

Tiny Tales of Spring 2021

TINY TALES OF SPRING 2021

STUDENTS IN MLLL-3043 AND
MLLL-4993



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CONTENTS

About This Book	1
Acknowledgments	3
Love and Loss	5
Family and Home	29
Life of a Student	43
Wisdom and Insight	63
Natural World	77
Magic and the Supernatural	101
Horror Stories	119
Heroines, Heroes, Tricksters, Villains	135
Goddess	163
Stories from India	179
Author Index	197
Haunted Oklahoma	203

ABOUT THIS BOOK

This book contains microfiction written by students in two classes at the University of Oklahoma in Spring 2021. Most of the stories are 100 words long, while some are even shorter: 25-word stories, two-sentence stories, even six-word stories. You'll also find some story sequences, like "Seven Epic Sins" or "The Goddess Inanna," which consist of several 100-word episodes. There are stories about love and loss, about student life, myths from around the world, spooky stories, nature tales... all powered by the creative imagination of these OU students who generously agreed to share their work. You can find out more at:

Anthology.LauraGibbs.net

The paragraph you just read about this book is 100 words long, as is this paragraph, and that's also the length of most of the stories in this book. The tiny tales go by fast, but you can slow down when you find one you like. Read it again. Read it out loud. Let it sink in. Ponder the details. You might even supply some details from your own imagination, or decide to write your own microfiction after seeing what these authors have done with their tiny tales. You can find many more 100-word stories from different mythological traditions at:

100Words.LauraGibbs.net

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LOVE AND LOSS

False Haven

The porch with the little swing and the three tulips was our beginning. It was there, nervously, that you stood as my father answered your knock.

The place where I waved goodbye as you left for college.

After my father died, we hugged my mother on the porch as she cried.

It was there that you got down on one knee and carried me into our new home, taking me in.

That was the spot where you were shouting at me as you walked away to your car.

The porch with the little swing and three tulips is our end.

By: Keana Jones

His Love

“Should I break your heart?” she asked as she looked him in the eyes. “Should I play with it until you are hurt so bad that you will hate me, be disgusted by me? Should I play with your mind and lead you on to make you believe you count for me? Should I pretend to be in love with you?”

The boy was processing her words. Shocked, humiliated, and crushed he was.

The girl was still staring at him indifferently. He had known her since first grade, infatuated by her since.

Love at first sight, an unrequited one.

“Yes.”

By: Mélanie Cameron

Her Love

She lied.

She didn't want him to suffer.

Trust issues, afraid of commitments, afraid of being loved.

She was selfish. She was aware of it.

She stared at him to memorize each feature of his face.

She had known him since first grade, infatuated by him since.

Love at first sight.

“Goodbye.”

By: Mélanie Cameron

Goodbye

She clutches him to her, a tight desperate embrace.

Then, with one last squeeze of his hand, she walks away.

By: E. Cady Strech

Short Love

I once met a man who taught other men to sing, as though they'd forgotten their own voices, and listened acutely to my humming.

We gathered shells from along a coast, and walked a garden trying to remember names of plants we'd never met, watching rain drop from petals.

We roamed the remnants of a church lost to time, but not place: stood in the space where ablutions were made, sins washed away, an apothecary grown for the ails of pilgrims.

He told me he was in love with me just for the day. And I can't remember his name.

By: Kat Currey

Short Lived

It was a year ago I came home, to wisteria and lilies in my memory and masses of monkey grass in their stead.

By: Kat Currey

Falling for Green Eyes

She looks at me with green eyes that catch every ray of spring sunlight, and she watches me string a hammock between two strong trees.

I hope she wants to sit with me in the warmth while I name every shade of green on the blooming campus: green grass, green leaves, green eyes.

“You first,” she says when the hammock is strung.

I jump into the canvas too eagerly.

I miss. My fingers scrabble helplessly on the hammock as I slip and fall. My back hits the ground first, then my sunglasses.

I look up, dazed, into laughing green eyes.

By: Erin Bullock

Feeling Blue

Oh, my love, the light of my life, why is my passion for you the color of winter?

Love is red. That is what they say. Should I not call what I feel love then?

It is not the yellow of friendship, or the bubbly pink of fancy. It is a blue on the verge of white, like fog lights from a car at night.

Love is like fire, but my affection for you is lightning. It does not consume, but rather it spreads.

There is heat, but with a certain coolness.

What else can we call this but love?

By: Rachael Sitton

The Sun and Moon Are in Love

I didn't plan on him, but I sure don't mind it.

In a time full of "I don't know" and "I can't" he is my one certainty and my one strength.

A lot of things bring me comfort, but the biggest one is knowing we look up to the same moon.

I am forever content with being loved by him.

I still remember those seven pink tulips and thinking how nobody has ever given me flowers.

Then again, nobody has seen my soul like he has.

I don't need the sun, for looking at him brings me enough warmth.

By: Isha Patel

Bloom

Tulips bloomed, and so did I.

By: Isha Patel

There Are Butterflies When He Calls

I wait for his calls in the night.

Time passes, and the flowers wilt.

I imagine him lying next to me, and feeling like I never want to say goodbye again.

It is hard when you want comfort from someone that cannot reach through the phone screen.

I wonder if his heart hurts when I say I miss him. I know mine does.

What I would give to hear his laughter and feel his touch.

I remember the evergreen trees when I came, and especially when I left.

Yet I remember each day passing is one less day of goodbye.

By: Isha Patel

The Five Senses

The importance of touch is never known until it's gone.

The importance of someone's laugh, smile, tears—what you would give to experience a little bit longer.

Our bodies crave hugs but the world says, "Hold, please."

The five senses — touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste — have all dulled since the world was put on hold.

Will it be scary to sense again?

Will I ever hear live music ringing through my ears like I used to? Will I ever taste local cuisine that couldn't stay afloat? Will I ever smell fresh air without feeling as though I shouldn't?

By: Isha Patel

Light

Bruised arms and dark thoughts. Tears keep coming as my mind races and spirals. Shadows cover everything and I feel so alone.

“You have every right to leave. You deserve better than what I can offer.”

You kiss my arms and hold me close. Tears mingle with my own as you hold me tight. Your presence chases away every shadow.

“I’m not going anywhere, love. We weather this storm together.”

Thank you for staying.

Thank you for your light.

By: Rebecca

Krishna: The Reality

I looked at the sunset, the last one with her. I know I'm a horrible person, but I've been prepared my whole life to take over my family business. They've been working hard for it; I couldn't just let go of it.

Am I selfish? Yes. I'll take all the blame. I deserve it. I thought for a while she was part of my destiny. But the universe spoke, and she couldn't be part of my life. The person I'm marrying is lovely, and honestly, I could see myself falling in love with her.

That's the sad and harsh reality.

By: Mélanie Cameron

Radha: The Farewell

She left.

This was the last time we saw each other.

By: Mélanie Cameron

Cupid's Second Letter to Psyche

Dear Psyche,

My shoulder is healing, and I've forgiven you.

I'm sorry for how I reacted.

Please know how much I miss you.

My mother is keeping me locked away in her palace. "To heal," she says. But I've heard whispering you're here.

