay coated with oil hit his leg. Once the first volley was over he ran back down the field and hid behind a rock, another horn sounded, the signal that the actual siege was going to start. Soldiers loaded the huge, hollowed rocks into the catapults. The hollow part was opened through a small lid on top and the soldiers loaded black powder into it. Once it was in and the lid was securely screwed on, they lit it on fire and launched it. The boulders hit the keep and the old walls crumbled upon the first contact, the rocks shattered and mixed the black powder with the fire and explosions dotted the walls.

“Ok!” Rothunn yelled out, “Let's get in there and take the keep!” He stood up and the rest of the army advanced, the remaining demons recovered on the wall and began to shoot at the army again. Rothunn jumped over a log and dodged an arrow that was barely visible on the dark sky. Shouts from other sergeants sounded out over the noise of the Kaarfelar. Rothunn looked over and saw Auirin running next to the rest of her squad. The wall grew closer and the demons were shooting directly into the army. He saw a healer twist to their right as an arrow ripped through his light armor.

“We need another barrage!” Auirin shouted out as she ran over to Rothunn.

“We can't, we're too close to the wall, a lot of our men would get hit.”

Rothunn shouted over the noise. Auirin cursed and grew quiet. They reached the wall and pressed their backs against the stone barricade. Rothunn panted and stretched his shoulders through his heavy armor. The rest of the army was either running or reached the wall.

Trodir was standing close by. “Hey Trodir, do you know where the rest of our regiment is?” Rothunn scooped over to hear him better.

Trodir looked around, “Graki is down that way, that guy with the scar on his face is on the other side of Auirin, and I saw Morkar get hit.”

Rothunn cursed, “Crap, he was a good man. Gather the others. We're going to get in there and clear a path.” Trodir nodded and ran off.

Auirin gathered the rest of her squad and looked at Rothunn, “If you're going in so are we.” Rothunn knew there was no point in trying to sway her into staying out here.

Trodir returned with Graki and the other guy. “Alright, we ready?” he said. Rothunn nodded. Just as he finished he heard a loud metallic creaking. “Back away! We got oil incoming boys!” The men backed away from the wall just as a waterfall of steaming oil splashed down the cobbled wall. Several men down the line screamed as they were hit directly.

“Move! Move that way!” Rothunn shouted and pointed down the line, and the two squads ran close to the wall until they reached a huge hole.

“Ok” Auirin whispered. “Let's get in there, and I'll take my squad left. Rothunn, you go right.” Rothunn nodded and ran to the right, followed by Trodir, Graki, and the scarred guy. Auirin and her group went the other way; her light captain armor fluttering behind her.

“Alright boys, I see, uh, two guards outside of the door, I think.” Rothunn

looked over his shoulder at his three men, “You, with the scar-”

“My name’s Jaakar”.

Oh, well Jaakar, use that bow and take out that guy on the right, wait for the other guy to look away. Trodir and Graki, go that way and cause a distraction once the other guy is shot. When you do that I’ll go kill him.” The others nodded with understanding and got in position.

Jaakar raised his Oriandic-horned bow and nocked an arrow. He lined the makeshift sight and after what seemed like an hour, fired. The bow shook as the arrow left, the arrow struck the demon in the neck and hit his spine, he dropped instantly. Once that happened the sound of metallic clanking rattled inside one of the rooms in the wall. The guard walked over to the noise, his white eyes darted back and forth, over top of his rotted skin. Rothunn ran out as quietly as he could and stabbed it in the back. Jaakar grabbed his arrow and they hid the bodies in the rooms. “Ok, well done boys, nice shot Jaakar, and excellent distraction you two. Now, we have to get inside”. Rothunn approached the heavy, metal doors and tried to push them open. “Re` tars axe, what did they do with this, bolt it shut and weld it together?” Rothunn motioned for the others to help him and the door didn’t budge. “Where is Auirin when I need her?” just as he finished Auirin sprinted out from behind the keep wall. She pointed her hand the direction they were running and tried to talk, “Other...way...run!” she uttered out between breaths. Once she finished a horde of demons ran out from around the corner, wildly waving their swords above their head. “Form a line! Auirin get back here!” Rothunn shouted out, Auirin stopped and so did her squad. Rothunn and his three other men were standing in a line and with their swords drawn. Graki growled angrily and Jaakar slammed his sword onto his shield. “Come on, Come on!” Rothunn shouted out as the group grew closer. The demon's jumped up, making a fatal mistake, while they were airborne Rothunn ducked under and raked his sword across two of their guts. Trodir used his long spear and impaled straight through two of the demon’s. Auirin's group regained their breath and joined the fight. More demon's fell as bolts of fire blew by, Jaakar backed to the outside of the group, and started shooting arrows into the crowd. The horned bow had an almost 100 pound drawback and could pierce armor at over half a mile. Someone from Auirin's squad screamed as he was impaled twice in the back. “Koorin!” Auirin shouted out, going berserk, she pulled a short sword off of her hip and began slashing relentlessly, using her staff to ignite her sword. Rothunn shouted out, “How many are there?!” The group seemed to be thinning but they were still vastly outnumbered. Through the fight, the sound of the Kaarfelar siege horn bellowed across the field. Auirin stopped and looked at the sky, “Get Down! Get Down!” Rothunn rolled away from the group and was soon followed by his regiment. The demon's began to howl violently and sprinted at the cornered group. Auirin stepped to the front and shot a wisp of white light into the air, the demon's screeched at the sight and didn’t move. As Auirin held the ward, the familiar clinking sounded softly in the sky. The demon's screeching was drowned out by horrid screams as the oil canisters dropped on them. Rothunn was in the front

and had his shield up to block the others from the viscous fluid. The screaming and shattering sound stopped and Rothunn lowered his shield. The courtyard was littered with bodies covered in steaming oil, Rothunn stood up, "Well that's good, our other men got `em, ok boys, and Auirin, let's get in the keep." Rothunn filled Auirin in on their inability to get the door open and she went up to inspect it.

"Oh, well here is the reason you can't get it open, the door is warded, it will take a large amount of skill to get it open. Luckily, I have plenty of it. Stand back boys, I got this." Auirin stepped back and pointed her staff at the door, the weapon jolted slightly and nothing happened, "Wait, hold on a second, this old thing is always acting up." she punched the bent, rhombus tip and hit it against the ground a few times. "Ok here we go." She pointed it at the door and a red beam shot out of it. The door shuddered and the beam from the staff disappeared. "There ya go boys, Joatar, stay out here, get Koorins body and go find the Commander."

