



AUTHOR M M's

Halloween
Writing
Contest
ebook

2006

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Author MM's Halloween Writing contest 2006

By

Dee Mathews

Little Miss Aki

William Redmond

David A. Archer

Lizette Garrido

Stephanie Thompson

Keith Brown

Raymond G Blais

Jack Beyer

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Winners of the 2006 Author MM's Halloween writing contest.

1st Place

Cookies and Milk

by
Dee Mathews
Olympia, WA

2nd Place

A Hallowed Freedom, The day for the Fallen Angels

by
Little Miss Aki
Parker CO

3rd Place

Devil Magic

by
William Redmond
Victoria, Tx

Best poem

It's an Ultra-Spooky Heebie-Jeebie, Creepy Halloween!

by
Keith Brown
Marshall, Mo

Best young adult

Halloween

by
Jack Beyer



By
Michel I e Beyer

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Witch Wraith by Stephanie Thompson

Poetry

It's an Ultra-Spooky Heebie-Jeebie, Creepy Halloween! by Keith Brown

~ ~ ~

Halloween by Raymond G Blais

Best young adult

Halloween by Jack Beyer

A Note from Author MM

My first Halloween contest was a resounding success. I thank all those who took time out of their day to write and submit a piece and I would also like to thank the copious sponsors of this years contest. All of you are the best.

Each piece is unique and I had a hard time judging. You will note by the great entries submitted and the winners chosen. Each day is a gift, squander it not and you will gain more than profit by doing so...

Slay on... slay on!!!

Author MM

Stories

Cookies and Milk

by
Dee Mathews

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It was a dark and stormy night. Seriously, it was. The day had begun by being overcast with dark black-gray clouds hanging just over Witch's Peak on the north end of town. Every child woke with excitement and anticipation of what the night would hold, till they peered out their windows.

"Darn it," Sam stormed as he watched it start to drizzle. "It figures. It's Halloween and it rains. Mom will make me take a blasted umbrella if I go trick or treating." He stomped his way back to his bed.

How could it happen that every Halloween in Newport it rained? It irritated him. Jumping back on his bed he slid down into the covers. Plotting. It wasn't the trick or treating that he was really upset about. He would go out with his friends whether it was storming or not tonight. They had plans. They were going to climb Witch's Peak and see if there was really a haunted old mansion up there. They had planned this for the last couple of years. Now at the ripe age of fourteen they figured they could do what they wanted. And they wanted to discover what was up there.

"Sam!" It was his mother yelling for him. "Sam, get down here. Frank and Jerry are here. You'll be late for school."

~~~

The day hadn't gotten any better. Sam and his friends literally frittered away the school day passing notes in class. They had everything planned out. They would meet at the Cacti Shop at the end of town. The shop was owned by Jerry's mother who had a fetish for growing cactus in the Pacific Northwest just to

prove it could be done. He also had a key since he was suppose to be cleaning the floors in the evenings.

Sam gulped his dinner down and impatiently waited for everyone else to finish. His mother glanced up at him. "By the way Sam, you will be taking Sally with you tonight for Trick or Treating."

He couldn't believe what he heard. "But mom, Frank and Jerry and I planned to go together. Can't you take her? She'll just slow us down."

"I won't either!" Sally said indignantly.

"You will take her," his mother said, "and you will be back in an hour. She has to be in bed early."

"But mother!"

The look she gave him boded no argument. Leaving the table he made a call to Frank.

"She can't come with us," moaned Frank. "We've planned this for so long and it's the perfect night, being Halloween and all."

"I know, but she'll have to come. We can't lose an hour taking her around. We'll meet you at Jerry's mom's shop in ten minutes."

~~~

"Where are we going? I want to trick or treat. Why can't I go to the houses? Sam! I'm going to tell mommy." That was all Sam heard as he dragged his little sister behind him to the Cacti Shop.

"Shut up. We're going on an adventure." Sam was more than upset. He hadn't planned on Sally coming. Though she might have her uses.

As they drew near the shop he saw his two friends waiting. "Are you ready?" he asked.

"Sure are. Is ol' whimper lips here going to keep her mouth shut?" Frank asked.

"My name isn't whimper lips." Sally retorted.

"Shush," Sam said as he lead the way down the street and into the woods. It wasn't long before they had actually made there way half way up the trail on Witch's Peak when Sally realized just where they were climbing.

"Sam. Mommy and daddy told us to never come up here. It's a bad place. They said so. Bad things happen here." She turned to go back down the trail.

Grabbing her by her jacket, Sam stopped her. "Those are just stories. We are here to find out if there is really a haunted mansion up here and since it's Halloween it's the perfect time."

Just then an owl hooted in the trees and there was a loud sound of flapping wings. Sally screeched and grabbed Sam by his legs making it impossible to move.

Frank reached out and pulled her back. "It was just a silly old owl Sally. Now come on. We don't have much time."

"I want to go home! It's spooky up here." Sally protested, her eyes wide with fear.

“After we find the old mansion. I heard Dad say that no one in town has climbed up here for years. So we will be the first. Now stop whimpering and let’s go.”

~*~

There was a bustling of excitement within the old mansion high on Witch’s Peak. Hooty had returned with a message and the sisters were excited. They were going to have company. They hadn’t had anyone come to see them for years. Many years.

“Shelia. Shelia! Where the heck are you? I told you to go get four pumpkins out of the garden. Not conjure them up. Now move it.” The woman speaking was bent at the shoulders, her long white hair in a tangled of curls that reached below her waist. Her dress had been patched so many times it was hard to tell what the original fabric had been.

“Gloria, stop you screeching. I did what you said. Even carved them. What do you think?”

Maggie came around the corner and into the kitchen where the other two where. Her appearance was no different then Gloria’s or for that matter Shelia’s. The three looked so much alike. Old women, with scraggly curly white hair, bent at the shoulders wearing old dresses that had been patched many times. The only youthful appearance they had were in their eyes. Eyes that sparkled with anticipation.

“Is that what Hooty said? Four visitors? And they look like this?” There are the table were the four pumpkins. Each had been carved perfectly. Perfectly to resemble the four visitors that climbed the old trail, three boys and a little girl.

“Yes that is what Hooty said. Rather conveyed,” Shelia retorted. “And he says they are perfect. He even likes my pumpkins.”

“But they are boys and there is only one girl. They won’t do,” Maggie said.