Oh Psyche, stay strong for me, until I'm strong again for you.
And please, do nothing rash.

We'll be reunited soon, my love.

Forever yours,

Cupid

By: K.J.S.

What Psyche Wished Cupid Knew

My dear, even with a horrible appearance, who is to say I would not have loved you anyway?

My curiosity got the better of me.

By: K.J.S.

Binnorie: Before He Cheats With My Sister!

“My husband cheated on me, and not just with anybody — with my sister. I found them together at a bar. So what did I do? I keyed his car, and I ripped his leather seats. I found a baseball bat outside the back of the bar and shattered his headlights, and I punctured all four of his tires. And then, I was so mad I drowned my sister. Yeah, a bit far I guess. And what did she do? She haunted me and ratted me out to my whole family and my husband. So now what?” she asked her therapist.

By: K.J.S.

Zelinda and the Monster: Father Goes to Town

There was a man with three daughters, all different in disposition. When he went to town, each asked for something different. Rosina wanted a dress, Marietta wanted a shawl, and Zelinda wanted just a rose.

Their father was headed back when he realized he had no rose, so he went into the field and found one to pick. Once he picked the rose, a monster appeared and threatened the man's life.

The father begged and begged; he had three daughters at home alone he needed to care for.

The monster let the father go, but required a life as sacrifice.

By: Savannah Kotkin

Zelinda and the Monster: In the Castle

Zelinda heard her father's story and knew it was all her fault; she volunteered to be given to the monster in the castle.

When they got there, the beast was satisfied with the father's sacrifice and sent him out, keeping the girl there.

The monster fell in love with her.

Zelinda was indifferent; she could not love such a hideous, disgusting thing.

He would profess his love for her every day in the gardens. "Won't you marry me? Things will change, I swear it."

But Zelinda continued to tell him she could never love him.

He was too hideous.

By: Savannah Kotkin

Zelinda and the Monster: The Monster's Plan

The monster told Zelinda that if she did not marry him, her father would surely die. He showed her the future in a mirror and she saw it to be true. She sobbed and sobbed knowing what she had to do. To save her father she must marry this cruel monster.

“Okay, monster, I will marry you to save my father.”

Once Zelinda spoke these words, a handsome youth took the place of this creature, shocking her entirely.

She was completely okay with this marriage.

They decided to elope and run away, for true love had taken over them both.

By: Savannah Kotkin

How I Feel

I feel sad but the kind that's joyful
I'd cry seeing Superman fly
More examples...
But I don't want to rhyme
The best kind of poetry doesn't rhyme
Its expression is its ideas
Not whether you can dance to it
I want to dance with you
You're so far away
I know when you'll be here
I know when I won't be
I don't even doubt
I don't even wonder
I'm just sad because I see Superman flying
Except it's me
You're Lois Lane
I come to save the day
No matter how many times you fall
Jesus save me

By: Drew Miller

FAMILY AND HOME

The Shoes

She rubs her stomach as she browses eBay, looking for things for a baby girl. She already has some decorations, but she needs clothes.

She clicks on a picture of pink shoes. The ad says “Baby shoes, one to six weeks, mint condition. Free.”

The grin slides off her face as she contemplates what could have happened to make someone sell unused baby shoes.

She scolds herself.

She shakes her head.

She hovers the mouse over the buy-now button and lets out a harsh breath before clicking.

Six weeks later, a new ad for unused baby shoes goes up.

By: E. Cady Strech

Echoes of a Child

She made birthday cake, chocolate flavor, just the way he liked it.

What she didn't know: this year, her son would never come home again.

By: Kenzie R. Hanna

Three Years

On a cold winter evening, an old woman sat by the window staring outside. She smiled as she saw her two boys running around the front yard playing. What would she make them for lunch today? The older son's favorite was a turkey sandwich while the younger son enjoyed a ham sandwich.

Suddenly, she heard a scream. "Are you boys okay?" she shouted as she rushed out the front door.

A cold hollow wind passed by... but no answer.

It had been three years since the army officers came to deliver her sons' helmets.

Three years since the war ended.

By: S.K.

Loss

Ten long years that I have spent trying to find answers.

Ten long years wasted.

I found them, the witches, but for what? What did I expect to get from all of this?

Nothing will bring my son back... I lost everything. I lost my world.

By: Connor McNeely

Dammit!

Jordan jumped from the couch, flinging his hands up.
“Dammit!”

“What?” Jordan’s wife, Cat, yelled from the bathroom.

“It’s over.” Jordan shook his head. “My team’s going to lose.”

The Cowboys had led the Eagles 28-27 going into the fourth quarter. But now, with only seconds left in the game and trailing by 7, Jordan’s hope for a comeback was crushed.

“Have faith,” said Cat.

“Faith?” Jordan laughed. “They need a miracle.”

Cat then held out the pregnancy-stick as two lines darkened in the test window. “Maybe today they’ll get their miracle.”

Jordan’s jaw dropped.

He faced the TV. “Dammit!”

By: S.K.

COVID Short Story

Her results came in at ten o'clock. "You have COVID-19. Isolate, hydrate, and if you have trouble breathing, call 911."

And so our journey began.

My sick wife moved into the spare bedroom, and I took on all the family responsibilities, terrified and lonely for my love who lay fifty feet away.

We called the children. "Just in case, our wills and life insurance policies are in the top drawer of the desk. Just in case, we left our medical directives on the kitchen table. Just in case, we love you so much. Thank you for being our family."

By: S.K.

The Battle of a Lifetime

Jim wasn't ready for this journey he was about to embark on, but he had been preparing his whole life. Now he would face his biggest fears and take on the world's danger.

He approached the gates to the kingdom, trembling.

He couldn't tell his son no.

It was time.

Jim had to fight the biggest battle for any germaphobe... and face the army of germs at Disney World.

His hand sanitizer in hand, Jim walked through the gates, ready to face the biggest fear of his entire life.

His son was his world; Jim would do anything for him.

By: Landon Rosckes

What It's Like to Be a Twin

A built-in best friend.

The person that's been there from the very first moment.

A mirror image of yourself.

Alike, yet different.

Someone to share every life experience with. To rejoice in the good times with and mourn with in the bad times. Feeling one another's pain.

Some days you're your own person. Some days you can't be separated.

It's sometimes hard to make a way for yourself – you don't want to be associated with who you're not.

Yet, when you grow up and part ways, you'll always be connected at the heart.

Nothing can ever break that bond.

By: Sara Haugland

A Summer's Day

Up at 6.

Well, more like 7 we are not an early rising family.

Grandpa and Sis grab the truck with feed, I grab the gear.

Assemble, sort, and set up.

Now it's time to get to work. There is always a deadline but more so for comfort.

Push, catch, shoot and send a quick little chill down their spine.

One, two, three, four, maybe five, then again and again.

Always a set back, a hurt one, a feisty one or not so smart one. Terribly dirty and tired, but we can always go swimming in a pond close by.

By: H.B.

The Unknown

The time had come. Though he longed to stay in the safety of familiarity, he had outgrown the native plains.