"Yes sir!" Joatar said. Rothunn went up to the door and pushed on it, the huge doors creaked open, but only wide enough to fit one person at a time.

"Let's get in there." Rothunn squeezed through the small gap and entered a tiny, cramped hallway that lead on a steep downward slope under the keep. Rothunn waited until everyone else entered and began to move down the slope. About one hundred feet down, the ramp smoothed out and became level, it lead down a slightly larger hallway and through an open door. Rothunn fixed his eyes on the door and began to move towards it slowly. As he grew closer, shadows passed the door and the group stopped. Auirin moved to the front and crawled towards the door. She stopped at the edge and looked both ways before she came back.

"I saw around five demon's, and three people." Rothunn looked at her confused.

"I thought the demon's didn't have any human helpers."

"So did I, but I know what I saw." Auirin's definitive stare only further solidified what she just said. Rothunn unsheathed his sword and motioned for everyone else to. He crept forward towards the door and looked inside, the room was huge, tall pillars towered up to a ceiling that was nearly two hundred feet high. The room stretched in each direction for around one-hundred feet and came to a steep wall. Several other hallways led out of the room. At one end, a small camp circled a large fire, people were crowded around a roughly built desk and demon's stood guard on the other end. Rothunn motioned Jaakar to get up on a large pile of rubble, which would give him a good vantage point over the room. Jaakar looked at Rothunn and nodded, he nodded back and crept around a pillar. Auirin took the other half of the group to take out the demon's. The people in the camp were talking quietly and seemed to be debating something. Rothunn saw Jaakar pulling his bow back and take aim on one of the men standing around the desk. Rothunn saw Auirin staring at him from the other side, he nodded and waited for one of them to fall. Suddenly, the man closest to the edge grunted and stiffened, he grabbed at his back before collapsing to his knees. The men turned around, "Taarmeis Graana, Mooraci lorgra kareash!" Rothunn sprinted

out from behind the pillar, he swung at the first man and heard a loud scream and resistance on his sword. An arrow whizzed past, and another scream bellowed out. Rothunn narrowly dodged a short sword and countered the attack with his shield, stunning his attacker. He slashed his sword across the man's chest while he was disoriented. He looked up and saw crumpled figures lying in unnatural positions, Auirin was cutting down the last demon. Rothunn looked over and motioned for her to come over. "Go look around, find out what and who these guys are." He went over to the desk and looked through the crumpled and bloodstained paper. "Hey Auirin, look at this, what language do you think that is?" She walked over and took the paper.

"Well that's not good, this is Panikroin. Which either means we are going to have a war on the most violent empire, or someone is setting them up." Rothunn stood up and began searching the men. They were wearing long black robes and had strange tattoos on their faces.

"Do you know how to read it?" Rothunn asked over his shoulder.

"No, I only studied it for about a month. Marra! Take this to the Commander, he might know someone who can read it." The scout took the papers and slipped out of the huge room silently. Rothunn turned over one of the bodies and saw a strange amulet tightly wrapped around his neck. "What do you think this is? It looks sorta like the symbol of that Panikroin God Harækor. Isn't he the deity of conjuration and the dark magic's?" Auirin took the amulet from his hand and looked at it.

"I'm surprised you know that, I thought you slept through the lectures in Cramma."

"I did, I heard that when I woke up from a cramp in my leg and I heard professor Seorem talk about it."

"Wow, but I think you're right, I'll take that up to Commander Gramrad. But I'll do that once we know we won't find out anything else." Graki left the biggest tent carrying a huge, wooden trunk that clinked when he moved, "I think that these guys might not be the main people behind this, it looks like they might have been hired." He opened the chest and revealed hundreds of silver Tors. "woah, that is a lot of money." Trodir said. Rothunn walked over to it, "Well, don't take any for yourself boys, this is going straight to the commander, this could be stolen money, for all we know these are just bandits with a little bit of Demonic help." Trodir sighed, clearly irritated. The group split up and began to go down the separate hallways. Rothunn went down the one on the far end, Graki and Jaakar following close behind. The stone hallways dipped down and led through a long staircase. The tunnel leveled out and led to another cavernous room. Rothunn told Jaakar, who could move the quietest, to go and see what's in the room. When he reached the door his face went white, he slowly walked back and described what he saw. "This is not good, there is another one of those guys in there and someone else, who appears to be about to get sacrificed-" Rothunn cut him off and sprinted through the door. "Stop!" the man turned around, he was holding another one of the necklaces in both hands and was wearing long black and red robes with metal chains dangling around him. His face was

masked with a metal helmet with only two eye holes, which were either bleeding or were painted to look like that. He didn't say anything, but he pulled out a long scimitar that was hidden beneath his robes. He began to move slowly towards the group, quietly and calmly, as if he had done this before. Rothunn charged forward, when he came within reach of his sword, he ducked down and slid around the man; forcing him to turn around. The man's back was now exposed to Jaakar, who already had an arrow nocked. When he released it the cultist swung his sword across his back and deflected the arrow. Trodir and Graki charged forwards, pulling their swords out of their sheaths. The cultist easily blocked and parried all three fighters, and he was barely sweating. Jaakar couldn't get a clear shot on the man without going through one of them first, so he drew his sword and joined the others. Rothunn knew that the man was trying to tire them out, "He's trying to tire us out, find an opening and hit it!" he had assumed that the man didn't speak Oriandic, but he was wrong.