Sheila looked at Maggie, “Hooty said they were perfect, so they will do. It’s just their being boys means less time. But we will make the most of it. Now, are the cookies ready? The milk?”

~~~

A clap of thunder resounded just at the foursome came to the end of the trail, or what they thought was the end, until lightening showed them a stone stairway sticking out from under some ferns. Rain started to pour down.

Sally had hold of Sam’s leg again, “Let loose,” he said as he pried her fingers loose.

“No. I’m scared. I want to go home. Now! I’m telling mommy everything,” Sally cried out.

Sam looked up the way the steps went. He knew they must be close and that there really was an old mansion. He knelt down and looked at his sister, “It’s going to be okay. We need to get somewhere that’s dry,” he coaxed as he pushed aside the ferns. “See there are steps here and that means there must be a house somewhere.” He looked at his friends beseechingly.

“Yes, what you brother says is true,” Frank spoke up. “And we better hurry. We’re getting awfully wet and if we go back it will be worst.”

Sally was all of five years old. And she was tired, wet and cold. She wanted to trick or treat and her brother and dragged her up a mountainside. Tears flowed down her face as her blonde hair began to stick against her head.

“O...okay, but when we get home do I get some candy?” Sally asked, her blue eyes glistening with tears and rain.

“Yes, Sally, you will get candy,” and Sam lifted her up. “Frank you lead the way, Jerry you follow him. Sally and I will follow you.”

It was a long climb and the rain continued to fall. As the steps twisted around first one bend then another Sam began to wonder if their idea to find out if there was really a mansion on Witch’s Peak was a good idea, but as they came around the next bend they could see dancing lights in what appeared to be windows.

“Look. See. I knew there was an old place up here. Our parents were wrong.” Sam shouted to the other two boys. They had already seen the lights. Thunder and lightening continued to resound around them, causing them to move faster. They never looked back. If they had, they might not have continued. For down below them the moon cast its light on the children running through the street, laughing, with bags full of candy.

~\*~

“They’re getting closer” Maggie said to the others. “They’re almost here. Sheila get the door. And for pity sake fix yourself up. You want to scare those poor little kids?”

Cackling could be heard throughout the mansion as the sister’s prepared for their guests.

Knocking was soon heard. “They’re here” Sheila said as she made her way to the door. Her hair now in order, her wrinkles gone. She had put lipstick on but it was on her teeth too. Just like her two sisters.

Opening the door she smiled at the three young men and the little girl. “Well, well, well. You sure are a long way from town. How did you find your way up here? Come on in you poor dears. You’re all wet.”

“I have to go potty,” Sally squirmed out of her brothers arms and looked up at the funny looking lady. “You got lipstick on your teeth. And where is the potty room?”

“My, my, dearie. You are a little spitfire. Sheila show her the bathroom. Boys, come in, there’s a fire in the fireplace. You can dry yourselves.” Maggie licked her lips and teeth as she gently pushed Jerry and Frank forward. “Such fine young men.”

Sally’s voice could be heard down the hall, “I can take care of myself.” And then the door slammed.

Sheila came into the living room and stood admiring the three young boys. She too licked her lips. After a few moments Sally came down the hall, “That’s a weird bathroom. You have to pull a chain to make it flush.”

Gloria entered from a side door carrying a large tray. On it were four glasses of milk and two plates of cookies. One large plate and one small one, with just one cookie on it. She set the tray on the table in front of the fireplace. Then the three sisters disappeared out of the room together, then reappeared. Sheila and Maggie each carried a pumpkin and Gloria carried two. They set them on the table.

Sam stared in disbelief feeling a little nervous. "They, they look like us. How'd you do that? You've never seen us before."

Sheila giggled, "Hooty told us about you. He described you and Gloria created these."

"Who's Hooty?" Jerry asked.

"Our butler," answered Maggie rather quickly. "Wouldn't you like a cookie and some milk? You must be hungry after that long climb. We don't have any candy so this is our treat for you."

The boys looked at each other then the plate of chocolate chip cookies and the milk. Sally didn't hesitate. Her Halloween had been all messed up by her brother and his friends and she wanted something out of this night. She grabbed the cookie from the small plate and glass of milk. Sitting on the edge of the sofa she took a bite then drank some milk. The boys followed suit.

"Thank you," they said in unison.

The sisters looked at each other. They were rather pleased with themselves. It was all too easy.

Sam took several bites of his cookie and then some milk. "They're good," he said as he looked at the ladies. He blinked. They looked fuzzy and rather funny. He blinked again, then nudged Jerry and whispered as he started to yawn, "I think it's time to go. We found out what we wanted to know."

Jerry and Frank both looked at Sam with the same expression on their faces. They had eaten two cookies and were feeling rather sleepy.

"I feel awfully tired," Jerry said.

"Me too," replied Frank.

Both boys eased their way back further on the sofa. Sally had already curled up on the floor. Sound asleep.

"Just a few minutes more Sam. The cookies are really good," Frank said.

The three ladies, now bent, their disguises slowly disappearing, watched with anticipation as their guests began to drift into sleep. Noting that Sam wasn't quite asleep she offered him another cookie. He took it since his friends seemed to need to rest.

While he bit into the cookie and feeling nervous that his friends has fallen asleep, Sam started to ask questions, "Our folks always said that there was no mansion up here. How long have you been here? How come no one sees you in the village?"

He thought he heard one of the old ladies start to answer, but Sam's eyelids closed and there was only silence

~~~

“Come on you guys, we need to get home.” Sally said, as she pulled on her brother’s hand. She had woke up to find her brother kneeling over her, shaking her awake.

Now they were halfway down the hill. The boys hadn’t said one word since they left the mansion. The old ladies had been no where in sight. Just three pumpkins that looked rather strange, rather wrinkled and rather old. And one very ruffled, stuffed owl that sat on a pedestal.

As they reached the bottom of Witch’s Peak the boys looked at each other and smiled an eerie smile. “See you in school tomorrow,” Sam said in a rather soft voice.

Sally looked at her brother, “Your voice sounds like a girls.”

The three boys looked at each other then at Sally. Sam coughed a couple of times, “Is this better?” he said in a low tone. “I think I had a piece of cookie still in my throat.”

Giggling, Sally shook her head, “That’s better.”

Sam gave a high sign to the other two boys as a loud explosion was heard from the top of Witch’s Peak.

Sally jumped and looked towards the mountain. “Ohhh, those poor old ladies. Sam. Sam?” No one answered. She turned in circles and looked all around her. People were everywhere in the streets looking towards the Peak.