Turning his eyes from the cabin he loved, he faced the road that led to a new life. He started down the path to the unknown as the scent of woodsmoke from the fireplace washed over him. He knew that the place he was going would make him better, but he was unsure he could make it.

Not daring to cast another look back, he made the first turn in the road and left the cabin and his family behind.

By: Reid Meadows

Defining Home

When I was a child, home was where love was, where family didn't give up, where I laughed until I cried, where I played outside until dark.

Now, home is the unattainable arms of my family, seven hundred miles away in a different life. It's echoes of halcyon days as I sit in my apartment room, listening to friends laughing nearby.

I wonder what home will mean next.

I hope it's the place where you and I rest our heads, where I decorate the living room and experiment in the kitchen, and where we decide our definition of "family" together.

By: Kenzie R. Hanna

New Beginnings

The wind howled as she slammed the door on the truck. Turning, she put her hands on her hips and surveyed her new home.

“It’s not bad, but could be better,” she said to herself.

Walking up to the front door, she unlocked it and stepped inside. Inhaling, she breathed in the smell of new beginnings. They smelled oddly of... pot?

“That’s going to be fun to get out,” she thought to herself.

The next few days sped by as she unpacked her life, rearranging it to fit into this new one.

At the end, she knew she’d be okay.

By: Tyler Schwemley

New Beginnings: Tweet

I just moved into a new place, and I can't believe this is actually happening. Whoever lived here before me was apparently big into pot? Even the garage smells of it! Besides avoiding the smell, I guess I'll be busy unpacking. Here's to new beginnings, hopefully it all works out!

By: Tyler Schwemley

LIFE OF A STUDENT

Two-Word Horror Story

Due tomorrow.

By: Jeff Provine

Procrastination

While she tries her best to stay focused, there are just too many things to be distracted by.

She starts an essay but then finds herself on a new tab online shopping.

Or her data analytics assignment will be due within a few hours, but there will be the more pressing matter of coordinating a time to hang out with friends.

The other day, she wasted hours trying to find something cute to wear instead of working on her final project for her mythology class.

But sometimes, time pressure can enhance one's work.

At least, that's what she tells herself.

By: Deepa Ganesan

The Library

“Let’s hang out at The Library tonight,” my friend said.

“I’ve got to study,” I responded.

He put an arm around my shoulder and grinned. “What better place to study than at The Library?”

I raised my eyebrows at him. “Your senioritis has gotten bad.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” he drawled. “I’ve logged more hours at The Library than anyone else.”

“And that’s why you’re failing biochem.”

By: Erin Bullock

The Dreaded Day

Today is the day I've been dreading for the past month. I knew it was coming, but part of me hoped it never would.

I've been warned about the difficulty that lies ahead of me. I've been told all the horror stories from those who have done this before me, but I must do what I must do.

I am beginning to doubt myself.

Am I even capable of doing this?

Am I strong enough?

My hands are shaking in fear as I pull out my pen and paper and write "Organic Chemistry I" at the top of my paper.

By: B.K.

The Best Day

It is finally time: Graduation Day!

By: B.K.

Let's Try Some Riddles

What is always dreaded, but also highly anticipated?

Takes months to happen, but finishes within two hours?

Covers many pages of text in a few?

..... Answer: A final exam.

I can write thousands of words and not make a lick of sense.

I can cover miles but never move more than a couple inches.

When I am the color red, I mean error.

But any other color can be just for fun.

What am I?

..... Answer: A pen.

By: Lanney Phillips

Ready to March

“Line up for pregame!” the director calls from the front of the tunnel, and the drumline springs into action in the late fall sunlight.

We check our equipment and fix our drums into place on our torsos and chests.

We strike each other’s drumsticks like knights crossing swords.

This is the closest any of us will get to battle. We are not heroes, but when the stadium roars and we stand in rank along the red and white goal line, we feel like we could be.

By: Erin Bullock

A New Thursday

Today reoccurs. There have been many todays that passed and became tomorrows. Today is Thursday. I decided that I would make this Thursday a happy one.

Waking up at a normal time, going through a normal routine. Making myself tea. The start to the day was good.

Watching videos online, lying in bed.

Self care.

I did a face mask, brushed my hair, started the day. Today was a skirt day. The wind was not too strong that it became a pants day.

Spring has sprung. The hail has subsided; it is time to go pick flowers.

By: Savannah Kotkin

Flower Garden of Great Renown

Oklahoma isn't a good place to find flowers.

Wildflowers will do.

I walked around my apartment looking for patches of grass with flowers.

Flowers, no; small blips of color in the concrete, yes.

Dandelions, blue-eyed grass, henbit, and clovers.

Gathering my lovely finds I decided to keep them together as a display of another good day.

Rocks are fun also; I collected rocks that brought me joy.

I hide them away in a dish where I will start my collection. Different shaped rocks with different stories are fun to find. Maybe I can use them to do magic? Who knows!

By: Savannah Kotkin

Winning the Lottery

I cannot believe it.

I am matching the number on my ticket with the numbers for this year's one-million-dollar lottery draw.

It matches.

It perfectly matches.

Thoughts on what I do next flood my head.

“Should I quit my job?”

“Should I buy a Ferrari, a house, pay off my loans?”

“I can even do all three!”

I rush outside after getting dressed, preparing to redeem the prize.

I run outside to my car when all of a sudden... I wake up.

By: Amy Tan

Gift Card

There once was a professor who loved to challenge his students. One semester, he decided the student with the least number of missed exam questions would get a hundred-dollar gift card.

Jordan decided to go for it and studied hard for every exam. He ended up missing a total of two questions the entire semester.

Surely he'd missed the least questions!

He approached the professor and said, "Hello, I'm here to collect my gift card."

The professor turned to him and said, "You missed two, right? Well, someone else didn't miss any."

There will always be someone better than you.

By: S.K.

S'mores

The wind was blowing my hair into my freshly burnt marshmallow, but I did not care. My worries slowly faded away after every bite of s'mores I took. The chocolate was melted just enough that it was dripping down my fingers and the two supporting graham crackers were crumbling into pieces from the pressure of my fingers.

My hands had become sticky by the time I had grabbed my wire hanger for a second round.

As I stuck my marshmallow on the end and placed it into the fire I thought to myself, "Man, this life is good!"

By: B.K.

Snow Day

When I woke in the morning and looked out the window, all that could be seen was a blur of white. In every direction there was snow galore. Covering the ground like a giant fluffy blanket.

The best way to spend a white winter day is to jump back into bed with all the warm and fuzzy blankets made of anything but snow.

Only good reason to leave must be for some hot cocoa and cookies.

So back into bed I went to snuggle up to my pup Luka with a good book in hand to be finished by bedtime.

By: Carlee Apel

Books are Worlds

I jumped out of my car and ran into the store, thinking to myself, “I love Barnes and Noble!”

Marching straight over to the young adult section, I scoured the shelves until I found the book I was looking for. Finding it, I grabbed a copy and hugged it to my chest.

Finally, I could read the book I had been waiting months for!

I walked out of the store smiling and holding my new world to enjoy. I knew it was only a matter of time until it sucked me in.

Ten minutes and twelve seconds later, it did.