"You can look but you won't find any!" his voice was raspy and was muffled by his mask. The four soldiers swung their sword at the man in different directions, trying to hit him at least once, but instead of feeling resistance, Rothunn only felt air and realized that the man had ducked down and dodged all four blades. He now had a great advantage on all four of the men and could easily strike them from underneath, and he did just that. The long curved scimitar glided through the air effortlessly, Rothunn and Jaakar narrowly dodged it, and Trodir rolled out of the way, Graki was less fortunate, the sword clipped the soft spot of his armor, leaving a rather deep cut in his torso, he fell back, screaming and clutching his gut. Rothunn quickly regained and attacked the man relentlessly, he swung the sword hard into the man's hand and knocked out the scimitar. Rothunn saw a bright handle of a dagger underneath the man's robe and noticed him reaching for it, before he could touch the blade Rothunn slammed his sword into the man's neck. Blood sprayed out and his head nearly fell off. He turned around and saw Trodir and Jaakar crouching next to Graki, who was breathing laboriously. "Auirin! Get down here Graki's hurt!" He heard what he thought was a reply and footsteps hurrying down the stairs. A series of fits and grunts sounded out from behind them, almost forgetting the sacrificial victim. The man was stripped down to his undergarments and was tied to a wooden post, blood smeared his body and his mouth was gagged. Rothunn cut him down and looked around for anything to cover him, but didn't find any so he handed him a few bloody rags. Auirin sprinted down the stairs, her staff glowing a bright white. She hurried over to Graki and started to heal him, Restoration was very hard to do and would tire her out quickly. She managed to get the cut closed and dressed, but it was still hard for Graki to move. "We should get out, the other hallways didn't lead anywhere that seemed important. Anyone who can walk search the room!"

Rothunn walked up to the altar, which was draped with strange tapestry and decorated with human bones. The man about to get sacrificed was crouched on the floor, obviously he was in some shock. Underneath the drapes, a large stone acted as a table, a worn book that was cheaply bound and was filled with scribbles and drawings

that seemed to focus on the human body, specifically pointing out areas of vulnerability. Rothunn took the book and turned around, the room was surprisingly smaller than he had expected. The earlier chaos had made him completely unaware of his surroundings. The cramped room shared space with a dumpy makeshift tent that seemed to be of Panikroin make. The rest of the men reported back, finding nothing. After giving the room another quick scan, he started to walk down the narrow hallway. Auirin yelled out “Wait!” and ran up to Rothunn, holding the bloody helmet of the man they just killed.

“What do you notice about the design of this helmet?”

“I don’t know, the thing is pretty crappy, it must get scaldingly hot and you can’t see or hear anything.”

Auirin sighed, “you have to go take those classes again. Although you are right, the design is appalling, but you missed the point. This helmet is Kragili, those warriors from Justron, so I have a feeling we might have to go on a trip.”

The fort was in an even worse state of repair when they came out, only small sections of the wall still stood, and those that did looked like even the slightest amount of wind would knock it down. Auirin ran up to a pile of debris with limbs and swords sticking out like the back of a porcupine, “We should find the Commander and tell him what we found.” Rothunn nodded and ran down the pile of rocks and wood only to stop when he rounded the corner. “By Koor, when did they get here?!”

“When did who get here?” Auirin asked as she made her way out of the fort. Rothunn pointed down the wall and at the humongous army of Therimic Legionnaires that had just assembled. The field officer was talking to the commander, Rothunn turned to the men behind him, “Great work men, go get some rest, don’t worry, I’ll tell the commander of your part in all that just happened,” The men saluted him, but mostly out of impulse due to the presence of the highly disciplined army standing nearby. The field officer saluted Commander Gramrad and turned around to his army. “Legionnaires! Ad Agmine, Ad scutum, Moveo!” the Army shouted something and started to move at double time to the other side of the fort. Rothunn jogged up to Commander Gramrad, “I see everything went well out here, we stumbled upon some stuff in the fort that you might want to hear.” Rothunn filled him in on the events and showed him the journal and helmet from the cultist.

Commander Gramrad sighed, “That’s what the Therimic Legions were doing here, they experienced some Panikroin and Kragili invasion forces landing on the beaches. Which would line up with this, it seems as though the armies have acquired some help from The Krin.”

“The Krin?” Rothunn asked

“You really should’ve paid attention at Cramma, lad. The Krin is the term for hell in Panikroin, Lithric and Narkiese.” Rothunn nodded in understanding, “What are we going to do about it.” Commander Gramrad pointed in the direction of the Legionnaires, “They seemed to have a plan in place, and I was forced to sign it, as techni-

cally, the Kaarfelar are part of the Legion. We are going to march with them to Orinad City, where we will board a boat to Taarmenia. After that we are supposed to meet up with Forces from Ardemre, Lookrun-Daarun, and some Elvish Krinchagren.” Auirin walked up, “Wait, what did you say, we’re going to the seat of Imperial power on Orinad, and then to a site of one of the most bloody battles that occurred during the Antiquis Temporibus.” She could hardly contain her excitement, ...”And then we are going to meet up with the most renowned fighters in history. When are we leaving?!” She stared eagerly at Commander Gramrad.

“Right now, we are going to use the munitions gathered from the fort, and the Legionnaires brought some for us. We march straight for Orinad city and we will stock up on Munitions there.” Rothunn and Auirin sprinted to their regiments to fill them in on the information



- Melissa Kummrow



- Sofia Powell

Lost Underneath The Sidewalk

By Julia Card

February 16th, 2014, a 16-year-old girl by the name of Olivia Wellmon, an only child of Westfield, NY, went missing. And a week before her, Olivia's Father, Nathaniel Wellmon, a former soldier also went missing. Hundreds of search crews were out looking for them. There was something very unusual about this case. All evidence of their existence is completely gone. Birth certificates, social security numbers, school awards. They even vanished from the family photos hanging up all over their cookie-cutter house in the middle of town. Just their silhouettes remaining next to the wife and mother, Amy Wellmon. Almost as if someone or something wanted them gone forever.

Westfield, NY is a small town, where everyone knows everyone. Filled with cute little houses, and a few local shops. Crime was extremely rare in Westfield. Many people are skeptical that they will ever see Olivia and her father ever again, and for their existence to be reborn. One week prior...

"Mom, I'm home!" Olivia shouted excitedly.

Scrambling, Olivia's mom Amy was hurling practically every piece of clothing from her closet.

"I'll be right there! I just need to find that dress he likes on me."

Olivia began to walk up the stairs towards her mother's room, and sees the pile of clothes trailing into the hall.

"Does this look okay?" she said twirling around on one foot.

"You look beautiful mom, he'll love it."

Olivia had been anticipating this day for over two years, the day her father came home from Iraq. Olivia and her Father were very close, the father-daughter relationship that every little girl dreams of. He was a strong man, tall with black hair combed over to mask his unwanted bald spot. Olivia and her father did everything together. They even had a little handshake when he came home from work. When her father was deployed, it really affected both Olivia and her mother. Her parents were married for over 25 years, and had been together since high school. So they were both ecstatic to see him.

