

storyzine.



III

**MAKE HEADLINES
ODDITIES COLLECTOR
WITHIN THE WALLS
AMUSEMENT PARK**

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A NOTE FROM THE TEAM LEADER

The third issue brought so many great people to the Storyzine team I'm starting to feel like this is something that can live on for a very long time! Let me try to introduce who we have and put the word out now that we are looking for some more people who have the time to help this new idea grow into a great resource for future writers!

We have a permanent Editing team! This has me MOST excited because it helps when it's the same people looking over the work every week. Looking for volunteers every month was a task I was not looking forward to doing every month. But I soon discovered there were a few stood out not just to me with their speed but to the writers who would tell me how pleased they were with the edits they were given. We have a team of three editors now, with plans to expand as needed in the future as we get more submissions in.

The role of FBI Designer is temporarily filled by someone who is giving it a try for us this issue. It's a fun and mysterious title. I'd tell you what it means and what exactly that person does, but then it would remove the mystery!

It was brought to my attention by a member of the Discord Server I manage that there should be someone to run our social media accounts. In my embarrassment, I realized that while I had set them up it never dawned on me to ask others if they would want the opportunity to post often to get new readers! So, now we have a Social Media Strategist currently running our Instagram and looking for at least two more to join him in running the Facebook and Twitter pages. Along with this role we are in need of Branding people to design images and language to provide to the SMS team, working together to share the news of who we are!

If you're interested in joining our Team you'll find a link [here](#) and at the end of this issue. Bring your talents, whatever they are! We'd love to have you!

One last bit of exciting news! We've expanded WHO can contribute to the issues every month to go beyond being a member of my Discord Server. Now, if you are on Reddit you can submit a story as well! More info on the last page as well.

Storyzine is published monthly. Each issue contains between 4 – 5 prompts given each week. All rights to each story belongs to the original writer and storyzine.

PROMPT ONE

MAKE HEADLINES

ILLEGAL WHAT? BY LYNA PRAVY

The familiar crunching of gravel beneath my car tires was soothing, it signaled home. Hobbling to the mailbox a few feet from my car, I sighed from a long day of filling coffee orders. Spam mail and the daily newspaper resided in the box. Grabbing everything, I walked the short distance to my apartment and opened the screen followed by the front door. Once inside, I sat on the couch and opened the newspaper for the latest local happenings.

The crinkling of the newspaper filled my silent home as I flipped the pages. I landed upon the police blotter and saw a few more entries than usual. About to turn to the next page, I glimpsed a familiar name. *Sherri Tendal, 32*. It was my name and age. Coincidence? I continued reading to learn what crime this Sherri committed. The words were as follows: *A warrant is issued for the arrest of Sherri Trendal of 38 Beaker Lane, for the possession and distribution of illegal sex videos. Police request that anyone with information should call immediately.*

The words screamed at me from the page. My address was correct, but I didn't have any sex videos and I only streamed a few when I felt horny!

Creaks of the screen door had me leap off the couch. Three bangs followed immediately, making my heart race. A man yelled, "Police! Open up!" My body shook. I thought about running through the back door. I didn't commit the crime, but I couldn't run away- there was a warrant out for my arrest! Perhaps I could prove I have nothing to hide. Let them take my computer!

They banged the door harder and yelled the same message.

OH GOD, WHAT DO I DO?

My eyes darted everywhere before I grabbed my purse and meekly opened the back door, still wearing my barista uniform, my hair tousled and matted. Not wanting to look suspicious, I gracefully walked to my car near my neighbors who happened to be leaving at the same time.

Once in my car, I peeked at the three police officers standing in front of my apartment with their hands resting on their holsters. I made up my mind to leave; I'd pee my pants if I revealed myself now.

Keys in the ignition, hands on the wheel, and anxious to drive, my destination was the coffee shop to find Steve, the asshole I rejected last week. He's the only one I knew who could remotely hack computers. He's done it before. I'll force him to confess with blackmail.

Admittedly, I drove like a maniac until the car's screeching tires landed at the coffee shop. Steve was in the back as usual.

"What did you do to my computer?"

"It was just a prank, babe."