Her brother and his friends were no where to be seen.

~~~

It was 15 year later and Sally was determined that she was going to climb up Witch's Peak. Her companion balked. "Why in the heck do you want to climb that old hill? There is nothing up there. Though I have been told that there is an old story about an old mansion that supposedly blew up one Halloween night. Some little girl started it they say."

"Will Joe, I'm that little girl and there was a mansion up there. It blew up the night my brother and his friends disappeared. At least the sky lit up like an explosion and there was a horrendous sound. I went with them to that mansion. It was Halloween night. Now, come on. I want to know if it really was destroyed or if it was just thunder and lightning. I know that the town council made the Peak off limits. But, I want to go."

Joe looked down at the petite blonde woman. "For you anything," he said stooping to kiss her inviting lips.

"Come on silly," as she pulled him by the hand up the pathway. It was just as she remembered. The path ended and then the steps. After they rounded a few bends she stopped and stared. It had taken them a good hour. She hadn't remembered that. All she remembered was it had rained and her brother had carried up the steps.

"Joe, look. The house still stands. The yard is tended. Thank god its daylight or I would be spooked. I saw the explosion. The whole town did. There should be nothing here."

Sally hurried forward stopping at the door. She knocked and waited. Soon there were footsteps. More than one set. The door opened and there

stood three wizen old men in ragged clothing. The sound of an owl hooted in the background.

“Why Jerry, Frank, we have company,” the white haired old man said in a rasping voice as he swung open the door.

“Won’t you come in?”



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It was a cloudy afternoon in Nambé, the winter chill striking to the depths of the red sandstone of the New Mexican frontier. A small adobe home on the hill was showing signs of life, a single light shone orange light from the window beside the teal door.

A single owl, resting its eyes after a night of flying, perched within the bows of a great willow tree that should never have survived in the harsh New Mexican climate, opened one eye as the door to the small home opened. He hooted a greeting to this strange person.

A woman, garbed in a black, regal dress from some Arthurian legend, emerged from the door. Her crimson corset and deep red cloak seemed to banish away the cold and the wind stopped blowing. Her raven hair was braided and looped in a regal style, contrasting her alabaster skin. Eyes of the purest and vibrant green glanced towards the owl from gold painted lids and cranberry lips. Another hoot and she smiled a soft and glorious smile. The door shut soundlessly behind her without her assistance and the latch clicked without any key's turning.

The owl seemed to smile back, swooping from his perch to land in front of her. She bent slightly to give the brown and gold owl access to her arm. The creature happily strode forward and climbed onto her arm with a flutter of its large wings. Reina stroked the creature with a gloved hand and glanced towards the Piñon tree and cactus terrain of red and tan sand. The air grew even more still in anticipation as she walked forward, the owl climbing to her shoulder. An ominous and low growl interrupted the crunch of gravel under her boots and she glanced back towards the house.

A shadow, it seemed, was perched on the roof, its arm extending down over the front of the door. Another low howl seemed to call to her and she smiled once again. The gargoyle was pacing the gravel of her roof, desiring to attack her yet held at bay by what seemed nothing. The owl gave a hoot and took off with a flurry of feathers at this demonic creature, cloaked in the nondescript gray of a thunderstorm. The woman did not watch as the owl and demon began a fight to

the death, the gargoyle cowering from this creature who showed such virtue and courage. Demons hunted angels...but angels always had their defenders.

Reina De La Pas smiled as she continued walking to the gate as it swung open for her without a touch. The two jack-o-lanterns at the gatepost had lost their candles, and one that had been kicked in by some adolescent. She glanced at it and the pumpkin quivered, its face healing into a smiling face. She gave a nod, as though to say thank you, and continued walking to the paved road below. Suddenly there was a rush of air and the owl once again took up its perch on her shoulder. She stroked it and glanced up and down the road.

It was All Hallows Eve, jack-o-lanterns and ghosts and skulls decorated the homes of Nambé. Reina let out a sigh of pure joy, tonight would be the one night when she could spread her wings, use her *magic* (as these people called it), and be looked at with nothing but indifference. Tonight she was free and no one would know it. She shifted her cloak, feeling the invisible feathers that spread from her shoulders in arches against her back. Tonight she was the demon, the angel, and the witch...

Wordlessly, she glanced skyward and the wind shot downwards around her, creating a funnel of dust. The wings under her cloak came open, scaring the owl away. The wings of this Queen of Peace were clear, reflecting their surroundings like a distorted mirror, and with a flutter and stretch, she was lifted from the ground skywards. Her destination was Santa Fe. She was not in need of a bewitched broom to get there.

**Devil Magic**  
by  
William Redmond

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Hensel threw back the heavy blanket; the sound of a heavy fist pounding on his door so early in the morning was never a good omen. He leapt out of the hay stuffed mattress, wrapping his blanket around himself, a feeble attempt to ward off the cold of winter. He cracked open the door of the shack that was his home, "Dien, what are you doing here so late?"

"There is not time Hensel, the council is coming! Get your things, hurry, you must run! If they find you they would put you to trial!" Dien yelled, taking no time be invited inside, but rather forced the door open. "Hurry, get dressed, I will begin packing for you."

"How did they find out?" Hensel demanded, slamming shut the door and dropping his blanket. He moved to his trunk, threw open the lid and took his heavy winter pants and shirt out. He dressed quickly, listening to Dien as he told the story of the council meeting.

"I don't know how they found out, but they called half the village to the Hall, and told them all that you were and sinner. The entire village is out for your head, everyone but Hersta, of coarse and myself. Here." Dien tied the top of the bag of clothing he had been packing, tossing it to Hensel; I've a horse ready for you outside. You will come with me to our home, Hersta is packing food for your travel." He opened a new canvas bag, beginning to fill it with yet more supplies.

"I don't understand, why now, why tonight?" Hensel demanded as he pulled on his heavy riding jacket.

"Because it's All Hallows eve, they need a sacrifice." Dien said, stopping what he was doing and looking back at Hensel with an utterly serious face.

"Yah, you're right, but there's no way in hell they're getting me." He swung the bag he had packed as well as the one packed by Dien over his shoulder.

Hensel packed his horse with the three bags and mounted, spurring the heavy creature into a sudden run with his heels. Dien and Hensel wasted no time in traveling to Dien's home, where they had hardly stopped the horses before swinging off the large creatures.

They entered through the door where Dien's wife Hersta greeted them by shoving a bag of prepared food into Hensel's arms, "Hensel, I'm so sorry dear, I

can't believe they would do this." She said, wiping away her tears, "Their horrible beast's, accusing you of such a thing!"

"Don't worry about me Hersta, I'll just hideout for a few weeks, come back and explain everything when this dies down."

"Of course dear, but please, take care."

"I'll take the best of care, no worries ma'am." He kissed her forehead, "I'll see you soon enough." He turned to Dien, "Thank you too, my friend. You saved my life."

"Only because I know you would do the same for me." They clasped and shook hand before Hensel departed, knowing full well he would never be able to return to the village that had been his home for so long.

Hensel spurred his horse again, galloping as fast as he could into the night, steering far clear of the main roads or homes of local villagers. He was nearly out of the wood that marked the village; he could literally see the light breaking on the horizon through the trees. His heart lightened, he felt a breath of freedom. Then, almost as suddenly, he felt that breath being forced out of his chest, an invisible object slamming into his chest, crushing the air out of his lungs.

He found himself laying on the ground, looking upwards at nearly half a dozen cloaked and hooded figures. His breath was harsh and ragged as he tried his best expand he wished more to keep immobile do to several broken ribs.

"You thought you could run from us? You pitiful little sinner, you will make an excellent example." An elderly male voice said from one of the cloaked figures that stood directly above him, he nodded to the hooded person who stood next to him. With a grunt, the one next to him brought a heavy boot into the side of Hensel's head, everything went black.

Hensel opened his eyes again to find his arms bound behind him, he was propped up on his knee's, something stuffed in his mouth. He opened his mouth, trying to force out what was in his mouth, only to cause more pain and irritation then it already did. He heard laughter, looking up, everyone he knew, men, woman and children, all looking onto him, laughing. Almost all, Dien and Hersta stood silent, tears in their eyes, yet neither could do anything for fear of their own

lives. With several more gags, he was able to force out what had been stuffed into his mouth, the peeled skins of the cacti, several large barbs still protruded from the waxy skin of the plant, and he could feel the rest in his mouth.

“Hensel, how do you plead to the sin of being in league with the devil!?” The same voice that had spoken in the woods asked, though now he stood several yards in front of Hensel, his hood dropped, revealing the face of Gisten, the village elder. He projecting his voice more for the crowd to hear, rather than Hensel himself.

“I’m not in league with the devil, I swear!” Hensel pleaded, his mouth burning from the cactus barbs in his tongue and cheek.

“Then show us your god given abilities!” He demanded, pointing a finger at Hensel.

Hensel dropped his head, “I can’t...” He took several deep breaths, which served to awaken the pain in his chest. “I don’t have any such abilities...”

“You hear? He admits to have no abilities, he sold them to the devil!” The elder shouted, his calls met by a screams and yells for Hensel’s death from the crowd.