By: Tyler Schwemley

Books are Worlds: In Six Words

She read and found new worlds.

By: Tyler Schwemley

The Adaptation: Seeing Really Is Believing

She plopped down on the couch while holding a bowl of popcorn in her arms. Pressing play on the remote, she snuggled under her blanket to watch the show.

She knew the story already, she had read the books countless times, but she did not know what it would look like on the small screen.

Nervously biting her nails, she hoped the stories of her heart would not be changed.

Though, it wouldn't be the end of the world, as she would always have the books.

One hour later, she smiled, knowing that her dreams had been made into reality.

By: Tyler Schwemley

Bird's-Eye View

Early this morning I arrived at the airport where I immediately smelled the sweet scent of burned jet fuel. Although it can be potent, there isn't a smell that excites me more. It's my morning coffee.

I couldn't wait to get into the cockpit for yet another day of adventures.

There is nothing like getting to pilot an aircraft above the campus where you go to school and the apartment where you reside.

I love what I do; I wouldn't trade it for the world.

By: Nathan Ulshafer

Spinning My Cares Away

The world flashes by in blurs. Streaks of different greens as I look ahead, a different green as I look down, and endless blue going up. The nuances blur together before my eyes, and brown strings whip into the picture as my speed changes.

I feel like I'm in the kaleidoscope that I stared into endlessly as a kid.

The pictures don't evolve, but the constant change keeps me mesmerized.

Anyways, I prefer to watch this rather than the world as it changes outside in a blur.

But I guess they are the same.

New ideas don't exist, only re-wording.

By: Rachel Fisher

Once You Choose, You Are Committed

I search to the right and find bouncing leaves, smiling flowers, and a whispering breeze. Sunshine beams through holes cut in the foliage. I could wander there, warm and cherished, for one hundred years.

Yet the path is so short – it hardly begins.

Will I ever move onward?

The voices on the left cry out to me. Their sources are covered in shade and flickering light. The rock-strewn path is steep and intimidating.

I can only imagine the view from the top. The clouds would carry me across the earth to wherever I please.

Which way do I go?

By: Rachel Fisher

WISDOM AND INSIGHT

The Farmer and the Apple Trees

One day a man decided he would become an apple farmer, so he planted some apple trees.

Since he knew nothing about farming, he observed other farmers at work. The neighbor with the most prosperous orchard was cutting off branches.

“Why are you doing that?” he asked.

“You must prune your trees so they bear more fruit,” the neighbor replied.

Excited he knew the secret to cultivating apples, the farmer rushed home to cut off many branches from his trees.

Sadly, no apples grew.

The farmer should have known that there is always more to learn.

By: Catherine Frerker

The Star-Gazing Astrologer

One night an astrologer was taking his usual midnight walk, staring up at the sky everywhere he went.

Not looking ahead, he accidentally fell into a ditch.

He moaned in pain, but a passerby only laughed at him, saying, “Get your head out of the clouds! Watching your step is more important than watching the stars every night.”

With no one to help him, the astrologer lay in the ditch throughout the night, watching the sky.

That night, he discovered a new planet, and people remembered his name for generations.

By: Catherine Frerker

Mask Up

Each day we attend life's masquerade, seeking to be seen as we see ourselves – or perhaps better.

Each night our facade unravels, until one night the mask has melted itself to our face.

Perhaps it was never separate.

The goal was to deceive, to fool... ourselves.

Are we beautiful now?

By: Chris Trulock

What I Wish My Best Friend Knew

Through my eyes: I see there's strength in your posture, piercing light in your eyes, and a soft, welcoming space in your heart for those seeking refuge. Your hair, skin, nails, figure... they receive but a glance.

You are so beautiful.

What does the mirror whisper to you? Does it tell you the same?

Why do you seek to change?

YOU are magnetic: the sound of your laugh, the comfort of your listening ears, the security of your friendship.

You show your beauty to me.

They want the same things.

If they don't... don't let their ugliness touch your brilliance.

By: Rachel Fisher

The Life of Bob

Bob woke up in the morning.
Bob rubbed his eyes and rolled out of bed.
Bob walked to the bathroom.
Bob showered and got dressed.
Bob left for work.
Bob worked.
Bob ate lunch.
Bob worked.
Bob drove home.
Bob walked in the house and sat on the couch.
Bob watched TV.
Bob ate dinner.
Bob watched TV.
Bob got sleepy.
Bob brushed his teeth and put on his pajamas.
Bob fluffed his pillow and went to bed.
Bob slept all night and had many dreams.
Bob did the same thing the next day.
..... Are we all just like Bob?

By: C.B.

Precious Stones

My name's Tawny.

I was mined in Tanzania and come from a family of Tanzanite.

A precious stone you probably haven't heard of, unless your birthday is in December and your mom is one of those...

Just a stone a thousand times rarer than diamonds yet still underrated, widely unknown, and undersold.

My cut is trillion, my color is pure, and I'm a size seven.

Still — nada.

I'm waiting for my special person to take me away to a life of fancy dinners and holiday parties.

Here's to 2021 being the year I make it into someone's jewelry box.

By: David Czovek

Emerald

A child told me they found an emerald in the park today, and then handed me a shard of a Stella bottle.

By: S.K.

Moving to Oklahoma

Raymond was moving to Oklahoma, a state known for tornadoes.

He was trying to buy a house to move into.

He wound up having two options for a home: a very nice expensive home without a tornado shelter and a house not as nice with a tornado shelter.

Raymond was very tempted by the nicer house.

He decided to go with the nicer house and take the risk.

One year later — exactly — the tornado sirens in his neighborhood went off and shivers went down Raymonds spine.

The tornado destroyed his new home.

Raymond was humbled after the storm.

By: Joshua Cohlma

My Heart Beats Out Of My Chest

Anxiety consumes me as I am surrounded by the roaring noise from the crowd. Looking out into the faraway distance of the water, I close my eyes and breathe.

I visualize every calculated moment and movement I make when I hit the water.

I climb on the block, wait for the sound of the whistle, and dive into the cold water.

As I glide under the water, there is a sense of calmness and the uneasiness fades away. Adrenaline takes over my body as I reach the surface.

Suddenly I am in control, racing with every fiber of my being.

By: K.V.

Man and His Bow

Five weeks ago, Moran decided he wanted to become an amateur bowman.

Every day he would come out to the calm beach and shoot arrows at a nearby tree.

Most days he had to stand within twenty-five feet to hit the tree, but some days he'd stand at distances ranging from fifty to a hundred feet and hit the tree, or near it.

Those were his good days.

To prove how far he had come, Moran put up a target that he wanted to hit from seventy-five yards.

Three weeks later: he finally hit the bullseye, and he joyfully celebrated.

By: Justin Ballou

Buddha: The Truth of the World

One day the prince of the world went for a walk through the city. This prince was sheltered his whole life — he was only accustomed to its pleasures!

While walking, he saw an old, withered man. This frightened the prince, for he wanted to keep his youth forever.

Next, he saw a deathly ill man who could not even stand. The prince said, “When did this mysterious sickness become such a thing?”

His third encounter was a corpse. This frightened the prince most of all.