Olivia and her mom arrived at the airport right on time, but did not see her Nathaniel anywhere. Hours passed, still nothing. There were no reports of a plane crash, or delay. Olivia looked over and saw a group of people in Army uniforms. Frantically, she and her mother ran up to them. There was joyful laughter, hysterical sobbing, and hugging. All of the families were so happy to see their loved one that had been gone for so long. Out of breath, Amy managed to get the attention of the crowd.

"Hello, have any of you seen my husband, Nathaniel Wellmon?"

They all looked at each other in confusion.

“Uhm, no ma’am, I don't believe I've ever heard of anyone by that name,” said a soldier with a small child latched onto his leg.

Tears begin to form in Olivia's once joyous eyes.

“You must know my father! He was the drill Sergeant, Nathaniel Wellmon! You must...” Olivia began to wail. Amy took Olivia’s hand and dragged her towards the United Flight booth.

“I can't find my husband, Nathaniel Wellmon, he was supposed to be coming home from Iraq today,” Amy shouted at the flight attendant.

“Okay, calm down ma’am, I can look up his ticket.” After several minutes, the attendant replied nervously. “There is no ticket in my records for a Nathaniel Wellmon, maybe he was on a flight with a different airline?” Amy began to cry.

“This must be some sort of mistake...he was on that flight!”

The attendant looked at her, puzzled.

“I've done all that I can, I'm sorry.”

The day of Olivia’s Disappearance...

(Olivia’s notebook)

I'm so afraid, and hungry. I have no idea where I am or how long I've been here. It's pitch black and frigid cold. I gave up on screaming, no one ever hears. I keep replaying how I got here over and over in my mind. Like a nightmare that never ends. I was walking home from school, and all of a sudden I could feel an intense rumbling through the soles of my shoes. It was like the world around me stopped, completely silent. But I was being engulfed by the concrete sidewalk. Eventually, it had seemed like I was moving in slow motion, almost as if my mind was deteriorating.

Little did Olivia know, that her father was in her exact same spot, one week before. As people started to give up hope, their memories of her faded. Olivia’s mother was the only one who remembered her; she tried endlessly to get people to believe and help her find her daughter. Several years went by and she was viewed as insane. Olivia’s mother felt completely wretched. She felt as if she had no reason to stay alive. So distraught, she wandered into the woods, thinking she would find Olivia’s body and show everyone that she was real. One week later, so mentally unstable, she aimlessly walked off of a 300ft cliff. And never did find Olivia.

(Olivia’s notebook)

Today, I saw a bright light. It was the sun seeping through the cracks of the earth above me. It gave me hope since I haven't seen daylight in so long. Frantically, I started to dig, desperately wanting to escape. At last I had breached the surface. I thought my ordeal was over, but I was sadly mistaken. When I realized nothing was

how I remembered. I began to panic, there he was, my father, lying motionless in the bits of rock and dust. The town I once called home was nothing but rubble. I was completely alone.





- Erin McCann
(previous page) Faith Clancy

Grandad Grad

By Julia Card

Ahh college. The smell of Ramen Noodles and freedom. Well, at least for most people. I have been out of high school for over 58 years. But after spending the prime years of my life working at Burger King, I wanted to go and get my degree in puppetry. It has been a dream of mine since I was a child to go out on the open road touring the country, performing shows. I actually tried doing a show once, but a kid in the front row bit one of the puppets heads off, which resulted in a giant uproar of wailing four-year olds. Not a good scene.

It was the first night before classes started, and I was beyond excited. I wondered what kids these days even acted like. I already knew I was going to be the biggest outcast possible, so I needed to find a way to make myself look young again. I drove over to my 97-year-old mother's house in search of the perfect outfit. I knew that she had a box of our old clothes stowed away in the depths of the attic somewhere. There were boxes piled up everywhere. And there they were, in pristine condition, just as I had left them. My bellbottom blue jeans and chartreuse turtleneck. I didn't think I could grow an afro, when I'm scraping just to maintain my comb over. So I had to make do with the clothes.

The following morning, before I even walked in the door of my first class, students were all over me. There was this one kid that even asked for my credit card number; I never knew that I could be so popular. My first class of the day was theatre history. Which was in this colossal sized room with endless rows of seats, meant for a huge audience. I learned a lot from just that one class. After class a group of guys approached me.

"Wow, I've never seen a man your age around here before. What's your name?"

"Albert," I said nervously; they were so intimidating.

"Nice to meet you. My name's Daniel. My friends and I are throwing a party tonight. Would you be interested in coming?"

I could tell the the group had mixed feelings about the invitation. But if I didn't say yes I would be missing out on the true college experience.

"Uh yeah sure, what time?"

Daniel looked around at his friends with a slight smirk.

"Around 12. Do you need a ride?"

"Yeah, that would be great."

"Okay, meet me in lot 1 by the dining hall, at 11:45?"

"Alright I'll be there."

I could hear a slight chatter of laughter as they walked away. But at the time I didn't think anything of it. I made sure that I was at lot 1 right on time, so I wouldn't miss my ride. All of the guys were piled into the back of a black pickup truck, blaring music so loud it felt as if my brain was shaking.

“Hop in, Albert,” one of them yelled loudly over the obnoxious music.

I got into the back of the truck after several failed attempts. And they began driving. I never pictured myself doing such wild things, but it felt kind of freeing. We arrived at the party right on time. It was in a tiny three-room apartment, right off campus. I walked in and there was a sea of college students, I felt like I couldn't even breathe. What seemed like thousands of them packed in. In one corner there were a group of them doing what seemed like chucking plastic water bottles on various surfaces. Why on earth are they doing that? The guys I arrived with walked over to them so I slowly followed, water bottles flinging in every direction. They all formed a circle around me.

“Okay, this is basically water bottle flipping, and every time you don't land the water bottle you have to...” Who came up with such a foolish game? But of course I didn't say that to their faces. I needed to seem like I knew what I was doing. We began to play the game. And I was the only one not landing any! I could feel myself slowly drifting away from any sense of reality.

“Do you think we could take little break?” I said hoping they would understand.

“Oh come on Albert, you're no fun”

They all began chanting my name. I flipped one more water bottle and I don't remember anything after that.

