

JULY - 2018 - VOL I - ISS V

storyzine.

FLASH FICTION COLLECTION



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Volume I Issue V

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Storyzine is published monthly. Each issue contains between 4 – 5 prompts provided each week.
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Editor's Note

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Our fifth issue had a bit of a rocky start as the Summer time lends itself to more activities and less writing, but we powered through and instead of having no issue we have what will hopefully be the last small issue we publish. With each issue I strive to bring something new and our sixth issue will do just that! No spoilers, of course, but along with the great Flash Fiction stories you get to read every month there will be more things to catch your eye.

This month's prompts use Storymatic. It's a box full of random cards in two colors. One color is used to describe a character or multiple characters and the other to give a sort of plot or setting to put that character in. I like to use these cards when I'm feeling stuck or when I just want to write a flash-fiction-sized story to get me in the right frame of mind before I get started on my bigger, novel-sized, projects. If you have been considering writing your own piece of fiction, might I recommend trying Flash Fiction? Some will say it is difficult due to the word count cap of 500 words, while others love the challenge and can't get enough of writing extremely short stories.

As for me, I use them to brush up on my ability to tell a captivating story in a small amount of space. This proves helpful when I'm working on my own personal fantasy novels. You might find it helpful and a great means of quick escape. If you're interested in writing on your own or contributing a story for an issue I would be so delighted! You'll find all the information you'll need on how to do so on the last page.

PROMPT 01

FOLLOWER

DEVESTATING SECRET

CURTIS
MCINTYRE

COMEDY

“Dad, if we’re both about to die, I just wanted to say that I love you. I know I should have said it more often before, but sometimes it takes your impending demise to realize the important things.

“I’m sorry for acting like a dick when you said you wanted to take me fishing. I’m a shitty son and shouldn’t have acted like I would hate it. Because now that we’re out here on this canoe, fishing isn’t so bad. If it weren’t for the huge tornado bearing down on us, this could have been a perfect day.

“Before we get Wizard Of Oz’d to death by that big cyclone fucker, I should probably come clean about a couple things. I don’t want to get to the Pearly Gates with all these unrepentant sins rotting the core of my soul.

“First off, I should tell you that the other day, I shoved your toothbrush up my ass. Okay, I know what you’re thinking: which end did I shove up there, the handle or the bristles? Unfortunately the answer is both. Well, it’s more like I shoved the handle up there, then used the bristles to massage my general butthole and taint area.

“Second, you should probably know that I jerked off, like, all over the house. I don’t mean that I did it in every room, although I did. What I mean is that I came all over things. I jizzed on the couch, the carpet, the television screen, your favorite reclining chair... I shot my load on almost everything. The only objects spared my seed were the things in the babies room. Somehow that would have felt... pervy.

“Let’s see, what else is there...

“Well, I act like I hate your new fiance because I miss my Mom, but I actually don’t. The real reason I’m so weird around her is that she’s a smoking hottie and I can’t handle talking to fine babes like that yet without getting flare ups of social anxiety.

“Oh, I also killed Whiskers. I wish I had a good excuse, like it was an accident and I was covering it up. But no, I killed the fuck out of that thing. I choked it while it clawed at my arms. Honestly, I

never liked it. Or cats in general. Or any animals actually. Or humans, if we’re being completely honest. In fact, I don’t know why I opened this with saying that I love you, Dad. I don’t. I hate everyone. Thank God for this tornado. I may be about to die, but at least I can finally be honest. Well, I’m done. Come blow me to Heaven, oh great tornado! Whisk me away to-”

“Son!” my Dad yells, cutting me off. “There is no tornado.”

I look around. The waters surrounding the canoe are placid. There’s not so much as a light breeze, let alone a swirling wall of death wind.

“Fuck,” I say.

FISH TALE

N D
KELLER

FANTASY

Hauling the net from the water, George stopped dead. A long scar ran down his grizzled left arm. It twitched.

“George, help us pull!” the captain shouted. The men grabbed the net and pulled hard, struggling under the weight of fish writhing about.

With the fish onboard, the others started the regular procedure of sorting, George looked to the swirling clouds on the horizon. “We need to leave, now.”

“Leave?” asked the first mate as he worked. He was the captain’s nephew. He had done a few runs before but never out by the southern islands. “Why would we leave? We aren’t due for wind or rough waters.”

“No fancy radar can predict the weather by the southern islands. But this old scar remembers.” George placed a hand over the old wound. No matter how much he pulled on his fingers that hand would never fully open. It ached now, clenched without his permission.

The captain scoffed. “That old fish story? I’ve sailed the seas and haven’t seen so much as a mermaid flipper.”

“What I saw that day in 82 was no mermaid. The water boiled. Fish turned belly up.”