"Well a man who knows how to hack is sexy. Want to ditch work and come to my place?"
I winked and smiled.

"Sur-"

"Come on, I'll drive!"

PROMPT TWO

ODDITIES COLLECTOR

PEN COLLECTOR BY N.D. KELLER

“May I see your pen?”

I would have liked to say she was beautiful. Instead the woman looked older with a homely kind of feel. She was a little overweight and dumpy with her hair tied back in a messy bun. She had kind eyes.

I handed her my pen. That particular one cost me \$60 on the internet. I used it primarily for taking notes. “A fine pen.” She turned it over in her hands.

Her fingers grazed the side of my laptop. I tensed. Cheap it may be but it held my life's work. I had a back-up at home, but this had the latest edit, painstakingly combed through.

“You are almost done.”

Done? I closed my laptop.

“How would you like a new laptop? I will pay you what you paid for this, more for the pen.”

“I need that pen, it is for drafting.”

“I know. That's why I want it. I collect the tools from all the great works. I have the typewriter that *Tom Sawyer* was written in. It was the first typewriter to ever have a full novel written on it. I have the pen that Shakespeare used to finish *Romeo and Juliet*. I'd like to add your laptop to the collection.”

“You can't be serious.” I was unpublished. My work would likely never see the book binder. I could understand her wanting those famous things; they'd be worth something if she ever sold them. Why would she want a laptop, a cheap junkie laptop, owned by a nobody?

“I will wait till you are finished. Promise to sell it to me.” She slid me an elegant card with a phone number and a simple word: muse. Then she was gone.

After that, my work flowed. Every hard knit eased into perfection. My words flowed faster. That last loose end suddenly had a brilliant finish.

It was done in a week, not the months I had estimated. Even my query letters turned out and I got 3 call backs.

I turned over the card in my hands.

She had wanted my laptop.

I called.

She came.

Lovingly, she touched the laptop as she gave me cold hard cash.

“Are you sure you won't part with your drafting pen?”

“Maybe after a few more drafts.”

“I can wait for a good pen. Might I suggest a better laptop next time? Something a little fancier. I will buy it from you when you are done.”

“If all goes well, you have a deal.”

“It will.” Her smile was homely. She was older than I imagined one to be. That night, inspiration struck.

ORGANIC MEDICINE BY SCOTTWRITESSTUFF

At midnight, my shift as hospital janitor was over. After saying goodbye to the few nurses and doctors around for the graveyard shift, I slipped out the back door where the bio waste dumpster was.

It was time to collect my daily allowance.

I unlocked the padlock on the dumpster's lid and eased it open, careful to keep the metallic screeching to a minimum. Holding it up with one hand, I reached inside with my other and groped around.

Jackpot. I pulled out a clear plastic bag that had three puke-colored gallstones in it the size of thimbles. I felt sorry for the poor fellow who'd had them removed, but I needed them for my collection. I tossed them into my backpack.

Five minutes later, I'd found a bag of inflamed tonsils, a tumor the size of a golf ball, and an infected appendix that looked like a thick, purple worm. I eased the lid back down, locked it up, and walked home through the night.

Inside my house, I opened up my freezer. Warts. Cysts. Failed kidneys. And now tonight's haul too. I dumped the packages from my backpack inside and pulled out a diseased spleen.

I set a pot of water boiling on the stove, then grabbed a bowl from the cupboard and scissors from the drawer, and cut open the spleen's plastic bag, dumping the deep-red mess into the bowl. It sloshed around, some parts of it frozen and some parts of it still mushy and bubbly.

When the water boiled, I poured it into the bowl, melting the spleen into a steamy mess. I grabbed garlic powder, soy sauce, and Sriracha from the cupboard, added a dash of each, and then stirred it with a wooden spatula, turning it into a goopy concoction that reeked like the rotting corpse of a long-dead cat lady.

But that's exactly what I needed it to be. The best medicines always smelled and tasted horrible—that's how you knew they worked. All of the specimens in my collection were demons that had been removed from people's bodies; I used them to remove demons from people's souls. Demons that the doctors couldn't see. Demons that they didn't even believe existed.