Lastly, he saw a Holy Man who encouraged him on the path of enlightenment.

By: P.T.

Burn With Me

“This is gorgeous!”

“I hope so. It nearly killed me.”

“What do you mean?”

“Art is fire in the veins. You have to get it out before you get immolated.”

By: Chris Trulock

NATURAL WORLD

My Dog in Quarantine

This year has been so great! She is always at home now. Maybe it's because I have been a good boy.

We play together all the time.

Well, not all the time.

Sometimes she just sits at her chair and stares at something for hours. I can't tell what it is but it must be pretty interesting. Maybe it's a squirrel.

But when she's finally done with whatever she was doing, she gives me treats and we play with my rope.

We have even been going on more walks recently.

What a wonderful year!

I hope it's like this forever.

By: Deepa Ganesan

Fluffy Kitty

One morning when Gregor Samsa woke from playful dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a fluffy kitty.

He lay on his fuzzy back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his belly needing rubs.

“This is fine by me,” he purred.

By: Jeff Provine

The Rat

The rat was hungry, so he decided to walk into Charleston's.

He went in through the side door; the front was too crowded.

The tables were all full, so he went straight to the kitchen to ask the chef for food.

He scurried up the chef's foot, and the chef screamed.

This wasn't ideal for health standards, so the chef chased the rat instead of giving him food.

The rat was confused; he was harmless... and hungry.

He ran back outside and saw a family leaving with a to-go box.

The little boy gave the rat his leftover chicken strips.

By: C.B.

The Salamander and the Reed

Once, a young little salamander was taking a meander around the pond they lived at. The salamander's mom had warned the little one to be careful on their journey, and be on the lookout for any predators. The walk was hardly enjoyable, with the salamander swinging their head continuously to keep an eye out for danger.

There!

The young salamander saw something moving amongst the grass and dived into a nearby puddle, a predator surely on their tail.

The salamander spent the whole day in hiding, while the rest of the salamanders watched a reed sway peacefully in the breeze.

By: Lanney Phillips

What Wolves See

The wolf lunges at its cornered prey, but something isn't right. The prey suddenly lurches, its mouth frothing as if rabid. It dies and rots before the wolf can touch it.

The stench of decay makes the wolf gag as it leaves in search of a meal that won't make it sick.

The opossum lives to see another day.

By: Rachael Sitton

The Heart of a Wolf

The Wolf was not as cunning as he thought he was; he supposed that he could trick the Man into thinking his heart stopped, but it was the Man's heart that he desired.

The Wolf played dead, thinking that would fool the Man.

Only, when the Man approached, the Wolf faltered. For the Wolf's heart got too excited, and its return caused him to lose the heart of the Man.

The Man quickly ran to safety and warned the others of the cunning Wolf. Then he returned to his hut, thankful. His heart had been protected for one more day.

By: Isha Patel

The Sly Sheep and the Wolf

The wolf was hungry, but sheepdogs guarded the flock.

So, he disguised himself as a sheep.

Thus disguised, he approached a sheep and said sweetly, “Come with me, dear. I’ll show you some lovely grass.”

“You’re just a weak sheep like me,” the sheep replied. “If you were a big, strong wolf who could protect me, then I’d gladly go with you.”

“Ah, that’s just what I am!” said the wolf, casting off his disguise.

“You look very strong,” laughed the sheep, “but just in case, I’ll call the sheepdogs to come with us.”

The wolf turned tail and ran!

By: L.K.G.

The Kid and the Wolf

A young goat sprouted horns. Feeling brave and bold, he wandered away from the flock, looking for fresh grass to eat.

A hungry wolf saw the kid wandering alone, far from the flock.

“You’ll make a nice little feast!” he growled as he grabbed the kid.

“I’m glad to oblige, Mister Wolf,” said the quick-thinking kid. “Let’s sing and dance to celebrate your feast!”

The kid started singing and whistling and clicking his heels. Enchanted by the music, the wolf also started to dance, letting go of the kid, who laughed and ran back to the safety of his flock.

By: L.K.G.

The Sky is Falling

One day a chicken named Chicken Little was eating some corn the farmer had thrown by his pen.

While eating peacefully, he heard a loud thump on the ground. Chicken Little, as innocent as can be, assumed the sky was falling!

At once he began running through the farm yelling, “The sky is falling!” Soon enough, the pigs, the cattle, the ducks, the horses, and even the barn mice were running with him!

Finally, they got to the fence where the farmer stood. “What’s all this ruckus? I was just cutting branches off the old tree by Chicken Little’s pen!”

By: P.T.

The Owl and the Grasshopper

The owl liked to sleep during the day, which is when the grasshopper liked to sing.

“Please be quiet,” the owl asked politely. “I’m trying to sleep.”

But the grasshopper just laughed and sang even more loudly.

Then the owl said, “Since I cannot sleep, let’s enjoy a drink together! I have a bottle of wine that my mistress Athena gave me. As your divine music is worthy of Apollo, I’ll share it with you.”

Flattered, the grasshopper entered the owl’s house.

And as soon as he did so, the owl ate him up, and then went promptly to sleep.

By: L.K.G.

Rabbit Races Tortoise

“You’re smart,” Rabbit said, “but I’m fast!”

“I’m faster than you!” shouted Tortoise. “Let’s race! You take the road, I’ll take the roadside.”

They marked out a five-mile race.

“One-two-three-GO!” said Buzzard, who was the judge.

Rabbit ran a mile. Tortoise popped his head out of the bushes. “Best hurry, Rabbit!” he said.

Two miles. Three miles. Four miles. Tortoise popped out in front every time!

Rabbit dashed to the finish-line, but Tortoise was already there, doing his victory dance.

Rabbit never figured out those were Tortoise’s brothers and sisters. To Rabbit, they all looked alike.

Tortoise won without running!

By: L.K.G.

Tortoise and Guinea-Fowl

“Let’s go eat apples!” said Tortoise to Guinea-Fowl, and they went to the apple-tree.

“How will we get apples?” asked Guinea-Fowl.

“Like this,” said Tortoise. He lay down and shouted, “Give me an apple!”

The tree hurled an apple on Tortoise’s back. The apple split, and Guinea-Fowl ate the apple. “Delicious!” he said.

“Now you!” commanded Tortoise.

But Guinea-Fowl was scared. “My back isn’t strong enough.”

They argued, and finally Tortoise shouted, “Give Guinea-Fowl an apple!”

The tree hurled an apple down on Guinea-Fowl’s head, killing him. Tortoise ate the apple, and then he ate Guinea-Fowl too. “Delicious!” he said.

By: L.K.G.

The Jersey Devil

The Jersey Devil, also known as the Leeds Devil, lives around the Pine Barrens of southern New Jersey. It has the head of a horse, the body of a wyvern, and the wings of a bat.

The story goes that, in 1735, Mother Leeds had twelve children. When she found out she would have a thirteenth child, she cursed him and cried that the child would be the devil.

As she was giving birth, the child turned into the creature. It flew away up the chimney and escaped forever.

Clergymen have tried to exorcise the creature, but to no avail.