“ No, I didn’t sell them, I never had them!”

“A likely story! Let use have a witness, someone who has seen you commit your devil magic! Would Marilyn Settler please come forth.” He turned and offered his hand to the lovely young daughter of the Village’s mayor.

“I’ve seen his devil magic’s. I was simply walking through the woods, where I came upon his home. He stood above a cauldron, mixing an evil brew! He threw in some powder and the entire mixture erupted into black flames and billows of blue smoke. Oh, it scared me so!” She gave her story like a well-rehearsed play, exaggerating the correct motions and in the end, pretending the faint.

“No, you don’t understand, it wasn’t magic, it was science!”

“A fancy word for the devil!” The elder shouted, his proclamation met with cheers of agreement from the crowd.

“No, it isn’t! It is natural, things that happen in nature, anyone can do!”

“I have never seen black flames natural!”

“Stop being idiots!” Hensel yelled, suddenly his body was engulfed in non-existent flames, every nerve exploding into an orgy of pain.

When he woke again, the village was yet again laughing at his pain; the unrelenting pain had caused him to lose consciousness. “I’m not in league with the devil...”

The elder lifted his arm, and let out an ear splitting whistle. His whistle was met with the sound of an owl’s hoot and from the bell tower of the church, a massive brown owl swooped out, gliding down and perching on the elder’s upraised forearm. “Then, if you are innocent, you will agree to be tested.”

Hensel felt his heart drop from his chest, he had no choice, though he knew well the outcome of every test was always the same. He nodded, slowing, condemning himself to death. After a moment, he looked up, Hersta buried her face in her husband’s chest, Dien stood weeping freely, but silently.

“Very well, he lifted his arm into the air again, the large owl taking flight, “Then my dear pet will return, through the hand of God he will bring with him the form of your punishment.” Only a few minutes later, the owl returned, not landing on the arm of the elder, but instead in front of Hensel, dropping in front of him a single, small stone. It took flight again, returning to its place in the bell tower.

“Very well, God will make his judgment of you at the lake!” He bellowed out to the crowd, “Every one is requested to going us at the Lake this evening, the judgment will take place there,” He turned to Hensel, “No sin’s escape the eyes of God.”

Lifting his hood, Gisten walked away, moving through the crowd, followed by the rest of the cloaked figures.

“Always did think somethin’ was off about yah.” The constable said, now standing at Hensel’s side. But as Hensel looked up at the pudgy man, he found the side of the constable’s club in the side of his head. Yet again, he fell to the ground, everything going black.

When Hensel woke, he was laying in the crude jail cell, used usually to let the village drunks sleep out the night. He was wearing black linen trousers and a long sleeved black linen shirt, though the sleeves of the shirt and trousers were

much too long to fit properly, though he knew well what that was for. He sat up, and dropped his legs over the side of the hard stone tablet he had been laying on.

"You're awake then, Hensel." A voice said, but he couldn't reply, he was frozen in place as four young women entered the cell. "I don't understand why you would give up the abilities that God would give you for those Devil Magic's."

Hensel would have given anything to be able to explain the truth, that he wasn't evil, that he hadn't given his abilities up for anything, he had simply never had any abilities.

Each of the young women set a large sack on the stone table Hensel sat on. Two cupped the sleeves of one arm; the other two took one of the sacks then opened it and carefully poured the content into the cupped sleeve. After emptying the bag of its contents, pebbles and small stones, they proceeded to sew the cups of the sleeves. They

finished the first sleeve and continued onto the next, then went to the sleeves of his trousers. Once they had finished, leaving the cell, Hensel still inside, he was free again to move.

The elder stepped forward and dropped his hood again; "It's time sinner." The cell door opened, two more men entered, in their hands they held several large stone, through the center of which holes had been chiseled. The stood up Hensel, tied a rope through one of the stones, then lashed it to Hensel's right wrist by a long cord. Doing the same to his left wrist, then lashing several smaller stones around Hensel's ankles.

They walked him out of the Jailhouse; it was night and a path lay lined for them to travel. To either side of them, large pumpkins have been carved to resembled faces, candles set inside causing them to illuminate the path. Past the pumpkin's, Hensel was able to distinguish people moving back and forth, though few spoke, but he saw in their faces fear and hate for the unknown. Once, as they neared the lake, a figure from beyond the path hurled a large rotten tomato at Hensel, it landed in his face, but he didn't falter, but rather walked on without saying a

word. Though he did hear a voice that sounded much like Dien's, and the sound of a fist making hard contact with flesh, Dien had never lost a fight.

The walked out onto the small pier, around his neck, two stones tied to either end of a rope was placed, wrapped around so that they would not come loss. He went to the very end of the pier; he had been able to removed most of the cacti thorns with his tongue and teeth and though his mouth was still swollen, he spoke as clearly and loudly as he could, "There will be a day, when your children's children look back on what you do now and are ashamed!" He turned, looking out at the people who surround the pier behind him, "You say I have sinned, yet, I have never harmed anyone! And when you find yourselves at heaven's gates, standing to be judged, God will remember this day, when your stupidity caused the death of an innocent man and he will find you wanting. I hope that you remember this day as you spend eternity in hell, as I, an innocent sits at the left hand of God, a beloved child."

"If God truly loves you, he will keep you afloat, won't he?" Glisten said, placing a palm on Hensel's chest, and shoving him back. Hensel lost what balance he had, falling backward into the freezing water. For half a moment, he floated and saw the elder standing at the end of the pier, looking down at him. Then he was submerged the water felt like knives stabbing into his flesh. He looked up, catching sight of the full moon, shining above the village. It was a strangely soothing sight; he let out the lung of air he had been holding, taking in a deep breath of the icy water. It was at first stinging, but that quickly gave way to a warming touch. He didn't try to struggle against the downward pull of the stones; instead, he complied with the gradual sinking. As the moon left his vision, it's light not penetrating the deep, murky water and he felt his feet come into contact with the muddy bottom, the warm embrace of death overcoming him, like that of a lover comforting him in his last moments of distress. His upper body was drug down, pulling to the floor of the lake, where he lay, as if asleep, for the first time in too many years, at peace.

**DEVIATED  
MEDICAMENT**

A Short Fiction  
In Celebration Of Fall

by

David A. Archer

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The “blipper” was still “blipping” which supposedly meant that she was still alive. You couldn’t tell though. She just lay there not even breathing on her own.

The sound of “inhale” and “exhale” was made with a gurgle by the machine that continued to force her once attractive chest into motions of “up” and “down.”

The tubes protruding from her nostrils which acted to drain the continuous flow of fluids, were reminiscent of hamster tubes for worms. That is surely what it reminded me of as the bloody mass would ooze down the tube now and then, moving much as a person might imagine of an annelid.

I found myself recalling our last exchange of any sort while still wondering through the sparse understanding I presently had of her ailment. I felt helpless in that direction of thought given that the specialists were only now beginning to understand the causes of these increasingly common occurrences.

I remember that her nose began to bleed, which neither of us felt too concerned about until it then began to gush accompanied with considerably sized pieces of some fleshy matter. I would soon find through consultation, that the fleshy matter was actually pieces of her brain.

Her “prognosis” was none too good for several reasons. The most obvious of which being an impossibility of return to any recognizable normality given the damage she had suffered to her brain, and the next of which being that the physicians didn’t even know much about the affliction itself, much less any way to treat it.

I had already spent hours on end with various specialists. Each giving their account and best guess at what exactly it could be that acted in such a quick manner. The specialists themselves tending to lean toward an area with respect to their given specialty, though obviously having deviated somewhat from the

standard lines of medical approach and diagnosis given the uniqueness of this condition. Each specialist I spoke with had a similar explanation but predictably from the perspective of their own given “area” of medicine. Not yet understanding just what they were dealing with.

It was a compilation of ideas manifesting as a radical theory, and hardly centralized as of yet, but it stood to all of the questions and really was the only thing which presented any comprehensive explanations. In so many words, it was really all that they had.

It had to do with humanity having failed to consider the resulting effects of so many types of saturations on the human existence, which we have introduced ourselves through development and hasty use in the market place.

We weren't “mutating” ourselves directly it would seem, but were doing so to some degree over a period of time frames which became staggered and tangled in the social movements and said developments within given societies.

It was very much that our human progresses, as we have managed to heap them upon one another, were now somehow reacting to the influence of each other.

In so many words, the “frequency” saturation and consistencies were causing a strange effect with, on and during the process of ingesting and absorbing medications. Diverting their expected course in action and in effect mutating their resulting manifestation and interaction with and within the human host. This transpiring as per the added influences to some extent, of the subtle variations in chemical presence from region to region. Then further promoted with differences in diet and personal elemental configurations and consistencies.

There was just no way of pin pointing it in the present state of ignorance and excitement of discovery now sweeping the medical world. And it was obvious that “head in the sand” would no longer suffice.