“Scuttlebutt. Get to sorting. We’ll sail towards that shore. Good fish tend to lurk there.”

George got back to work, moving efficiently despite old pains. He had worked these many years on the ocean, the rocking from the boat was as familiar to him as walking on land. He felt a bump, one that couldn’t be caused by the waters. The first mate stumbled into one of the containers. Fish slid across the deck and a bucket turned over.

“Feel that? It’s the beast.”

“It’s just a rogue wave.” The captain shrugged him off again.

They sailed to the sandbar. Clouds swirled above them, becoming more dense as they approached. A breeze picked up; the sound of waves crashing upon the beach grew louder. The men worked while the skipper focused on keeping the bow pointing into the breeze.

The others did not see the circular rotation of the clouds.

“Look out!” shouted George.

The first mate shook his head. “We are busy and you should be too.” He didn’t see the water spout until it slammed into the ship throwing the captain off the bow. The first mate ran for the helm and turned the boat to find him. The sea boiled and the captain’s body floated belly up out of the water.

“Cut the nets!” he shouted over the wind.

George was already on it. He let the beast have its fish. They floated belly up and then one by one sank into the ocean. The first mate stared back wordlessly as they sped away.

THE BOAT

ALDAIR
QUIROZ

FANTASY

The clouds were gray, filled with water ready to be poured down. On the seas was a small fishing boat, with a man and a young boy sailing in it. The boy controlled the motor and the direction they were heading.

The man breathes in the ocean air with his nostrils. "Smell that boy? It's the smell of the great blue," said the man, standing in front of him.

The boy looked to his left, and chuckled. Confusion filled the man's mind by the boy's action.

A few hundred meters in the direction they were heading, a large, dark gray finger began to poke down from the sky. A tornado. The man, startled, turned around to face the boy once more.

"Get us out of here, boy!" he shouted, closing his eyes as well.

"Sir, yes sir!" replied the boy. He changed the direction of the boat. The direction was even more direct towards the tornado. "Is this good?" he asked.

Hopelessness filled the man as he opened his eyes to see them even closer to the tornado. "You want to kill us?" he yelled.

"Well, if I'm being completely truthful with you, sir, I can't see," said the boy.

"What do you mean you can't see?" asked the man.

"Sir, I'm legally blind," said the boy, causing the man's fear to become visible.

"Why didn't you tell me?" shouted the man, knowing his fate was near.

"Well, you did abduct me when I was with my service dog, and frankly you never asked," said the boy, sounding obedient, and facing the left.

"I hate fishi-" the man was swallowed up by the tornado, along with the boat and the boy, killing them both.

PROMPT 02

LARGE SCAR

WHIRLWIND OF INTROSPECTION

SYBIL

TRAGEDY

“Ryan!” she calls as she walks down the spiral staircase. A single candle lays in her hands as she makes her way down—her only light source after the storm. Her stomach twists as she bites her lip. He should be back by now...she calls again, swearing she hears a knock at the door. “Ryan, are you there—”

The door swings open, letting in the harsh snap of a summer night’s wind. There’s Ryan, frowning. She smiles. He’s here, he’s back— “Hello, dearest. How are—”

“I’m no dearest to you, Claire. I know that much.”

“What...?” she replies, looking at the newspapers in his hands. No, no, he couldn’t have gotten those. The safe at her office...she feels his eyes burning into her, burning everything away.

“My darling Claire,” he says, before his frown deepens. “I can’t say that without getting sick to my stomach.”

“Ryan,” she sighs, clenching gloved hands. Velvet rubs against her fingers, irritating. “Hate me all you want, but I never meant to—”

“You didn’t mean to lie to me? Even about this storm, or the countless others you caused?” He holds up the newspapers—Claire’s eyes go wide, light of the candle illuminating tears. No, she thinks, this isn’t possible— “So many people, dead by your hand.”

Floods. Droughts. Earthquakes. The disasters stand before her, the silence in the air choking her. The moon reveals itself from behind the clouds, as if listening in.

“...We had something, once. I loved a monster,” he says, the ghost of a smile on his face. “...And now that something’s gone. And you’ll be gone, too.”

“Wait!” But Ryan’s already gone, slamming the door.

The world shifts, bends as she collapses. Tears on tile, pooling. “You impatient...why...?”

Why is this happening?

The gloves glow—she looks away, shaking her head. No. not now, not—

The wind is already blowing, a vortex ready to consume everything. She holds her head in her hands, watching the tornado swallow everything. Screams pierce the night before the wind swallows them and everything else.

Houses, animals, people...

And soon, it swallows him too. The newspapers are ripped to pieces, falling like ashes. The secret is safe, the damned secret is safe. Why?

Why?