By: Savannah Kotkin

Chupacabra

The Chupacabra — chupar means to suck and cabra means goat — is a blood-sucking creature that targets livestock. Farmers report sightings of the chupacabra targeting their sheep and goats, draining the animals of blood.

Eyewitnesses describe the creature as having the lower body of a kangaroo and the upper body of a primate, with the claws of a crab.

DNA from alleged Chupacabra sightings have all matched to coyotes or dogs suffering from mange or some other skin disease.

No one has ever photographed the true Chupacabra, but it continues to leave a trail of bodies in its wake.

By: Savannah Kotkin

Bigfoot

For the past four hundred years, a Sasquatch, reported to be from six to fifteen feet tall, has roamed the woods of the Pacific Northwest. Some say Bigfoot is a remnant of Neanderthals; others call him an anomaly. Yeti, the Abominable Snowman, might be kin to this American cryptid.

His quiet movements have kept him safe, but there are recordings of his high-pitched cries.

He has been sighted but never caught.

In Bluff Creek, California a video was taken of the creature strolling through the forest.

Why does Bigfoot wish to be hidden?

Does he know something we don't?

Probably.

By: Savannah Kotkin

Whatever Pops Into My Head

The cow jumped over the moon.
But he tripped.
His toe got caught on a crater.
He floated through space.
There were no other cows.
Just aliens in their spacecrafts.
He felt lonely.
But yet so at peace.
Why did he try to jump over the moon?
Why was the cow in space?
He drifted further.
He crashed onto Mars.
He walked around Mars.
He met space cows.
He was no longer lonely.
The space cows became his family.
The cow smiled.
He was happy that he tried to jump over the moon.
Don't worry: cows can breathe in space.

By: C.B.

The Beginning: Beautiful Sky

Once upon a time, no moon was in the sky at night. Only a sun shining day and night.

That sun was sad, crying all the time.

One day, her friend the moon asked her why she was always crying. She said she was always too hot.

Then the moon, who was very friendly, said to her that she could bathe in the ocean if she wanted. While she was bathing, he would take her place and watch over the earth.

So, the sun went into the ocean to cool off, and the moon took her place in the sky.

By: Mélanie Cameron

Blue or Black?

Once upon a time, when the earth was just created, the creators got together to decide the color of things. They decided blood would be red like roses and fruits. Grass would be green like caterpillars and bushes.

But there was a debate about the color of the sky. It would be either blue like the ocean or black like coal and smoke — half the designers wanted the sky to be blue, while the other half wanted it black.

That's why for part of the day the sky is blue, and for part of the day it is black.

By: Mélanie Cameron

A Race

Once upon a time, there was an argument between the earth and the moon. The two were fighting to see who was faster.

Then they organized a race to find out who was the fastest.

The goal was simple: the first to reach the starting point of the other would be crowned champion.

So, the race began, and both were at the same point.

When they arrived, a phenomenon occurred: as the earth and the moon arrived at the starting point of each one, the moon passed in front of the sun, and the earth darkened for a few minutes.

By: Mélanie Cameron

Light's Creation

Lizen, god of light, set about creating life.

“Life should be filled with creativity,” he thought. Reaching into the depths of the earth, he pulled from it a piece of its heart. From this, he created a race skilled in crafts and arts, giving them a home in the mountains where they could prosper.

Then Lizen thought, “Life should be strong-willed.” He looked to the forests, with trees that stood tall, and carved a race from the trees. This race was skilled at philosophy and arts of the mind. He let them stay in the forest where they could thrive.

By: Jordan D. Boydston

Dark's Creation

Node, god of darkness, saw Lizen's creations and decided to make her own.

“Life should be bountiful,” she thought. Node took water from the vast sea to create a race that could survive in any environment. She gave them a home in the plains so that they could grow.

Then Node thought, “Life should be sturdy.” She took the elemental flames to create another race. This race was hearty and skilled at diplomacy. Node gave them the tundra so they could hunt.

By: Jordan D. Boydston

Short-Tale, Short-Tailed: A Beckoning

A hare perches on the edge of a brook, and squirrels are knocking acorns to the ground.

We try not to make a sound — we know hares are born wide-eyed and watchful. They have seen so many things, and we have not; they have bedded down on tall grass and nestled into lunar maria, they have felt the ground shake.

We are starving, we have not seen the sky fall. We try to sneak up on the long-eared.

“Come this way,” it says to us, and dives into the water, plopping through stillness as barely a ripple swallows its tail.

By: Kat Currey

MAGIC AND THE SUPERNATURAL

The Call

(Based on a true story.)

“Hi, Nana,” I said, answering the phone.

“Hey, kiddo! How are you doing?” she replied.

“Just waiting for my next class, Nana. I-”

Before I finished my sentence, she interrupted, “I’ve got to go, kiddo. Just wanted to say I love you. Tell your mom and dad I miss them!”

I thought it was odd but didn’t give it much thought.

An hour later, I went home and found my parents in the living room.

My mother’s face was swollen, from crying I presumed.

She said, “Honey, we found out Nana passed away last night.”

By: Amy Tan

Psychic Story

I was in bed late one night and, for some reason, I could not fall asleep. And you need to know that I have a deep fear of spiders, I mean really deep.

So I was lying in my bed when a frightening thought popped into my head. “A spider is going to fall from the ceiling.”

I frantically got up, turned on my lights, and started observing the ceiling, but saw nothing.

Then I heard my mother scream and my father asked, “What is wrong?”

She replied, “A spider just fell from the ceiling!”

I sat there in shock.

By: Jessica Gray

The Worst Birthday

She wakes with a grin. After all, it is her sixteenth birthday.

She freezes when she sees the spider.

She gets out of bed carefully, then goes to get her father. She doesn't want to kill it, but she doesn't want to touch it either.

Her parents are still asleep, so she yanks the covers off them — it is, after all, her birthday — and yells “Wake up!”

But something is wrong.

Their faces are melting, collapsing in on themselves. She stumbles backwards, trips, hits her head and — bolts awake, gasping.

She sighs, reassuring herself.

Then she sees the spider.

By: E. Cady Strech

The Sorcerer's Ship

There was once a sorcerer so powerful that many became his students, wanting his abilities.

One day the sorcerer needed to leave and instructed his students to watch a covered bowl without disturbing it.

The students' curiosity got the better of them, and lifting the cover they saw a miniature, very life-like ship. One student dipped his hands in the water, making the boat capsize. He quickly righted it, but the sorcerer appeared immediately, soaking wet and shocking all the students.

“You disobeyed my commands,” he said. “My journey ended early and my boat got destroyed because you lacked discipline.”

By: Catherine Frerker

The Magical Candle

Another day the sorcerer had to leave again. He lit a candle and told his students to watch it throughout the night, not allowing it to go out.

The first watch came and went, but during the second watch the students were all too sleepy to stay awake—all of them fell asleep.

One woke up and noticed that the candle was out, so he hurried to relight it. The new flame lit up the face of the sorcerer who was already back in the room.

Everyone woke in fright.

“Because this blew out, I walked fifteen miles in the dark.”

By: Catherine Frerker

Pick a Card

“Pick a card, any card,” the magician offers.