Best guess estimates I had been told in one of the numerous and blurred meetings with specialists, is that it first began to happen with early diet pill deaths. They just didn’t know how to diagnose it as per what it really was beyond the known mortal effects.

This as well being true in regard to several other medication mishaps as they appeared to happen. No one knew that this phenomenon was transpiring. All anyone knew, was that for some reason even medications which had been through extensive research prior to introduction and use, were suddenly looking to be the root cause of severe side effect developments.

It was when it started to happen with various forms of pharmaceutical inhibitor medication, that someone decidedly took note and explored what was really emerging as a consistent effect. Between the normal mutation in human progression and those other saturated forms of influence, the medication was being changed in the digestive process itself. This producing rather caustic effects as result. Including the decomposer like changes to various organs and other living tissue, including the brain.

The initial symptoms of many forms of this mutation occurrence are suspected to be the presence of olfactory disturbances. That is to say, the presence of smells that can’t necessarily be explained and have no real affiliation with anything in the general area. Most times being fleeting, though at others being quite pronounced.

It was overlooked for the longest time as just some sort of strange human development. Some psychological affiliation with memory having been

stimulated to cause the effect and didn't seem to be of any great concern. It was even accepted in many social atmospheres as simply a part of life.

They were correct in the smallest part of the assumption being stimulation, but were grotesquely mistaken in the meaning and severity of such mystery "smells." They had no idea that it was to be an indicator of epic proportions. It was just that none had even begun to consider the area of "development" as a possibility, much less a developing reality.

Soon they would know that in the present time, the occurrence of such symptoms meant nothing more than the presence of said mutations. The effect and result of what was now known as "Deviated Medicament," and with that again, in the present darkness pertaining to the depth of knowledge in such results, meaning nothing less than impending incapacitation if not death.

There was just nothing they could do about it.

To use more medications was to only amplify and even diversify the problem. Polarizing the effects in result and mutation, far past even the inability to diagnose and treat them which was currently common.

To no longer use medications was to allow it to continue as a strain of mutation within the human realm of existence.

It was very much juggling the self imposed unraveling of humanity. And doing so blindfolded at this point. All while having no reference point from which to begin to address it, beyond the results now manifesting in pandemic numbers throughout various societies.

For me the realization began with small bits of brain matter mixed with blood on the linoleum kitchen floor as I watched the gurney wheel away under a dark and

gloomy sky. Absent mindedly then looking at the new pumpkin in the window still waiting to be carved for the nearing holiday, not yet really grasping the gravity of the situation. Only moments before having heard about the smell of fresh bread mixed with the distant olfactory sensations connoting an untended, modern outhouse.

For many others the realization was yet to take hold and might not if they were lucky enough.

I looked again.

She still lay there with no motion of her own volition, and the “blipper” kept “blipping.”

Her chest kept moving up and down as I had seen it do similarly in other situations now more than worlds away.

I began to feel the fatigue of having been awake for several days and not moving much as I again noticed the worm like sludge which kept oozing down the tubes protruding from her nose...

...And then in that moment of relaxation, I suddenly found myself comforted in a slight daydream like state...

...With the presence of baking cookies from somewhere down the hall.

## **The Tragedy of the Cursed Amulet**

by

Lizette Garrido

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It was a dark stormy night at Salem Massachusetts in 1962. The pitter patter of rain dripped onto a muddy puddle on the forest ground. Suddenly somebody in a black hooded cloak stepped in the puddle and ran deeper into the woods. "Moonstra! Moonstra!" yelled a deep male voice, not too far behind her. Gasping for breath Moonstra knew she wouldn't be able to run much further. Her heart pounded against her chest and the stitch in her side was getting worse. "Come back!" Ignoring the woodsman, Moonstra came to a clearing where she saw the tall Cacti from her dream. Stunned she stopped and walked towards it. How did I know it was here? thought Moonstra. She turned to leave when a dark figure stood right before her. She gasped sharply as thunder flashed. "Kurt what do you want from me?!" cried Moonstra. "I want to know the truth! Why are you acting so strange? You said you dreamt about a mysterious cactus out in the middle of the woods and here it is. What's your secret?" he said grabbing her. "Nothing! I don't understand it myself!" she desperately replied. Suddenly the cactus began to glow blue. Kurt stared wide eyed in horror as a jet of blue light hit him in the chest, knocking him back twenty feet in the air. Moonstra screamed in shock at what just happened. She shakily walked to his body and screamed again at what she saw. There was a hole where the light hit him and blood spewed out in rivers onto the ground. The worst was his eyes, which were light blue and swirling like a crazed fog. Moonstra was transfixed on the horrific sight in front of her that she didn't notice an eye witness watching her. Moonstra stepped back and gaped at the cactus. It was no longer glowing so she

tentatively approached it. She noticed a small hole in the cactus and reached her hand toward it.

“Hey!” Somebody grabbed her shoulder and spun her around. “No let me go!” she frantically cried, struggling out of his grip. “Woah, it’s ok!” said a handsome young man with dirty blond hair and green eyes. “I heard screaming and...” he trailed off when he saw the dead body. “What happened?!” he exclaimed. “I don’t know, there was a burst of light from the cactus and it killed him!” Moonstra said close to tears. The cactus. She turned to see the mysterious man pull out a beautiful amulet from the cactus. It was shaped like an upside down triangle with a gold rim and in the center a blue circle. “Is.. is that yours? she asked skeptically. “Yes, I found it myself and hid it in this cactus for safe keeping.” “But how did it kill that man, and who are you?” “I believe this amulet has a mind of it’s own. Perhaps there was a reason for it killing him. I found it on a stormy night like this one, only something strange happened.” Moonstra nodded for him to continue. He took a deep breath. “Lightning struck the amulet when I was holding it and... it’s given me magical powers.” Moonstra’s jaw dropped but then she started to laugh. “I’m serious!” the man desperately yelled. “Yeah, right” said Moonstra grabbing the amulet. “It’s just a plain old necklace.” “Give it back!” said the man but he was too late. Thunder rumbled and a bolt of lightning struck the amulet and Moonstra. She didn’t even get the chance to scream as electricity surged through her body. At that moment she felt something growing inside of her that plunged into her heart, something powerful. She fell in a heap on the

floor and the man rushed to her side. "Are you alright?!" he asked helping her to her feet. "Yes. I can't believe you were telling the truth about that amulet!" she exclaimed "The amulet made me a warlock and now it's made you a witch." he stated. "Oh my God." she whispered, brushing back her damp brown hair. "Why don't we take a walk and talk about this." said the kind man. "Ok, oh you never answered my second question. What's your name?" asked Moonstra. "My name is Atherius Black." he said extending his hand politely. "I'm Moonstra Goodrich." she said shaking it. "You mean Moonstra Goodwitch." chuckled Atherius. Moonstra laughed and she knew it was a start to a wonderful friendship. Two weeks later Moonstra couldn't have been happier. She and Atherius grew to be the best of friends. They confided in each other, and had fun with their magical spells. However, one day they took a stroll in the woods, unaware of the tragedy that awaited them. "I never had such a strong friendship bond with someone before." said Moonstra. "Me neither. Nor have I confided to anyone about this amulet. Which reminds me." He took the precious jewel from his coat pocket. "I decided to name the amulet after you Moonstra. It symbolizes our grand friendship and I want you to have it." "Really!" she exclaimed. When he nodded she gave him a big hug. "That's so sweet! Thank you." she sincerely said taking the amulet. They were interrupted by the sound of many footsteps approaching. Moonstra and Atherius quickly stood up and huddled close together. Seconds passed by when suddenly someone from behind Moonstra threw a rope around her neck and began to choke her. "A.. Atherius!" she choked

out. "Moonstra!" he yelled raising his palms at the man. A jet of blue light hit the man and he fell. "There they are! I've seen them use witchcraft before! Kill them!"

said a big man. Two men held down Moonstra who was struggling furiously. She looked over at Atherius and saw to her horror a man raising his axe over him!

"Atherius look out!" she yelled in fright but a moment too late. There was a sickening sound of flesh being slice and she screamed a bloodcurling scream.

"Atherius! Nooooooooo!" she yelled as he fell to the ground, lifeless. The axe still clung to his back and his eyes were wide open staring right at Moonstra.

"Atheriuuuusss!" she yelled as the men dragged her away from the horrible sight.

They reached a deserted trail further in the woods where many people stood. All Moonstra could think about was Atherius and how he sacrificed himself for her.

She sobbed as people yelled at her and called her a witch. She was pushed onto

a heap of logs and they roughly tied her hands to a huge stake. Moonstra didn't struggle at all, till the amulet around her neck started glowing. It was all she had

left of Atherius, symbolizing their friendship. One of the men grabbed the torch and began to approach her. Moonstra remembered a spell Atherius taught to her

to protect the amulet from harm. The man lit the fire onto the mound of logs. She trembled and said the spell outloud. "Amulet from the moon disappear today.

Come back when the moon is full on Halloween day. Find my ancestor make her unique. Give her the powers that my friend gave me." The fire was now close to