The following day I woke up in Burger King storage closet, and for a while I thought I was dreaming. But once that familiar smell of rotten meat hit my senses, I knew it was real. I must have blacked out. This whole situation made me realize Burger King is where I was meant to be. But, I also learned that I shouldn't be around or trust raging college kids. I dropped out of college after one day of classes. And it was the best decision that i've ever made. I'd rather flip burgers than water bottles.



Gob the Onion
By Evan McCarthy

The sunlight shined luminously over the golden fields of tomato and onions. Gob, my giant onion friend, was created when all of my friends and family died in a car accident. I created him by injecting massive amounts of steroids and slowly letting radiation into his field. He is more loyal than any dog and is willing to die for me.

Gob grunted apologetically and folded the leaves on his head down. The onion is a magnificent tear inducer. He is a vidalia about 6.4 feet across, 7 feet tall, and approximately 300 pounds.

I continued to plant the tomato plants along the long dusty field. I lived alone and Gob is the only other "Person" for miles. Gob helps plant and do other daily chores. But I also trust him with hunting; he has killed countless squirrels and taken many deer. But his greatest kill was a pack of three black bears. He tackled the alpha of the group and strangled it to death, and then he commanded the other two bears to kill each other. When one bear had survived, he punched it and killed it instantly.

"Come on, Gob, I have some hardy onion potato soup cookin' back home." Gob followed me back to our sorry excuse for a house. I hung up my hat and wiped the sweat off of my brow.

"Scrumptious," Gob said as he chewed into one of the onions in the soup.

The next day I walked over to my barn to start up my prized possession, a homemade aircraft I call the Pegasus. It has a killer paint job: pegasus on the left flank and a six-inch windshield that is shatterproof. The two chairs in it can even support Gob's massive weight. I built it from sheets and duct tape as well as a wicked turbo jet.

I told Gob to get some snacks and to grab our two harpoon guns. "Suit up, Gob, we're going fly fishin'." I loaded up the harpoon guns and handed one to Gob. I put the keys in the ignition and the purr of the engine erupted across the valley.

"Alright, Gob, start to push us forward." Gob put his massive arms on the ground and boosted us forward. The wind caught the wings of Pegasus and we began to climb. Gob stared in wonder at the treetops and mountains around us. The mighty Mississippi River appeared and I could see the carp jumping. It was perfect timing.

"Get ready, Gob, fire at will." Gob aimed and fired the harpoon which was attached to a cable in the gun. With a crunch it pierced through the fish.

"Nice shot! Now bring him up." Gob pushed a button and the cable on the harpoon retracted. "That's a nice fish. We're eating good tonight." One shot after another Gob pulled in more fish until we had about fifty.

"By Jove, can you see that!" I yelled. A gargantuan albino bear emerged from the forest.

"Gob, take a shot!" The onion fired and struck the bear in its leg. It roared and ran for the forest.

“It's gittin away! Git down there!” Gob nodded and jumped from the plane.

He landed on the bear and wrapped his arms around the bear's neck. With a twist and a crack Gob ripped the bear's head off and roared triumphantly. The beast collapsed dead on the shore. I landed the plane in a nearby clearing and we skinned the bear and took it's meat. Gob had to walk home because there wasn't enough space on the plane. I left a bowl of soup out for him and retired in my chambers.

The next morning, I did something risky.

“Hey, Gob, we're going to take that bear skin into the town to sell.” It was the first time since I created Gob four years ago and when my family died that I went into the city. I hopped into my homemade truck. It had the body of a Ford and two wooden seats taped to the floor and a couch in the bed of the truck. I started her up and we rumbled into town. We arrived about three hours later. The vehicle coughed into a lot and wheezed to a halt. The forty-mile ride had taken its toll. I'll have to repair it later. We waltzed confidently into downtown. I saw the stares but told Gob to ignore them.

“They're just jealous of your amazing brawn,” I assured him. We got to the store and began to attempt a sale.

“Alright, you ain't gonna believe this, but me and this giant onion killed this albino bear over yonder yesterday.”

“I'll believe it,” the clerk said staring at Gob. “How much do you want?”

“74 dollars.”

“Deal.” I handed over the bear skin and took my money.

“That went well, let's go get some pop.”

We bought some root beer and started back to the truck. When we got there there was a group of teenagers holding sticks.

“Hello, young people, nice day today.”

“Shut it, oldster, and surrender your onion!”

“Over my dead body!” I charged at them like a horse on meth but one hit me with a stick, breaking my leg and laughed. Gob was furious; he grabbed a screaming lad and slammed his back into Gob's knee. The teenager died instantly from a broken spine. I was getting dazed, but I could see a figure who threw a flaming stick at Gob. Gob burst into flames and swung his leafy arms at people hopelessly. The devilish fiends laughed mercilessly as the inferno erupted. Then they pulled out bowls and began chopping Gob apart. He was diced into nice crispy pieces and put in a bowl of broth and beef. The monsters stole my money and my car. The blow from the stick broke my leg and prevented movement.

It is now day four in the hot parking lot with no water; I have been able live off of Gob's few leftover limbs, but my supplies are dwindling as is my hope. This may be my last entry.





- Sophia Widdekind

The Oompa Loompa's Adventure

by Stephen Trail

“What the hell? Why does he want a dwarf?” I slammed my laptop shut. “We Oompa Loompas are much shorter than dwarves, and we've been around for much longer!” I'll show you!” I risked a quick glance out of the factory window. Wonka doesn't like us looking out the windows. He insists on company secrecy and isolation. I needed to get out of here without getting caught.

“Yo Jeff, I'm gonna go do an inventory at the sugar processing wing, tell the supervisor I'll be there.”

“You got it, buddy!”

Gotta love Jeff.

Right as I was leaving my Oompa Loompa sized dorm, I remembered something important.

My laptop.

“No one can know where I'm going,” I thought, quickly typing in my password. Craigslist was just as I left it. “Help needed” the page read. “I want to surprise my friends at our lake party. Any dwarves looking for cash meet me in Johnsonville, California. Free drinks included.” I whistled to myself softly. 100 dollars for the whole shabang! Free drinks? That's way better than the crap Wonka pays up. I'm a strong-minded Oompa Loompa, it's time I get out into the world anyways. I closed the webpage and wiped my laptop's memory. I tossed it in the waste disposal.