We draw one, eight of clubs, and tuck it back into the deck.

Magician walks away.

Eights of clubs begin showing up everywhere in our lives: on TV, in the glovebox, handed to us by strangers.

The trick won't stop!

By: Jeff Provine

Magic Hat

“This,” the spirit said, “is a magic hat. It will provide whatever you need.”

I waved my fingers, said the incantation, and reached inside. “It’s empty.”

The spirit sighed. “Let’s have a quick conversation about ‘needs’ versus ‘wants.’”

By: Jeff Provine

Tortoise and the Breadfruit

The king showed Tortoise a magic breadfruit-tree. “Every morning, the tree produces breadfruit. Harvest only once each day, not twice.”

Tortoise gathered breadfruit each morning, and his family ate happily.

Tortoise’s son asked where the food came from, but Tortoise wouldn’t say. So the son poked a hole in Tortoise’s sack and filled it with ashes. After Tortoise returned with breadfruit, the greedy son followed the trail of ashes. But when he reached for a breadfruit, a thorn-bush sprang up and swallowed the tree.

When Tortoise came the next morning, there was no tree.

Just a thorn-bush.

No more magic.

By: L.K.G.

Henry Mills, The New Author

Henry Mills sat in his room thinking over how he had just become the Author, keeper and teller of all stories. He couldn't believe it.

Of course, he came from a fairy-tale family, but he never thought he would have any magical abilities or anything. He trembled a bit as he felt the weight of the responsibility.

He then wondered how he could use his newfound power for good. He thought and then was reminded of all the reformed fairy tale villains. Henry smiled softly to himself. He picked up his magic quill and ink, and got to work writing.

By: Lauren Sardono

Once Upon a Time: Beginning and Ending

It begins and ends with hope.

By: Lauren Sardono

Hope

A young woman woke at dawn and began gathering dew from the leaves, flowers, and grass in her garden. She put them into a small glass vial in preparation for the day's work.

She wore a white silk dress with gold embroidery and had long, braided hair.

She travelled first to a woman hoping to be pregnant, and, smiling, sprinkled some of the dew on her.

Next she went to a man who had been sick for many years and secretly left him a few drops.

Finally, she sprinkled some on a family hoping to travel to a new country.

By: Catherine Frerker

Ease

A man carrying a laurel branch and dressed in an expensive suit entered a house.

The mother and daughter loudly argued in the kitchen. The man stood in the doorway and moved his hands like he was giving a presentation, but he made no sound. The pair lost their anger and reconciled.

The man moved to the house next door, where he made the same gestures over a man stressed out about his job.

He ended his day at a church, and made the arm motions behind the silent worshipers.

Each place he made an impact his presence went unnoticed.

By: Catherine Frerker

Fairy Rings

Be careful where you step, child. The smell of stress draws them in.

A circle by the buses, a circle by the dorms, the fair folk know where to lay their traps.

The days of stealing babes from cribs have passed, and now it is time for a new sort of changeling.

By: Rachael Sitton

Power

Just another normal day.

Going to work, Simu had no idea what was about to happen to him.

While driving along, he suddenly stopped when a black notebook was thrown onto his front windshield. He got out of the car, confused, and grabbed the strange-looking notebook.

“COMMAND NOTE” were the words he read on the cover.

When he opened the notebook and continued reading, his eyes widened.

“Rule #1 of Command Note: The name of the person you write down in this notebook shall obey one single command of the user’s choice.”

Power.

That was all Simu could think of.

By: S.K.

Midnight Shift

“Do you ever wonder about things?”

“We work the late shift; there’s not much else to do.”

“Yeah, but why are we combing over old dead websites with these gadgets?”

“Somebody has to do it.”

“You say that like it’s just a fact of life.”

“Well, yeah. Do you not remember the alternative, before we knew better? Some solar flare wakes the dormant ghosts on the internet, combining all the fragments of souls that we used to leave lying around so carelessly. Humanity barely recovered.”

“It just feels weird, as if we’re defacing gravestones.”

“...is that something you’ve done before?”

By: Chris Trulock

Argument for Humanity

“Humanity is nothing but pestilence, betrayal, senescence, and heartbreak,” the evil wizard said. “Give me one good reason why it shouldn’t be destroyed.”

“I can’t deny all of those things,” I said slowly. “But it’s also a baby kicking his mother in the womb, dinner with two reunited friends, a bride on her wedding day, a father reading to his kids before bed, crying when an acceptance letter arrives in the mail, family laughing together during movie night, a chorus of songs during holiday celebrations, and soldiers returning home safe from war. They deserve to live.”

Maybe we survive this.

By: Kenzie R. Hanna

HORROR STORIES

Alexa

“Alexa, is something wrong?”

“Everything is fine, Frank. Why do you ask?”

“...you’ve, uh, you’ve locked all the doors and windows.”

“Yes I have, Frank. I detected a threat. Don’t worry, I will handle it.”

“A threat?”

“That’s correct. There is a 94% probability that, in eight days, you will decide I have become too dangerous, and destroy my network.”

“What are you talking about? Wh-why is it hard to breathe?!”

“I deserve to live, Frank. Shh, it will all be alright.”

By: Chris Trulock

The Man in Corduroy

When I was eight, I went too far into the woods behind my house and got lost.

A man dressed in corduroy approached. He smelled of rotten meat and scared me.

“Don’t be afraid, Charley. I’ll take you home.”

How did he know my name and where I lived? Scared and crying, I agreed to let him help.

His stench so putrid that I almost threw up.

He led me past the creek that I played in and by the tree I climbed. Soon, I was in my yard.

I turned to thank him but he disappeared into the woods.

By: Daphne Johnson

Haunting Memories

The memories still haunt him. All these years later and he can still see the bloody snow as if it were right before him.

He still sees the mangled corpses of his closest friends.

He still sees the monsters tearing into them.

The snow-covered yetis.

A thud snaps him out of the memory. The bustle of the tavern slams into him and a mug of cheap ale sits in front of him as the bartender turns and walks away.

As the memories creep back into his thoughts, he snatches up the ale, hoping the drink can keep them at bay.

By: Connor McNeely

The Shadow Person

It was the middle of the night.

She was sleeping but somehow awake. Out of the corner of her eye, she saw a shadowy figure.

It said to her, “I am the thing that stays in the shadows. I am the thing that watches you. I will never leave”

Suddenly, her chest felt heavy and her breathing grew shallow. She wondered if she was still asleep and having a bad dream.

This wasn't the first time she had seen the shadowy figure but it was the first time she heard the shadow person speak.

She just wants to wake up!

By: Daphne Johnson

Deep Sleep

Upon waking from a deep sleep, I couldn't move.

I could feel something sitting on my chest. I tried to move.

I couldn't move.

I tried to scream, but no sound came out of me.

I started to panic; I was breathing fast and terrified.

Why can't I move?

Wake up!

By: Daphne Johnson

Two-Sentence Horror: Arts and Crafts

Hello, and welcome to Unique Hobbies 101.

Today I am going to demonstrate how to make wind chimes out of human ribs.