My doorbell rang. My first patient for the evening. It was time for their checkup.

PURE PASTOR BY OARMFAN

“AMEN” the Pastor’s voice trembles through the church as if it came from a thunderstorm. He is staring directly at me and everybody else simultaneously. He stares into my soul, to see all the sins I have committed. Nobody dares to stand up. This is the custom of the church established by the Pastor.

He at last lowers his eyes, marking the end of the silence. The congregation stands and starts to walk out, orderly and with care not to bump into the others, flowing like a slow stream. At last, it becomes my turn. My lungs are screaming for air and my skin for the sun, but I cannot walk, and I cannot make myself to look up, I have felt this before. I sit here while the church empties in my own pain, as if my lungs are collapsing and my skin will tear apart. It feels like poison is pumping through my blood. The door slams as the last attending walks out, the last except me. After every service, he chooses one to stay, and today it is me that have to spend time with him. The Pastors footsteps can be heard against the stone floor. The sound of his footsteps gets closer, slow but steady while drops of sweat begins to run down my back. Then he stops. “*My son, what tea would you like today?*” he always asks this question before the confession.

“...Lemon tea please” I stutter. The sound of his footsteps begin again.

... a door can be heard opened and then calmly closed, the sound of the footsteps vanishes behind it signaling the time of peace as the silence takes over the church. The air gets lighter, and my lungs are screaming for all the air it can get before the silence will be over.

But the moment is short, and the door opens followed by the monotone sound of his footsteps.

A cup of tea is placed in my hands.

“*So, my child... what sins bring you here to me today?*”

I can feel his glare on my shoulders—intense, immobilizing, and thirsty—as he sits down behind me.

I think of what to say. Mobilizing my jaw and tongue. I open my mouth.

“Forgive me Father, for I have sinned... I was weak, and she was strong. She locked the door and took off my clothes while her lips imitated the snake.”

“So, my son, you chose to enter a devils room while you were weak?”

In his words he condemns me, but in his voice, I can hear his need for more.

“At parties we follow many devils,” I answer.

“You must confront your devils then and find your path back to God!”

“I know father, but why does the devils’ make their paths so easy to follow while God does not seem to help you keep away from them?”

“God has his reasons. Now confess all your devils so God may help you!”

And so, he always said. He never sinned, but why do so when you can collect everyone else's?

PROMPT THREE

WITHIN THE WALLS

THE THING IN THE WALLS BY ZAK BURCHELL

On the Thirteenth of July 1908, I found myself housed in a most peculiar place on Lundy Island, far from any prying eyes. I knew not, at the time, that this place would be the root of my downfall.

I arrived at dawn, taking in the warm, calm atmosphere about the place; the house was small, yet comfortable. It was equipped with a library stuffed full of books on any topic imaginable, everything from archaeology to zoology. There was a single, fair-sized bedroom occupied by a queen-sized bed, a clinically clean white bathroom, and a study, in which sat an oak desk. I felt oddly at home there, despite having arrived mere hours before; the scent of aged journals, novels, and newspapers from times long past eased my mind.

On that fateful night, a great storm enveloped the island, and with the thunder came the nightmares. I remember little of those visions, and yet I awoke, screaming, to a sound far worse than any creation of my own mind. The sound, the infernal shriek of a million claws scratching at once. It came from all around, an inescapable swarm of noise, swallowing me whole. I ignited my handheld lamp in a futile attempt to seek comfort from the flood of gnawing and clawing.

The room was empty, and yet the walls were alive, screaming and hissing.

As the optimistic chime of the clock rung seven, the noise ceased. The house returned to the silent, peaceful place it had been previously.

I had been tempted to leave, to run far away and never return to the house, however, the clouds spewed rain so torrential that it would have been deadly for me to depart.

I started with the walls. Searching the house, I discovered a chisel in a toolbox, which was tucked away in the study, along with various other tools; a hammer, bolt-cutters, etcetera. Despite my fatigue, I tore down the northern wall, and found that there was a gap between the panels and the exterior layer of the wall; peering through the darkness, I noticed a rough silhouette. The object was damp to the touch and felt as if it was made of worn-down stone. I could not make out the details, but it looked to be a tablet of some sort.