her feet. The Amulet glowed really bright and disappeared. A tear fell down

Moonstra's cheek which turned into a scream of pain. The fire was now on top of

her, melting her flesh. Some people turned away at the gruesome sight. Her body jerked and her eyes were full of horror and pain. The full moon had turned a fiery color representing the tragedy on that day.

Three hundred years later the amulet made itself visible to a baby named Sylvia. She and her parent were having a picnic outside. Sylvia crawled to a nearby tree and found the amulet. When she touched it, it opened and a gold mist surrounded her. Sylvia started and her parents ran to her. "What's the matter honey?" asked her mom, taking inside,

Eighteen years later Sylvia is now a grown witch and she and her three friends Evanlin, Kayli, and Melanie are attending Salem college. On October break they go to Melanie's Halloween party at her mansion. Melanie is a typical spoil rich girl. She has long wavy blond hair and blue eyes. Lately she's been extra stubborn and selfish to her "friends. Melanie has always been jealous of Sylvia's tanned good looks, her grades, and her caring family. On October 31<sup>st</sup>

Sylvia drove to the dark mansion on top of the hill. She was dressed as a powerful sorceress, and she hoped to win the costume contest. Her robes were dark blue and black matching her dark hair. The amulet was resting safely around her neck. SNAP! Something was rustling around in the bushes. Sylvia froze and gulped. "Who's there!" she yelled, trying to sound brave. There was more rustling and out popped something that landed on her head. "Aaaaaah!" she screamed waving her arms around in attempt to get the thing off her. It left her head and Sylvia saw that it was just a frightened owl. She sighed in

frustration and entered the mansion. Everything was decorated in orange and black, and the music was blaring loudly. There were pumpkins everywhere and so many people! "Sylvia over here!" exclaimed Evanlin waving her hands. Evanlin is one of the most fun loving people Sylvia knows. She's always where the fun and excitement is. She has dark brown straight hair to her shoulders with bangs and green eyes like herself. That night she was dressed in a stunning vampire costume. Kayli, her other friend was very different than Evanlin. She's sensitive and can be shy at times. She has short curly red hair and misty blue gray eyes. She came dressed as a gypsy. Sylvia smiled and went over to her friends. "That's a cute costume." said Melanie dryly straightening her pink queen outfit. "Thanks, you too." replied Sylvia, nervously smiling. "Listen up everyone the contest is about to begin." hollered the announcer. "Look around this room and vote for who you believe has the best costume. Then come on stage and tell our judges. We will then announce the best guy and girl contest winner!" Everyone applauded and started looking around and voting. "Now that everyone's voted we have our results. The first place guy winner is Lance Black!" A handsome young man with light brown hair and eyes walked on stage in his warrior costume. "And the first place girl winner is.....Sylvia Goodrich!" "Yes!" said Kayli and Evanlin as she walked on stage and accepted her trophy. Melanie was furious and she ran upstairs to her balcony. "Congratulations on winning the contest." Lance said shaking her hand "You too." replied Sylvia. Afterwards she decided to go see Melanie but was stopped by Evanlin and Kayli. "I think it's time to tell her." said Evanlin calmly. "I'm scared of how she'll react." admitted a

nervous Sylvia. "If she's our friend, she'll understand." said Kayli. Sylvia nodded and headed for the tallest floor where the balcony was. Her amulet gleamed in the moonlight when she stepped out to where Melanie stood.

She turned around with her arms crossed and glared at Sylvia. "You think you're little Miss Perfect, don't you!" she yelled angrily. "No...Melanie." Sylvia started to explain. "Who was prom queen in 12<sup>th</sup> grade, who got straight A's throughout high school, who has the caring family, and who wins the best costume contest in my party?! You!" she furiously yelled. Tears formed in Sylvia's eyes. "You don't deserve to be the best! I do!" she yelled and charged towards Sylvia. Before she could hit her Sylvia used her powers to fly up in the air. Melanie stopped and turned to Sylvia in shock as she descended. She opened her mouth but no words came out. "I wanted to tell you." said Sylvia apologetically. "I'm a witch. This amulet gave me powers when I was a baby." explained Sylvia holding up the amulet. "That's not fair! I want to be powerful! I want everything!!" screamed Melanie. She wrapped her hands around Sylvia's throat and began to choke her. "Melanie N..no!" stammered Sylvia. "Do the other girls know?!" hollered Melanie in rage. "Yes!" replied Sylvia trying to break free. "You don't deserve to have magical powers!" exclaimed Melanie. She tightened her grip until she saw the amulet glowing. She let go and a jet of blue light hit her in the chest. Melanie stumbled backwards her eyes representing fear. She lost her balance and fell off the balcony. "Noooooo!" yelled Sylvia in horror as she heard a sickening crack. She peered over the side where Melanie lay, her neck and skull broken. Melanie

opened her eyes only to hear somebody scream her name. "What?" she murmured then she saw her broken body. She sharply gasped and looked up to see Sylvia, Evanlin, Kayli, and Lance who was trying to

comfort the hysterical girls. A fiery rage rose inside the ghost of Melanie. They were all going to pay! I will kill them all for doing this to me starting with Sylvia, she thought. With that she grinned evilly and disappeared. For the past week she spied on her "friends" and Lance. She could see that Sylvia and Lance were clearly becoming good friends. We'll see about that thought Melanie as a plan formed into her head. "Have fun while you can, Sylvia." she cackled. After school Sylvia took a walk with Lance, Evanlin, and Kayli. "Thank you Lance, for being there for us in this horrible time." said Sylvia, in sincere gratitude. "Yes, it really means a lot." voiced Kayli as Evanlin nodded. "No problem. I know what it's like losing someone close to you." he said smiling sadly. They all got together in a group hug when an eerie voice said "Me too." They all froze in fear and looked around to find no one around. "Aaaaaah!" screamed Evanlin. "Somebody pulled my hair!" Then suddenly Sylvia felt the amulet leaving her side. "Hey!" she said watching in terror as it floated away from her in mid air. "What do you want from us!" demanded Lance stepping forward. "I want to kill all of you for what Sylvia did to me! And my two so called friends, who always took her side!" "Melanie?" whispered Sylvia in disbelief. Suddenly Lance was flung backwards and he started gasping for breath. "Lance!" screamed Sylvia rushing toward him who stopped shaking. "Are you ok!?" asked Sylvia in concern as the other girl also

rushed to his side. Lance didn't say anything but wordlessly took out a pocket knife from his pocket. "Run, he's been

possessed by Melanie!" screamed Evanlin. Lance swung the knife which Sylvia barely ducked in time. She ran after her friends who were screaming for their life. Without the amulet her powers were gone! thought Sylvia in panick. Lance chased them to Melanie's dark mansion. It was at that moment that Lance touched the amulet and a jet of light hit Kayli's back. She froze to the spot and hollered "I..I can't move!" Her two friend rushed back to her and pulled as hard as they could. The power of the amulet couldn't be broken. "Help me!" yelled Kayli sobbing in terror as Lance approached her. In quick steps her stepped up to her and stabbed her in the back! "Nooooooooo!" screamed Evanlin and Sylvia in disbelief. Kayli was still frozen but her eyes were bug eyed and her mouth was open in a silent scream. Sylvia and Kayli ran frantically into the dark abandoned mansion, only to find out that Melanie's parents were gone. They slammed the door shut and locked it. "Now what do we do!?" yelled Evanlin fearfully. Sylvia had no idea. Outside they saw a flickering blue light. "Oh no." she whispered recognizing the source where it came from. CREEAAKK! "What was that!?" whispered Sylvia. Something was moving around in the floor and Evanlin whimpered. The full moonlight hit the figure revealing a rotten horrible looking pumpkin! It was small but it had arms with claws sticking out of his round form and feet. It's eyes were yellow and it's mouth revealed sharp teeth. "Aaaaah!"

yelled Evanlin as the evil pumpkin jumped on her friends head. It clawed at Sylvia's face who yelled trying to get it off her. Evanlin wrapped her arms around the pumpkin and with difficulty pried it off her. "Leave my friend alone!" she exclaimed kicking at it. This made the pumpkin even more mad, with a yell it chased

Evanlin down the dark hall. "Evanlin!" Sylvia yelled, preparing to run after her when a howling wind stopped her in her tracks. She looked around in fright when SLAP! "Ouch!" she screamed tumbling backwards, holding her cheek. Lance appeared cackling and holding the amulet. "This ends here!" he said triumphantly. "Melanie, please!" begged Sylvia. "Melanie's gone thanks to you!" she roared. "It wasn't me, it was the amulet" she sobbed. Melanie ignored her and stepped forwards preparing to fight. She charged into Sylvia with a yell and they fell to the floor. They struggled and Melanie raised the dagger to finish her off. However, just in that split second Sylvia tore off the amulet that was around Lance's neck. "Give that back!" he furiously yelled. "I'm sorry Melanie. I'm sorry Lance." said Sylvia sadly. But she had to finish this. She wrestled her ex-friend to the floor and plunged the amulet in his heart. "AAAAAAHHH!" screamed Lance which turned into Melanie's high pitched voice. The amulet produced a high wailing sound of a woman in pain and flashed dangerously. The circle of the amulet glowed black and then broke into a million pieces. Sylvia watched in shock as the ghost of Melanie broke free out of Lance's bloody body. She gave Sylvia a sad, defeated look and vanished forever. Sylvia sobbed at what she had done to Lance and Melanie. "I'm sorry!" she cried to Lance's lifeless body.

“Sylvia!” yelled Evanlin, looking very pale. “Oh, Sylvia it’s finally over!” she cried hugging her. “Let’s get out of here.” said Sylvia when they stopped hugging. The two remaining friends quickly left the tragic house, never to return. “Hey Evanlin, what happened with you and the pumpkins?” asked Sylvia puzzled. “Oh...they gave me a unique perspective of life with the amulets power.”

replied Evanlin, mysteriously. “How?” asked Sylvia cautiously, stopping to stare at her friend. “I get to live forever.” said Evanlin, smiling evilly. Sylvia didn’t see the sharp fangs forming from Evanlin’s mouth until it was too late.

**Witch Wraith**  
By  
Stephanie Thompson