Thankfully, no one suspected where I was going, so leaving the place wasn't as hard as I anticipated. The hard part was, once I was out, disguising myself. My green hair and orange skin would definitely get me some second looks. To fix this I bought a simple blonde wig and some makeup kits. I still looked weird, but I could pass as a human.

I had to hitchhike my way across America, let me tell you, it wasn't easy. Truckers can be nasty people, especially to a midget. I learned that the hard way when I was staying at a pretty seedy looking gas station in western Arizona looking for rides. I was particularly impatient looking for a ride today, because Arizona is hot as hell, literally. Hours passed, and still no one picked me up. Finally, a man came out of the gas station and waved at me to come meet him. Once I approached him, he said, “hey, you're probably looking for a ride. I can give you one if you pay, I usually don't serve your kind.” This chilled me to my bones, it was almost as if he could see through my disguise! I decided it was better to wait for another ride.

“Sorry, I'll pass,” I told the driver.

“Not so fast!” He put his hand on my shoulder. I let out a grunt as he pulled me into the backseat of his truck. He slammed the door shut. I was trapped. Between the back seat and the front row were iron bars, preventing me from grabbing the wheel. “Who the hell is this guy?” I wondered to myself. I heard the sound of gravel crunching under his boot as he walked around the car. He opened the front door and

shoved himself into the driver's seat. I cursed at him and punched the window. It was no use, they were tinted and probably bulletproof.

I knew I only had one option, and that was to try to distract the driver into crashing. "Hey man," I began. "Why are you kidnapping me? Just wondering." The man turned around and looked at me. "Name's Ted Anderson, and you sir, look like an Alien."

"I don't look like an alien." I protested.

This pissed Ted off, "YOU LOOK LIKE AN ALIEN AND I'M GOING TO BOIL YOU ALIVE SO I DON'T CATCH YOUR PATHOGENS."

We were on the highway now, I knew my chance was coming. "I'm pretty sure you already caught my alien pathogen then." Ted completely freaked out. He turned around and pulled out a handgun and pointed it right at my face.

I was screwed.

Just then, a speeding car slammed into us, throwing Ted out of his seat. He hit the back of the car so hard that he broke the iron bars that were keeping me from freedom. I crawled out of the car and managed to get away without getting noticed. Logically, you would assume that I stopped hitchhiking after that, and returned to Wonka factory. But you're wrong. I continued to hitchhike and met enough decent people after that to get me as far as California, it wasn't enough. I needed to find Johnsonville, that's where the lake party was supposed to be. A few (pricey) cab rides later and I was there. Sure, being in the real world was hard, but spending my money was the hardest part of all. I had never spent my money before. I never really needed to. But it still hurt to watch the little money I've accumulated over the years disappear. Of all the millions of dollars Wonka made, he still couldn't fork over enough money for his workers. "I'll pay you in chocolate!" I remember him telling us when he first promised to hire my Oompa Loompa clan. I grew to hate chocolate.

"We've arrived, pay up," the cab driver's voice interrupted my thoughts. I rummaged through my wallet. God dammit, I didn't have money.

"What's taking you so long?"

"Sorry." I was trying to think of something. Could I give him an iou? Nah, he wouldn't take one. Besides, what could I give him? Chocolate?

Chocolate.

It just might work. No one could resist a Wonka bar. "Hang on, I need to go to an ATM." I was lying of course. I didn't have a debit card. What I did have in credit, however, was my Wonka industries tattoo. Technically, I was Willy Wonka's property. (Because the US government thinks we were all wiped out, Wonka could get away with it). If I showed any grocery store scanner my tattoo, all Wonka products in the store would become mine. Sometimes undercover Oompa Loompas would use their tattoos to inspect various stores' supply. Anyways, I ran to the nearest Wall-mart, went to one of those do-it-yourself registers, and scanned my tattoo. "Hello Fluffy McStuffy, enjoy your chocolate!" the machine read.

By the way my name is Fluffy McStuffy.

All of the chocolate was mine! I grabbed a handful of Wonka bars, as well as an Everlasting Gobstopper (for me). Thankfully, the cab was still where I left it. The driver's impatient frown quickly turned into a grin when I gave him the chocolate. I was free to go! The lake was only a short walk away from where I was, and I had two hours before the party started. The guy who created the Craigslist request hiring the "dwarf" knows I'm coming, but he thinks I'm just a dwarf. Just then, I felt my phone vibrate. It was a text from him! "Hey, little dude" the text read. "Word just in, my friend said it would be funny if you dressed up as an Oompa Loompa for the party. Please dress like an Oompa Loompa for the party?"

"You got it ;), I'll be there in one hour." I texted back. That won't be hard. Since I had plenty of time, I decided to walk around, explore the town. There were tons of stores, locally owned by the look of it. People dressed in expensive clothes strolled down the streets, many of them carrying shopping bags. A few people glanced at me. Funny, they almost looked sorry for me. I quickly forgot about them however; I was used to funny looks by now. I whistled some Oompa Loompa tunes to myself while I turned a street corner, heading to the lake.

Right as I turned the corner, I almost slammed into a man in a dark suit. "Sorry." I mumbled, looking at my shoes.

But as I began to look up I realized something strange, this guy was the same height as me! I looked up to inspect his face.

It was Jeff!

He was accompanied by two midget bodyguards. His usually green hair was gelled and dyed black. He wore dark sunglasses.

"Hello Fluffy." He said coolly.

"H-hey J-Jeff." My voice was barely a whisper.

"Shame that you became a deserter," he chided. "I liked you. But as head of Wonka Secret Service, I cannot tolerate deserters."

I let out a muffled scream as a bag was pulled over my head. I felt a strong kick to the stomach. Jeff laughed as I reeled over in pain. That was the last thing I remembered before blacking out.

I woke up sprawled on the floor of the sugar processing wing back at the chocolate factory. "Are you ok, buddy?" It was Jeff's voice.

"Yeah, what happened?"

Jeff then informed me that I had, in fact, overdosed on smarties again, causing me to black out. Everything had been a dream. But as I sat down and thought about it later, I decided it was a good dream mostly, (the ending kind of was rushed).

The End



- Andy Hill



- Maddy Smith

Cheers to you old friend

By Mrs. Gover

Cheers to you, old friend,
My soul sister
My pal
The dynamic in our duo.
Today?

Today turns into yesterday

I know that.
But today?
I toast to you, dear friend.
Today.