Carefully, I retrieved the rune. Seeing it under a new light, I was vaguely familiar with the faint symbols etched into the ancient tablet. I had seen them somewhere before.

I took to the library immediately. Searching the endless shelves of well-organised journals, I came upon an unlabeled section of leather-bound books. Taking one in my hands, I saw that the notes were hand-written in some foreign script that I did not recognise from my travels. There were several diagrams throughout the book of rituals and tablets much like the one which I held in my other hand. Where the previous occupant of the house discovered these journals, I did not desire to know, as books of this nature are only passed down through generations of the oldest of families - the ancient, devil-worshipping, evil-doing cults of the prehistoric era. I did not return to the library that night, for I did not intend to delve any further into the barbaric actions of those antediluvian groups. Instead, I returned to the walls.

Tearing down the panels of a fresh wall, I discovered an additional two carved stone tablets. I recognised several symbols from the yellowed pages of the journal.

That was my second night in the house without sleep. How could I rest? Not only had I uncovered the house's great secret, but with it, I had been cursed with the knowledge that under this very roof, the most sinful atrocities had been carried out.

It was dark outside when I heard a stirring below me, like the gurgle of a great stomach. There was a tapping of tiny feet and the grinding of stone against stone. I felt the earth shake and observed as cracks began to form on both the floor and ceiling. Dust fell, shrouding the room in a haze of mist; then... Silence.

The dust settled. A crack in the ceiling and floor had split the room diagonally; the carpet had been displaced, exposing a large trapdoor. In the shaking of the earth and the cracking of the ground, the door had been split in two, leaving a sizeable gap in its place.

Lifting what was left of the trapdoor revealed an endless set of stone steps, stretching downwards into oblivion. I heard distant chanting far below me. This was it. I took the first step toward the end of it all...

A DAY THAT ENDS IN Y BY CURTIS MCINTYRE

“There’s something in the walls.”

“Bull to the shit.”

“There is! Come see.”

“I don’t have time to go with your stoned ass to see whatever weird shit you are imagining is inside the walls. Quit bugging me. I’m trying to read Fakebook posts from my friends.”

“Come on! You can see it currently through the hole I made in the wall, but it’ll have crawled away if you take any longer.”

“You broke a hole in the wall? What the hell, Lenny? That’s going to cost us our security deposit!”

“Why are you worried about things like money when there’s some kind of fiend living in our walls?”

“You know what, Lenny? I’m out. I can’t take your weird shit any longer. I’m moving back in with my Mom.”

“Ugh... whatever.”

“And I’m taking the weed.”

“No!”

“I paid for it.”

“But-.”

“It’s mine.”

“Fine. Take it and go. You’re harshing my mellow. Plus, I should probably get back to watching the hole in my wall.”

“Oh, I’m already gone.”

“You are?”

“I left a while ago. God, you’re pathetic. Breaking holes in walls. Talking to yourself. You make me sick.”

“That...that’s not true. Just leave. Stop putting bad thoughts in my head. Leave, leave, leave! Oh? What’s that? You’re already gone? Oh, thank goodness. Phew. This will sound crazy, but she almost had me convinced I had lost my mind there for a moment.”

“Psst.”

“Whoa. Who’s there?”

“It’s me. The guy in the wall. I stole a couple of the dankest nugs from her stash before she left. Wanna toke up?”

“Fucking aye, I do.”

ARE THE WALLS TALKING TO ME? BY JONATHAN MALETTE-TREMBLAY

Something is inside the wall... the kitchen wall, more specifically. Every day, when I ate my cereal, I could hear voices inside of it. When I first moved here, I thought it was just the neighbors. But they kept getting louder and louder. Until one day, I got tired of the noise, and knocked on their door. There was no answer. So, I called my landlord and asked him about the neighbors. He told me that there hasn't been anyone living there for over five years.

I thought I was going insane, I had to go see someone. The only person I could really trust, was my sister. So, I invited her over, she seemed worried about me and proposed to stay over for a week. This was the perfect way to see if I was actually going crazy. The first night passed and when I woke up, she was looking at the wall, the one with noises. She looked at me and asked: "Noisy neighbors?"