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Why did she refuse his company? He had offered without condescending or any implied weakness. Maybe he had offered just to be in her company a little longer. Why did she say no? Because she's a woman and doesn't need any help from any man. Damn feminism! Why shouldn't she be afraid to walk the streets at night? Anybody's company would be preferable to a mugging.

She smiled to herself then looked alertly around her. She probably should be paying more attention to her surroundings. Isn't that what they always say?

It was after midnight. With the realization that it was a new day and technically Halloween, Victoria shivered. Her footsteps echoed on the empty streets. It was the constant rhythm to the staccato raindrops falling off leaves. It had stopped raining hours ago, which is why she was finally, able to walk back to her apartment. But talking with John had made her forget all about going home. John could make her forget to breathe sometimes.

"This is what it's like," he had said.

"What?"

She was still laughing from whatever random thing he had just said.

"You know, a beautiful laughing and smiling woman with deep brown eyes and pouting lips. Good food and good wine. Benny Goodman's jazz clarinet. Doesn't it sound like . . ."

"What?"

She wasn't laughing. She wasn't breathing. She was suspended and waiting.

"Doesn't it sound like heaven?"

*Was that a sound?*

Just thinking about the evening was distracting her. She looked around but saw nothing. Correction she saw no one. What she did see was steam rising from the pavement. That was what made rain so beautiful. The white fog that rose from the streets like spirits returning to God.

She turned the corner. Only two blocks, almost safe. The instant she thought it she regretted it. She should knock on wood now. She had jinxed herself and some schizo was going to shank her right in front of her door. Shank? Can you shank someone outside of prison? Does it matter? The point is she was going to get stab because she had to say something stupid. Forget that pay attention, where am I?

She stopped walking. She could spread her arms out and touch brick walls on either side. Why had she come in here? In front of her was a manhole where the steam from underground came up in a column of lime green. What was making it green? There must have been some strange light up ahead. She looked behind, the regular street was behind her, a car drove past. What was she doing in this alleyway?

She turned back to the green vapors. She had never seen anything like it. The absurd urge came over her to go and touch it. She shook her head briskly. Whatever, she *needed* to get home. She *needed* to get out of the alleyway before something *really* did happen to her. She wanted to go home and call John and tell her she was safe and then spend the rest of the night talking on the phone. She wanted to but she found herself walking closer to the unworldly fog.

A bird landed behind her in a flutter of wings that sounded like flapping velvet. She turned and saw the glinted yellow eyes of an owl. Its squatted body shifted as it raised one leg then the other.

She thought she heard it speak: "Don't go."

But she shook her head and didn't spare a thought for the bird. Her mind went back to the vapors. It was the most fascinating thing she had seen. She wanted to touch it. Her hand reached out. She barely heard the owl's velvet wing movement. The green air seemed to reach out towards her too. Her fingers curled with the thick smoke but it was more than a gas. It had a texture a weight against her fingertips.

The owl's wings were brushing the back of her neck. The vapor encompassed her whole hand now. It was like . . . it was like fur.

The wings were fully flapping against the back of her head. Her whole arm was submerged in the smooth and soft substance.

No, not smooth, slightly scratchy. . . it was like a woolen sweater, like she was only wearing one sleeve of a very thick sweater. She closed her eyes; the wings were beating around her head like she was in between a pair of clapping hands.

Both of her arms and most of her torso were surrounded. She wasn't moving anymore the green cloud was doing it all. It wasn't feeling so nice anymore. It was becoming more prickly than wool. It resembled the pricks of cacti needles. Deep, sharp pricking all over her body. Like she had fallen in to a cactus gully. And every needle was tipped with fire. She wanted to run now.

But she couldn't remember how. Her mind was screaming but her legs didn't seem to understand. White-hot fire penetrating far in to her body. Her head was the last part to feel the pain because the owl would not stop flapping, as though it was battling the malicious green substance. When that was lost the pain was all encompassing. Blinding pain swallowed her skull and brain. Her ears were bombarded with screeches. She opened her mouth to scream but no sound came out, instead the mist flooded in. Fire spokes stabbed from inside as well as the outside of her body.

She knew nothing else until the pain ended.

*Victoria Victoria*

The voice called her from far away and yet very near.

*Victoria Victoria*

It trembled like the coo of a dove.

*Victoria Victoria*

Then she remembered the bird. It wasn't a dove. It wasn't a pigeon.

*Victoria*

*Owl.*

She thought she had said the word but she hadn't heard it. It was a voice in her head, like the owl's had been.

*Don't be silly that wasn't an owl saying your name. Owls don't talk.*

*Well I do anyway.*

Then her vision came back to her. She thought her eyes were closed but in fact they were open. It was like someone had turned a light switch and the world had reappeared. In front of her eyes the owl hovered flapping its wings. She didn't think owls hovered normally but she had the distinct impression that things would not be normal anymore. She tried to move away from the owl as memories came back. The owl had attacked her, she remembered, sort of.

*Not attacked. Saved, I saved you from complete devouring.*

*What happened?*

*There isn't time. No time. You must go. Sacrifice, sacrifice.*

*What? I don't understand. What sacrifice.*

*Self sacrifice. To save yourself you must sacrifice. Or else . . . you will walk the rest of time as wraith spreading sorrow with every step.*

*No, I still don't understand. I want to go home, why can't I move?*

*You can move . . . If I tell you, will you do what it takes? If you know the whole truth, you have to save you.*

*Yes, yes.*

She thought hastily. It must be a dream, that's all. If she just played along, it would end and she would be in bed.

*You walked into the after effects of a curse. A witch cast a spell, a curse, and opened something. It shouldn't have been opened. It shouldn't be done. But some people don't listen or care for other beings besides themselves. There are thousands of these haunting mists . . . curse ghosts. And if you get caught in one. Like you did. You have to sacrifice. Something, somebody, anything dear*

*to you. Or else, like I said, you will walk until the end of time invisible and destroying hope, love, happiness, every good emotion. Because that's what the ghost needs, insatiable sadness. But as long as you are there, somewhat yourself but still partly wraith, if you become sad and it becomes sad, then it . . . it self destructs. Oh no, I can't explain it any more. You must go. Go to John.*

*Owl, you're not making any sense.*

*My name is Steve, thank you very much. And I am telling the truth, the imperative truth. Immediate action. "Making sense" is not imperative and therefore does not matter. You only have until midnight on Halloween, tonight. When the barrier between worlds is thinnest for only a few minutes.*

*Ok, ok, what do you want me to do?*

She was trying to wake up and it wasn't working. The owl was becoming just an annoying voice in her head.

*Go to John. Go to John.*

*And do what?*

*Oh why must I explain it? Does it matter?*

Victoria shrugged mentally. She was talking to an owl (an owl called Steve at that) in her head. She supposed she didn't need to know anything more than that. And so she thought about going to John's apartment, that kind of dream could end nicely anyway.

She was moving but not moving like she was on a walking sidewalk or she was standing still and the world was moving around her. But her feet were not touching the ground, she had no weight, she just glided.

*Steve, can I fly?*

*No, you move partially by will and mostly by air movement. You can't soar.*

*Won't people think it's strange to see an owl flying so low in daylight?*

*Ah, they can't see me, I'm an other creature. And they can't see you either.*

*What's an other creature?*

*Beings with special abilities, don't ask too many questions. You should be concentrating on getting to John. You have to move again.*

*Aren't I moving?*

She looked around her. She was out of the alley but she hadn't head towards John's or her own apartment. Instead she had crossed the street to Maggie's Market where there was a large display of pumpkins. She was just standing there while the people walking the streets avoided her. For no apparent reason they walked around her even when they couldn't see her.

*They sense the cold despair. Steve said.*

*I don't feel cold.*

She looked back to the display.

*You don't have a body any more. You can't feel anything.*

A few pumpkins were carved like Jack O' Lanterns with bright flames flickering with in. The scent of raw pumpkins filled her.

*You can't stay here you have to move. It's better to get inside before dark.*

*Why?*

*Oh, too many questions, too many questions . . . move.*

So she willed herself. She ignored the inviting smell of pumpkins and began drifting in the reverse route she had followed the night before.

*Steve I am so disoriented. All I want is to go towards the pumpkins, are you sure there isn't enough time, for just a little while? They are so nice and warm and inviting. What time is it? It's so bright out; we must have plenty of time til midnight.*

*It only looks bright to you because the sun is still above the horizon, it's dusk. You have less than six hours. If you follow the Jacks you will stay mesmerized by them. That's what they are there for. If you stay you will miss your only chance to save yourself.*

Victoria and Steve moved slowly. The wind was against them, blowing her off course and assaulting her with warm fragrance of pumpkin.

*I have to stop*

They were still blocks away from John's apartment.

*You can't you will blown away.*

*The shelter, let's stay in that shelter.*

She used the last of her will to move to the bus shelter. The lady who was waiting moved as far from Victoria as she could get and tugged at her coat.

Victoria was weary and exhausted. She just wanted to close her eyes and let the wind take her where it would.

*This isn't a dream is it?*

*No. But it is a living nightmare.*

*Why? Why did this happen to me? I was going to be happy. I was . . .*

*Yes but. . . well, the sadness inside you was attracted to the curse ghost.*

*It always traps people that way. You must have had some kind of despair because it overtook you quickly, I almost had no time.*