Cheers to us, old friend
With a tear in my heart
I
know
today
is
the first day of the rest of my life?
without you.

Today?
Today turns into yesterday,
last week, months ago,
years ago, Once upon a time...
The past?
No, never, dear friend not that verb tense.
Never.

I say cheers to you, old friend, dear friend,
You will not be the Past.
You are my history, a link in my chain.
You have a starring role in my story.

And The Story of Your Life? Well, it is, Extraordinary.

So,
Cheers to you, old friend,

goodnight, dear, sweet friend.
I will love you and love you and love you and love you
Until,
we meet again.

It steals my breath?

By Mrs. Gover

It steals my breath?
this thought of you
When there are

 Moments alone, or in front, next to, with, or without, someone-
you're a thought, a flash, and then

This hot tear keeps sliding out, popping out
and running down my face,
rolling cold
off the tip or side or freckle on my nose
and, and then
Then I either catch myself-
And-

 Barricade it away.cement it in.block it stop it.thunkgk!
Or I have to run
Run
Run
Breathe and

And it's a different kind of cry I have
It's animal
It's howling
It's so dark,
It aches

 It crumples me and, and
And it steals my breath-



- Liz George



- Maddy Donaghy-Robinson



- Jessica McConnell

casual and bold, [redacted] Some-
thing might go wrong anywhere along the line. [redacted]
[redacted] No one would
ever see it [redacted]

[redacted] "Man is fallible but Mar-
tin isn't." No one would see his hand, [redacted] unless it
were caught in the act.

[redacted] [redacted] began
[redacted] at the beginning.

[redacted] Old Roberts

[redacted] Mr. Fitweiler.

[redacted] Mr. Martin

[redacted] a look of studious concentration and a faint
smile.

As Mr. Martin
squirmed slightly. He must keep his mind on her
as a special adviser.

[redacted] This he found difficult to do,

[redacted] The faults of the woman
a woman kept chattering on in his mind [redacted]
[redacted] for almost two years now, baited
him. In the halls, in the elevator, even in his own office,
into which she romped now,
she was constantly shouting
him. [redacted] at

[redacted]
[redacted]
It was Joey Hart, one of Mr. Martin's two assistants
who had explained [redacted]

at the door in an explosion
screamed, "You've got me with
beside my ears. You've got me with
Mr. Martin, "You've got me with
you were going to blow him up when
you got your hands on your hands." She stopped
breath and a new glint came into
he popping over. "If you aren't such a drab, ordinary
fish man," she said, "I'd think you'd planned it all,
sticking your tongue out, saying you were sitting in
the middle of the room, because you thought I would
believe me when I told Mr. Martin, it's really too per-
fect." She burst loudly and hysterically, and the fury
was on her again. She glared at Mr. Fitweiler. "Can't
you see how he has tricked us, you old fool? Can't you
see the whole game?" But Mr. Fitweiler had been cur-
reptiously pressing all the buttons under the top of his
desk and engine, and he began pouring out the
room. "Barrows," said Mr. Fitweiler, "you and Fish-
bein, you've got to go to her home. Mr. Barrows,
you'll go with the ball." Stockton, who had played a
little football in high school, blocked Mrs. Barrows
as she went to Mr. Martin. It took him and Fishbein
together to get her out of the door into the hall,
crowded with papers and the boys. She was
screaming imprecations at Mr. Martin, tangled
and confused, imprecations. The hubbub finally
died down the corridor.

"I regret that this has happened," said Mr. Fitweiler.
"I shall ask you to dismiss it from your mind, Martin."
"You've got to go," said Mr. Martin, anticipating his chief's
order. "I'll be moving to the door. I will dis-
miss it. He went out and shut the door, and his step

Three-Scene Play
By Adrian Warner

Synopsis: a raggedy group of stereotypes wanders about in a twenty-acre world consisting of a forest, a mountain, hell, and a Denny's.

Characters:

Mr. Alden: A tall, annoying man that greets people as they enter the Denny's, likes to talk, usually ignored.

Grace: A social media addicted girl, who is always on her phone.

Juan: A mexican immigrant worker who wants to go back to Mexico and hates the food at the Denny's.

The Demon: A cannibalistic demon from hell, who hangs out in the Denny's and gets bullied by the other inhabitants.

Mary: A girl stressed out by their situation, lies curled up in the corner of the Denny's.

The cook: The cook from Denny's.

The denizens: Random people who live in the world.

Five Lumberjacks in a Cave

Open in on a Denny's. Mr. Alden is standing by the door, looking out of the glass doors at the forest. Thunder booms, but the lighting stays consistent. Denizens can be seen around the Denny's.

Mr. Alden: You know, I've always thought that this was a great Denny's. Great placement. Even though I never wanted to work at a Denny's, this place has really grown on me. I like it here. Even if it is a bit odd, and the people here are a bit strange, it's great. He strokes his ginger beard. Yeah, even if I have no idea how I got here, and the demons don't really have good manners, it's quite a place. Don't you think, Grace? He looks out the doors for a few seconds, waiting for a response. None comes. He looks around.

Grace: Why do I only have one bar? Why is there no wi-fi? I need to upload this photo to instagram. All my friends will love this.

Mr. Alden: Grace? Did you hear what I said?

Grace: Hmm? Yeah, sure. She resumes furiously tapping at her phone.

Juan, who has been sitting in a booth with some pancakes, gets up and walks past Mr. Alden and Grace, stepping over Mary, who is lying on the floor curled up, rocking back and forth. He approaches the Cook.

Juan: Disculpe, señora.

Cook: What, eh? Speak up.

Juan: Me preguntaba si tienes algún tacos.

Cook: How many times have I told you? I don't speak Mexican.

Juan (obviously irritated): Tacos, señora?

Cook: No is un taco, señor.

Juan (turning away): Madre de Dios, no hay tacos. Quiero devolver a Mexico, donde hay comida bien.

Juan returns to his booth, tripping over Mary. He falls on his face, and gets up, picking up his sombrero off the floor. Mr. Alden is offering him a hand, but Juan does not see it, and sits down in his booth, muttering under his breath as he stares at the pancakes.

The back door of the Denny's opens, and the lighting becomes red and hot, with a blast of air that ruffles the character's hair. The Demon walks in, head down. She walks over to Mary and hunches down over her, salivating. Grace sees The Demon sitting over Mary, takes a picture, and then stand up, walks over, and kicks the demon with her converse shoe. The demon whines, and slinks away, complaining.