I grabbed her arms and asked if she was hearing voices. She nodded. I told her the same thing my landlord told me. She had a face that I haven't seen in years, fear. She never was one to be scared, always going first in any attraction. But this time, it's as if she was going to be sick. She grabbed a rusty hammer out of my cupboard and started bashing the wall, breaking it piece by piece.

Behind it was... a door. I opened it. The door lead to an amazing sight. We were atop of a steep hill. The door was just standing there, as if with magic. Looking down, we could see what looked like a giant city, surrounded by tall stone walls. The city looked very medieval. Outside those walls were a bunch of wheat and corn fields. We could even see a group of people, coming in our direction. As they got closer, they looked like soldiers. Once they got close enough, one of them approached us even more.

"Welcome to the world of Eccacyre, traveler." is what he said. Would you mind following us? We haven't had any new travelers in a while."

We did as we were told for we did not want any trouble. They brought us to a large door leading inside the city. Are we stuck to live? Is this our fate? I do not mind, earth was a boring place anyways.

THE DARK BY DANIEL FANNING

Something is inside the wall...

I often remind myself of the fame and fortune I will receive when I leave this room, but twice as vividly the thought that I will never leave always triumphs. It started as just a small challenge that will lead to riches: stay in the room for a month and you get to leave with a nice cheque of ten million dollars. The room was dark, and I received all my nutrients through an IV on my arm.

At first, I thought it was easy money. I made puzzles to complete in my head, I had thought up many stories and often played them when I got particularly bored, But after my first sleep, I realised something horrible. something horrible. I had no idea how long I had been inside the room. Had I been in here for a day? A year? This place was locked on the inside, and it had to be opened by someone else.

After three rounds of the National Anthem, I noticed a scraping sound. it was coming from behind one of the walls. Were people opening the door, so I could walk free? I got up on my frail legs and immediately fell back down. I hadn't walked in ages and my legs were refusing to stand. I had spent so long on the ground solving puzzles and playing my stories I had forgotten to exercise. I waited, and I waited for the door to open. Nothing. Yet the scratching persisted. It never ceased.

The sound of the scratching grew louder. It was tearing at my mind. I could no longer sleep, I could no longer imagine. I yelled for it to stop, yet my throat refused to make a sound. I banged at the wall in desperation, scraping at my skin and tearing at my muscles.

I could do nothing; the scratching will drive my insane. How long had I been here? A day? A year? Will it ever be opened?

PROMPT FOUR

AMUSEMENT PARK

THE COMMUNITY PARK BY PAUL METAXAS

Exiting the woods, Alec and Tommy stumble still inebriated from the party.

“Is this it?” Alec asks, wheezing.

“I think so. Here are those tickets I told you about.” Tommy says knocking on the rusted steel. “Useless though... it’s still abandoned. Shocker. Want to hike back?”

“Seems fitting we put the tickets where they belong, after all these years changing hands.” Alec lays them at the ticket counter window.

The “Community Park” sign above them lights up. Carnival fanfare starts to play as a carousel begins to spin. Chains pull a roller-coaster as it climbs a slope. Elsewhere, a pirate ship on a limb swings down from the apex of its arc. The entry gate opens.

Alec and Tommy wobble as they stare.

“Holy shit...” Tommy says. “Should we go in?”

Alec looks at Tommy for a moment. “Nothing ventured, nothing gained... right?”

Inside the park, they pass an automated fortune teller in his box.

I can grant your deepest desire - gaze into my eyes it says. One of the lights in its pupils has burned out.

“You know, the park’s owner opened this from his own funds.” Tommy says. “Private property. Wanted to give back to the town, name was Mr. Fallows.”

“You see that?” Alec asks.

“What?”

“Thought I saw a snake over there, near the sack.”

“Snake?” Tommy asks, “That’s what got the owner. Some kid round our age was jealous of the guy, wealthy and all. Fallows gave a speech every day, standing on his pulpit in the park. One day the kid--name was Jonas I think--planted a snake in the pulpit to embarrass him.”

“Hey I don’t think this is a sack.” Alec inches closer. “It has a zipper.”