*I was getting better. I was finally getting over Scott. I was going to be happy again. I was going to be happy with John.*

*There's nothing for it now.*

She waited there. She couldn't sit or lean she just floated there and looked enviously at the lady huddled in the corner. Rain and wind pelt against the shelter. Leaves blew in and out. The lady held a Kleenex to her nose with one hand and the flap of her coat with the other. She looked miserable. Victoria hated her. She had a body; she could feel the wind and not be controlled by. She had power and she was crouching in the corner of this stupid bus shelter.

Victoria saw the tendrils of lime mist float out from her. She realized she was doing it. Reaching out to the lady. She wanted to grab her, choked her, steal her life.

Steve started flapping his wings wildly. She could feel them against the tendrils of mist like whips of heat.

*No, no, too dangerous to stay here, Victoria. We must go. You don't want to do this. Go to John.*

The feeling instantly rejuvenated her. She floated out of the shelter and back onto the street where they moved quicker.

*Steve, Steve! I felt your wings. I could feel them flapping against me.*

Yes. Yes.

His did not indicate happiness but she didn't ask a question. It had gotten much darker when they were in the shelter. She felt nervous now. The smell of pumpkins was stronger but Victoria was determined. She was going to get her body back and she was going to be with John.

*Wait why am I going to John? What do I have to do? Didn't you say sacrifice? I don't want to sacrifice John? I don't want to kill him.*

They had been moving swiftly up the streets, they were less than a block from John's building. But now she stopped. The wind pushed them back a little.

*You humans always think sacrifice than is death. You spend so much time being afraid of it yet . . . there are worse things than dying. Like being a wraith. That is far worse.*

*I will not kill John.*

*Nobody said you did.*

*What do I have to do then?*

*I will tell you when we get there.*

They started moving again. She could do anything if she didn't have to kill him. Plus she would get to see him. Nervous energy sped her on and she finally floated up through the 13<sup>th</sup> floors to John's apartment.

It was dark. John was asleep on his couch. The TV flickered but the volume was low. As she approached he shivered.

*What do I do?*

*Tell him that you can't be with him. That you can't love him. That he isn't good enough.*

*What? Would a lie work?*

*Tell him because it is the truth.*

*No it's not. I want to be with him. He is perfect.*

*No, You know he will just leave you. Just hurt you. You already suspect it. Suspicion will grow until nothing else can live, there will be no space for love. Trust me. Tell him.*

She knelt down beside him. Steve rested on the couch arm. The green mist curled out around her. She felt like she was sobbing even with out the tears. Whatever was left of her being ached. Steve had to know he was an other creature. An owl who could talk. He must be wise.

*John.*

He moved slightly. His cheek brushed against a tendril. He murmured.

*John.*

She couldn't even think of the words. Months of trying. Of trusting him. Of getting over heart ache. And now she was here ending it all. Forcing a broken heart to prevent a broken heart.

*John. I can't love you.*

She caressed his cheek with her green mist. A tear rolled down the side of his nose.

*Steve says I can't trust you but I do.*

Her mist completely surrounded his head.

*I can't love you because I will stay a wraith. I can't lie to you. I trust and love you but I will never see you any closer than this.*

When John awoke in the morning he had vague memories of dreams. He remembered crying with a heavy sadness and being cold . . . very, very cold. But he had also fallen asleep on the couch so that was expected. All of this, however, was driven from his mind when he realized that Victoria was there. Her ice-cold hands were grasping his face.

"Victoria? Victoria?"

She moaned slightly. He didn't know why she was there. Or how she got there. He carried her to his bed and wrapped her with blankets, hoping to warm her.

Afterwards Victoria couldn't tell exactly how she got there or where the day had gone. But every Halloween since, Victoria and John's yard have had the most Jack O' Lanterns on the block.

*Poetry*

**It's an Ultra-Spooky Heebie-Jeebie, Creepy Halloween!**  
by  
Keith Brown

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When the wind blows cold  
and the moon is full.  
The werewolves howl  
and the vampires drool.  
Your heart is filled with terror  
as you hear yourself scream.

**It's an  
Ultra-Spooky,  
Heebie-Jeebie,  
Creepy  
Halloween!**

Hear the flitty, flitty flutter  
of a squeaky little bat.  
And the haunting, lonely cries  
of an eerie black cat.  
A jack-O-Lantern flickers  
with a grin so mean.

**It's an  
Ultra-Spooky,  
Heebie-Jeebie,**

**Creepy  
Halloween!**

When a distant witches cackle  
slices through the gloomy sky.  
You'll know the monsters and the mummies  
will be lurking near by.  
A silent fog is rising  
where the tombstones lean.

**It's an  
Ultra-Spooky,  
Heebie-Jeebie,  
Creepy  
Halloween**

Your heart starts pounding like a drum  
when you hear an awful CRASH!  
And you hope that's Mr. Mason  
taking out the evening trash.  
A shiver rushes up your spine,  
like an icy mountain stream.

**It's an  
Ultra-Spooky,  
Heebie-Jeebie,  
Creepy  
Halloween!**

But wait! That sound behind you,  
was that a growl? or just a bark?  
A slinky figure melts into the shadows  
cold and dark.  
You strain your eyes to catch a glimpse,  
but there's nothing to be seen.

**It's an  
Ultra-Spooky,  
Heebie-Jeebie,  
Creepy  
Halloween!**

Now you take off running like a shot!  
By the school and through the parking lot.  
Then you dash by old Mrs. Watson's place  
with a frightened look upon your face.

You've ran right through her garden  
and trampled her green beans!

**It's an  
Ultra-Spooky,  
Heebie-Jeebie,  
Creepy  
Halloween!**

You can see the beast behind you,  
it's fangs so long and scary.  
With a big strong neck and real bad breath  
it's ten feet tall and hairy!

Your growing tired from running now,  
'cause this beast is very fast.  
And now your thinking to yourself  
this Halloween may be your last.

You turn to take one final look,  
your legs as limp as noodles.  
You start to gasp!....but begin to laugh.

It's just old Mrs. Watson's poodle!  
You can see your house from here now,  
where a friendly porch light gleams.

**It's an  
Ultra-Spooky,  
Heebie-Jeebie,  
Creepy  
Halloween!**

When you finally make it home,  
where it's warm and where it's safe,  
Big brother swipes your candy  
while your mother wipes your face.

Now you take a bath,  
then you hit the sack  
and you hope you don't dream

**About an  
Ultra-Spooky,  
Heebie-Jeebie,  
Creepy  
Halloween!**

**Halloween**  
by  
Raymond G Blais

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My protagonist in crime, Larry was to me  
Childhood pranks and other such things  
A spider here and a broken light there  
Life as a boy, you know what I mean.

My childhood romance Susan and me  
Of never ending love we had declared  
Then came Billy as she reached thirteen  
When never ending meant only preteen.

Johnny was my brother, younger than me  
Short, stubby and weakly was he  
All our secrets he would hide  
At least until someone made him cry.

Carol, my older sister was to me  
Years wiser than us she would always be  
Preaching about how things do seem  
Upon deaf ears her voice did ring.

We got together on one Halloween's eve  
Dressed in our costumes and raring to go  
I tell you a story and hope you believe

When the devil himself joined the show.

Dark and eerie was this witch's night

Cold and cloudy with dim street lights

A whistling sound from that house over there

Soft and shallow, nothing to beware

An empty house from what we can tell

From the sign on the lawn house to sell

The door was open upon our approach

Slowly, very slowly we did encroach

The whistling sound became a little clearer

Not a whistle at all, but young child's voice

The words seem shallow and somewhat muttered

We must get closer Larry would utter

Surly a trick of which we must discover

So upon his prodding we did descend

Down the dimly lit basement, expecting a scary end.

Did you hear that, Carol would shout

This is know trick I have to get out

For what she had heard from further below

Were the unforgettably haunting words

"help me", "help me", "help me"

This is as far as Johnny would go

Larry, Sue and I would not be deterred  
Even though we heard those very same words  
Two more steps to reach the basement floor  
To expose this trick we must at once explore  
Whatever it is we must find out for sure  
Upon the basement floor we took a look around  
There was nothing there, noting but that sound  
“help me”, “help me”, “help me”  
We answered the cry with a feeble hello  
And the retort came back just as before  
“help me”, “help me”, “help me”  
A mighty chill ran up and down my spine  
There is no doubt, there must be someone here  
OK you win, I shouted, this is a mighty scare  
There again those words from underneath the stairs  
“help me”, “help me” help me”  
There is something underneath the basement stairs  
Much too small a space to cause us any fear  
Using a small pen light we ventured a gaze  
It looks like a small doll lying sideways  
It’s just a trick after all, Sue would then say  
Larry crawled in underneath the basement stairs  
To retrieve the doll that created such fear

Cursing himself , never again to be scared  
Then all of a sudden without any warning  
Something in there took a hold of his foot  
Larry screamed to the top of his lungs  
Something was pulling me in by my boot  
We pulled on his arm until he was free  
Larry grabbing the doll as if it was real  
We ran up the stairs, out the front door  
And across the street to investigate no more  
Scared out of our wits we stopped to rehash  
We gathered our senses and started to laugh  
What a great trick, no one was harmed  
We turned on the doll, and to our great alarm  
"mommy", "mommy", "mommy".

**Best young adult t**

# **HALLOWEEN**

by  
Jack Beyer

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One day I woke up and I decided to enter a pumpkin contest! So I entered. There were only five prizes. I didn't get first or second. I got third prize. I said, "Where is my prize?" "It is on your front lawn." So I went home and three blocks from my house I saw a lot of orange colors. When I got there I saw 50,000,000 pumpkins! They were in the tree and in the bushes too. They were everywhere. So I took them one by one and smashed them to make lots and lots of pumpkin pie. Then when my mom got home she said, "What are these?" I said "Pumpkin pies!" Then my mom said, "What are you going to do with them?" I said, "I am going to have a pumpkin pie party!"

THE END!!!!!!

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