“I’m so sorry, my dearest,” she says, watching his translucent form walk past. Claire snaps her fingers, and a scythe as tall as her appears. She holds it in both hands, a familiar calm coming over her as she stares at what used to be a human. With steely, tearless eyes, she slices the form in half. It’s gone in a moment—laid to rest forever. She snaps again, a black cloak falling around her shoulders. As she walks into the night, she takes one last glance back inside, and speaks to a dead man:

“But Death has a job to do.”

I drummed my fingers against the table, glancing at my watch for the millionth time. Gentle sounds from the waves reaching out onto the shore soothed my nerves as I shifted in my seat. The sun was setting and seagulls flew around, casting shadows against the floor.

The scene was beautiful. Unlike me.

A waiter refilled my water, and there was a shine of pity in his eyes. I had been sitting at the restaurant patio for the last fifteen minutes, waiting for my date. Or maybe that wasn't the reason behind the pity in his eyes and it was, instead, the scar on my face. After all, who would like a girl with an ugly scar on her forehead. The oceanside restaurant gave a clear view of the boats drifting through the water.

Ugh. Boats.

My stomach clenched as the old wound on my forehead burned as a reminder of that day.

"Mommy, look over there! I think I saw a big fish over there!"

"Careful, dear. Don't lean in too far over the top or you'll fall off."

"I'll be fine. Look, look!"

"Lena! Be careful, Lena!"

"Mommy!"

I had lost my balance and fallen off the upper deck. I hit the floor and the collision left me with a scar on my forehead. It wasn't too large of a scar, but it was ugly. Ever since then, everyone seemed to watch me, judging me for my five-year-old self's decision on the fishing boat.

What if Andrew did too?

I never met him before, but my friend convinced me to meet him. She was flabbergasted that a twenty-year-old had never dated a person before. If only she realized that no one wanted an ugly girl in this day and age. Everyone had to be pretty to some extent. My scar was too visible. Maybe he'd think less of me. Maybe he'd never want to meet me again. Maybe I'd grow up to be an old, lonely woman. I took in a deep breath. I was being too dramatic again. All I needed to do was remember what my friend told me.

"Relax, Lena. Let your personality shine through and he'll forget about your scar. Don't even worry about your scar: just remember, you're beautiful."

That was right; I am beautiful. I am beautiful. The more I repeated it, the smoother it flowed.

"Excuse me? Are you Lena?"

"Yes, are you Andrew?"

"Yeah. It's so nice to meet you. You look beautiful."

"...Thank you."

PROMPT 03

**DEVASTATING
SECRET**

It wasn't my fault Stella left her purse after our blind date. If she didn't want me going through her things, then she shouldn't have forgotten it. Simple as that.

Some people drink, some people do drugs. I get high on information. Dates are nothing more than a way to get a name and a face to Google.

Usually I only get little tastes of their lives to bite into. A few peanuts from Twitter, a few cookies from Facebook. But this purse, it was a juicy cheeseburger just waiting for me to sink my teeth into. I could already taste the warm, meaty details of her life dripping down my chin.

For our whole date, it was like sitting across from a baby lamb. Stella was happy to play along and bleat out whatever information I wanted. She gave me her phone number and e-mail when I asked, and she kept losing her phone and glasses, even though they were always right next to her on the table. Scatterbrained dates are so easy.

At the end of our date, she was so anxious about making her Uber wait that she left without her purse. I couldn't believe how lucky I was.

I immediately paid the bill, went home, and rummaged through the goods. That was when I pulled it out: the smartphone that she'd kept misplacing. I held it in my hand, quivering as if I was holding a chocolate bar with a Willy Wonka Golden Ticket inside.

Her messages. Her call history. Her photos. Just imagining the tantalizing bits of her life that I was about to bite into was enough to get me drooling.

Then a thought crossed my mind. How did she pay for her Uber without her phone or purse? But my curiosity was left fleeting when I touched the phone's screen and it immediately unlocked. She didn't even use a password! How much of a naive little lamb was she? Taking a deep breath to calm my racing heart, I opened up her photos, ready to wolf down

every last precious moment.

Parties with friends. Vacations with family. Selfies she thought no one would ever see.

...but it was none of that. They were all photos of me.

Me, through the window of my apartment sitting at my computer. Me, at my mother's house eating dinner. Me, driving to work in my busted-up car. Me, sitting at the restaurant waiting for Stella to show up for our date.

My hands were shaking. Sweating. I barely made it to the final picture. It was a photo of words painted in thick red letters: "I know what you do. This is for my friends, you creep."

A camera flash went off behind me. My chest clenched. I dropped the phone, threw the chair to the floor, and ran to the window. Outside, there was nothing but darkness.

The phone vibrated in my hands. I'd received a message.

"This meal's on me."

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