Demon: What was that for? I'm hungry.

Grace: Then go get some pancakes, ugly. Don't eat Mary.

Demon: Pancakes don't taste good.

Mr. Alden: God, you're such an ugly freak. Why don't you leave my Denny's and go back to hell? Aside: It's not even my Denny's. I just hate that demon.

The Demon slides up to the counter, away from the others. Mr. Alden goes back to looking out the doors, Grace continues to stare at her phone, and Juan takes a disgusted bite of pancake. Grace abruptly gets up, and walks to the door of the Denny's, accidentally smacking into it as she stares at the screen of her phone. She pushes it open, stepping offstage. Mr. Alden looks after her.

Mr. Alden: Oh, where is that silly girl going now? She'll wander into a tree and knock herself out. Well, I should follow her to make sure she's alright. He walks offstage after Grace. Juan has been watching the other two leave. He stands up, shrugging.

Juan: Tal vez puedan ayudarme a volver a Mexico.
Juan exits after Grace and Mr. Alden.
Fade to black.

Scene two. The mountainside, above the line of the forest. There are a few boulders scattered around, and the three main characters are standing there, shivering. A couple denizens are sitting on nearby boulders. An eagle screeches.

Grace: How is there still no internet service? We've walked for miles, and no bars. Nothing. My followers must be wondering where I am. I wonder where I am. I'm going to have a breakdown if I don't get service.

Mr. Alden: Well, you know, we can't really walk miles. We only live in twenty acres. Unless we walk back and forth, we can't walk for miles. And we walked in a straight line, so that most definitely was not miles. He turns to Juan. Why are you here, anyway?

Juan: looks over the forest, actually the audience: Pues, esto fue una idea horrible. Mexico no esta aqui. Mexico no es en este mundo.

Grace: Do they have snapchat in Mexico? I bet not. I bet they don't even have internet. Or phones. How can you survive without a phone or internet service?

Juan: ...

Grace kicks at a boulder. It goes flying and hits one of the denizens, knocking them off the boulder they are sitting on. An ominous rumbling begins, and the other denizen gets crushed by a boulder as an avalanche begins. The three major characters let out high-pitched, childish screams, except for Juan, who begins screaming in Spanish. They run randomly across the stage, waving their arms and screaming, until the rumbling stops. The lighting is dark and red, and there are pillars of rock about. They have wandered from the mountainside into hell. Smooth jazz plays in the background, over the cries of the damned. On stage left, a fat, bearded demon can be seen eating

doritos. The Demon from Denny's wanders by, eating an uncooked sausage, followed by a floating goat that spins and bobs in the air. Grace looks down at her phone, taking selfies with these sights.

Grace: Hey, I have service again!

Fade to black

Open in on the kitchen of the Denny's. The Cook is standing in the middle of the stage, alone, surrounded by pancakes, ovens, and breakfast sausages. She is holding a ladle and a frying pan.

Cook: Why do I even do this? It's not like I'm getting paid. There's no one here to pay me. Well, there isn't even any money. Unless you count the two dollars that the Devil keeps taunting us with. But it seems like Juan is the only one interested in that money. The Demon enters, and tries to take the breakfast sausages. The Cook takes her ladle and hits the demon over the head with it, and the Demon runs, followed by the floating goat, which snatches sausages and pancakes with its mouth as it passes. The Demon exits.

Cook: All I ever do is make food and put it out. Nothing more. Cook, serve, cook, sleep, cook, serve, blah blah blah. No one appreciates my work. I keep this entire place fed.

She stares around the kitchen. Every available surface is covered with pancakes and sausages. There is no sign of any rot, decay, or flies, just pancakes piled everywhere.

Cook: Then again, the pancakes never spoil. And I never run out of ingredients. And even the people who never come to eat seem to do fine.

Stacks of pancake mix and frozen sausages appear from the sides of the stage, as if by magic. The Cook turns to stage right and begins unpacking the pancake mix to begin cooking more pancakes. Juan enters from stage left, sombrero singed from the fires of hell, mustache drooping, and stands silently until the Cook notices him. She stops, holding a box of pancake mix in one hand and a frying pan in the other, and silently gives him the evil eye.

Juan: Tacas, señora?

Cook: What did I tell you about tacos? She advances on him, and begins swinging the frying pan at him. Juan runs away, shielding himself from the blows. There are no tacos here! This is Denny's!

Juan (as he exits): Eso es exactamente como Mexico!

Fade to black. Curtains close.

Curtains open. The fat bearded demon is sitting alone onstage, in hell.

Bearded demon: That play didn't make sense.

Suddenly, a man runs onstage and yells:

Liam McCarthy: BUT DOES IT MAKE DOLLARS?

Curtains close for good.



- Bridget Sullivan



- Melissa Kummrow



- Julia Taubman

The Life of a Hero

By Bekah Warner

Walking up crowded stairs in blistering heat
people in sharp-pressed business suits walking down
pale faces lined with terror
the closer I get to the inferno

I trudge up the creaking gray stairs
lugging my equipment over my shoulder
sweat dripping down my face
I hear the cries of death

I sit on the stairs
taking a break to catch my breath
I look out the window to see
orange-red flames 20-stories high
shooting out windows towards me
people are jumping out of windows,
grasping each other's hands
Oh, what an end to a life,
I think of my baby and then of my wife
hoping to see them again

Looking onwards up the stairs
I feel the flames coming closer
people are frantic trying to escape this Hell

I reach my destination
a woman with brown hair, blue eyes
crouched in a cubicle,
terrified eyes, frantic with fright
I extend my hand, say, "I'm here to help"

Suddenly the earth trembles
concrete, dust and flames are flying everywhere
hearing screams and shouts of fright
we hurtle towards the ground in a cloud of dust
suddenly all I see is light



- Maddy Smith



- Parker Jackson

Free as the Sea

By

If you want to be free
and enjoy this ride
look out to sea.

Don't try to flee,
go with the tide
if you want to be free.

Don't fret, just be.
Don't run and hide,
look out to sea.

Don't worry about me,
I'll always be by your side
if you want to be free.

Forget those who disagree,
forget those who've lied,
look out to sea.

Hear my plea,
be sure to abide.
If you want to be free
look out to sea.





The End.