“Huh? Anyway, the kid didn’t know the snake was poisonous. Got Fallows in his eye. Lived but had to get a patch--face rotted away. Folks started to make fun of how he looked, despite his good nature.”

“You should see this.”

“Alright, alright. That’s when he had that pirate ship attraction built. Gave the people what they wanted with the eye patch jokes, I suppose. Killed himself twenty years ago.”

They peer at the object as the zipper slides open from the inside. A form emerges, a mass of tendons and ligaments roiling through themselves. Its caved in head performs a full revolution independent of the body, fixating on them. Its features are inhuman, dark with oaken sinew and wrought with cavities. Each of its extremities moves singularly, repurposing one at a time, putting body in line with neck.

More forms twist their way around corners and down from awnings, their heads rotating to lock on Alec and Tommy. In unison the forms lurch sideways, losing balance.

Alec and Tommy bolt away from the congregation, scrambling behind a prize counter.

“This can’t be happening,” Alec says, slapping his cheeks trying to sober up. He whispers over the cacophony of rides and music, “I just wanted to be noticed by someone, hang out with people for a night.”

“Gets lonely without friends. You think we’re dreaming?” Tommy asks.

“I don’t know. We’ve gotta get out of here.” Alec sees the forms’ heads spinning searching for them. The forms fall to the ground again. Alec notices the ship.

“I think they’re synced with the ship, tumbling as it swings.” Alec says.

“You’re right. It’s like they’re on the ship itself.”

A hand reaches over the counter and a misshapen head appears.

“Run!” Alec yells. They dart between the attractions with the pendulum swing. Forms are flung by an invisible force towards one another, interweaving tissue syncopating with the ship. Tommy trips face first into a table’s edge, collapsing to the ground unconscious.

Alec sees a clear path for the exit, gate still open. The forms close in, directing their bodies towards Tommy. Alec had only met him tonight, thrilled Tommy approached him in his solitary chair nestled in a corner.

Alec lunges back for Tommy, pulling him up and heaving for the final stretch.

A sea of limbs from innumerable forms palpitates across oxidized steel of the entrance. Alec slows for breath. Hundreds of forms encircle them, reaching out to each other inserting their fingers into the pockmarked crevices adorning their bodies, barring escape.

Alec and Tommy are next to the automated fortune teller, its head is now facing them. Alec makes eye contact with it.

The music stops. The lights die. Every ride grinds to a halt, save the ship swinging in the silence. The forms fall en masse pulsing with its sway, no longer drawing nearer.

I can grant your deepest desires it repeats.

“Yes! Please! Just let us leave!” Alec pleads.

A form approaches from behind, sliding its hand into Alec’s. He recoils, hand subdued.

Your soul does not wish to escape, Alec. It yearns for fellowship. For connection.

Another form takes his other hand, inexplicable suffocation setting in. Tommy lies lifeless.

You long for community, as I did. We all do, eventually.

Alec looks ready to puke, cheeks swelling as he flails. Instead of vomit, a snake’s head forces through his lips, its tongue flicking Alec’s nostrils. He attempts screaming but only muffled noises come as the snake slithers across his cheeks. The forms’ tendons weave through his fingers. Before he can blink the snake strikes, burying one of its fangs next to his eye socket, the other deep into his right eyeball. As the lens is punctured, vitreous humour bursts, coalescing with venom as they pool around his cornea. His existence becomes only pain, unfathomable pain.

Now, you are like me.

The automated fortune teller turns to Tommy.

I can grant your deepest desires.

Tommy stands, calm and unharmed.

The forms wrap Alec into a body bag, zipping it as he convulses in excruciation. The snake is still working its jaws deeper into the cavity where his eye socket atrophies.

“I desire death.” Tommy says.

Eventually, Jonas.

Two tickets eject through the fortune teller’s box.

THE TEAM

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Help Us Grow

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<http://thestoryzine.com/newsletter>

If you are looking to help in more ways than sharing, we do have a Patreon Page where for just \$1 a month you would be helping to pay for the Hosting services we use to keep the website up and running, the URL itself, and much more. Visit our Patreon Page [Here](#).

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