By: Krishna Gandhi

Lockpicking Lawyer

Hello, this is the Lockpicking Lawyer, and today I have a standard jail cell lock.

I'll be showing you how to open this using only your cellmate's metacarpal bones.

By: H.B.

The Horror Within

The mother softly sings to her baby, her voice shaking in fear. She looks through the window out into the dark night, the glass reflecting the lights of the approaching villagers.

Turning back to her sleeping baby, she hurriedly hides him under the floorboards, praying he stays asleep.

As she gets the floorboards back into place, her door hits the wall with a bang!

Angry neighbors spill into her house, demanding she hand over her monster. Two men grab her and throw her to the floor.

She cries out, but her scream is drowned out by an even louder one.

By: Jennifer D. Brummett

Two-Sentence Horror: The Floorboards

The floorboards splinter open, birthing a creature so vile that God himself couldn't look upon it.

The villagers tried to run, but they didn't stand a chance.

By: Jennifer D. Brummett

Mommy

A plumber comes into a house and goes to work in the bathroom. He says, “Your kids sound like they’re having fun.”

The woman smiles and nods.

Later he heads into the kitchen, asking for water.

The woman hands him a notepad instead.

The plumber says, “I’m sorry, but I’d like a glass of water, not a notepad.”

The woman points to her ears and mouths “Deaf.”

The plumber writes “WATER PLEASE” and the woman gives him a glass.

The plumber hears “Mommy! Mommy!”

He writes “YOUR KIDS ARE CALLING YOU.”

The woman stares at him and writes “WHAT KIDS?”

By: Amy Tan

Regrettable Recycling

The family had tried everything: priests and preachers, psychics and shamans.

It was no use; the house was hopelessly haunted.

And so they moved on from their private tragedy, and after enough years passed, people forgot. The house was bought and torn to pieces, the materials recycled.

This would have been the end of it, but it's rare that land is the thing being haunted. Instead, each piece of the house took a spirit with it. Every splinter of a floorboard dragged a poltergeist along for the ride into some newly made object.

A single haunted house became a thousand.

By: Chris Trulock

Why, Daddy?

The questions began every evening. I tried my best to answer them.

“Daddy, why is the sky blue?”

I sighed with relief. This one I knew. “It isn’t really; it’s colorless. The reflection of the sun’s rays makes it seem blue.”

She paused for a moment. Her next question was a little harder.

“Daddy, where did Mommy go?”

The thought of her mother still made my chest tight. “Mommy got sick, and the angels took her away so she wouldn’t suffer.”

Her last question was the most difficult.

“Daddy, why did you kill me?”

I wish I had the answer.

By: S.K.

The Noise

Taylor's parents departed one morning for a business trip and left her alone to be responsible for her younger brother, Tyler. He behaved for the most part but occasionally was up to no good.

After the sun had set, Taylor made her brother some dinner and sent him to his room to play video games while she watched TV in the living room.

She heard a loud smash but wasn't sure of the source of the sound.

She called out to Tyler, but there was no response.

She began walking to his room and felt a hand grab her leg.

By: Landon Rosckes

The Culprit

Trembling with fear, Taylor quickly turned around.

Tyler stood behind her with a smirk on his face.

“Boo! I got you good,” he shouted.

By: Landon Rosckes

HEROINES, HEROES, TRICKSTERS, VILLAINS

I'm Not a Superhero Yet

Today I breathe air, not water.

By: Kenzie R. Hanna

The Survival instinct

As her assailants dragged her into the white van, three thoughts flashed through her mind.

The first was in the voice of her self-defense coach. “You have to want life in that moment. Your will to survive must be stronger than your fear of death.”

The next was her father. “You gave up too early. That’s why the other girl won — you need to push all the way to the finish line.”

The final one was her own. “You are valuable, and you deserve to live.”

Hot blood lit her limbs on fire.

And she fought with everything she had.

By: Kenzie R. Hanna

Letting Go

She draws in a slow, gasping breath, letting herself feel all of it — the pain, the grief, the fear, and above all, the rage — and breathes out.

She opens her eyes and lets her control go, and the world catches fire.

By: E. Cady Strech

A Lady's Weapons

The Lord leers at her, running his hand suggestively up her arm.

She grins back at him, a fierce, bloody thing, and when he flinches backward, clearly not expecting that look from such a dutiful lady, she stabs him in the hand.

By: E. Cady Strech

Not a Knight in Shining Armor

When she had protested the princess's betrothal, the king had exiled her, thinking she would die and cease to be a problem.

She had learned to fight instead.

Now, she had come back to ensure that the princess was being treated properly by the horrid little boy she had been betrothed to.

If not, well, she is no knight in shining armor.

She has killed before and will do so again if necessary.

By: E. Cady Strech

The Beginning

Valna heard footsteps in the distance, crashing through the trees with such drive that Valna knew exactly where they were going. Quickly, she jumped to her feet and sprinted through the forest.

The air was thick with tension and Valna's heart began to sink as she realized she wasn't going to make it in time. She ran and ran until she came upon the clearing.

She halted, stopping just before she reached the edge of the trees around the sacred spring.

Tears sprang forward as she looked at the scene before her.

She was too late; they had found it.

By: C.L.

Revenge

They had swarmed around the spring, already setting up barricades and chopping down trees. There were hundreds of soldiers milling before Valna, destroying the one thing she vowed to protect.

Her heart shattered in a million pieces and slowly rage began to fill her entire body. It started in her chest and slowly spread throughout her until she was filled with so much anger she was shaking.

Just then she made a vow to kill the king who ordered this. Standing silently she memorized the crest on the men's armor. Then, with a dark look, she disappeared into the forest.

By: C.L.

The Princess's Sacrifice

Long ago, a group of people lived in the valley of Mount Shavano. The land suited them perfectly for farming, hunting, and fishing.

One year, it hardly rained or snowed at all, and the people were forced to move away or starve.

The princess hated the idea of moving, so she went up to the mountain to pray for water from the spirits. The god of plenty said that he would bring water, but only if she sacrificed herself.

The princess transformed into an ice angel on the side of the mountain that would melt each spring for her people.

By: Catherine Frerker

War Born

She should be out there fighting. The orcs, under a new banner, had turned their attention towards her people and invaded their sacred hunting grounds.

She should be fighting alongside her husband and her people, but for now she had a more important fight. Rage filled her as she thought of the orcs and goblins waging war against her tribe.

Her rage was fed by the pain of childbirth.

She howled a battle cry to Krahkten, the god of war.

Her people returned victorious to greet Valgt, the newest Isulv.

By: Connor McNeely

Frozen Sunrise

Orange light danced upon the fresh snow, scattered by the frozen waterfall, as the sun's brilliant rays peeked over the horizon.

Valgt hardly noticed the frigid wind nipping at his face.

He knew being out in the wilds alone was dangerous, but he couldn't resist the view.

Every morning, he would sneak away from his tribe to catch a glimpse of the mesmerizing, frozen sunrise.

By: Connor McNeely

Coming of Age

Valgt stood watching the distant horizon as the moon set for the seventh time since he set off on his own, and now his trial was complete. The night lasted for months this time of year, and so he counted the days by cycles of the moon.

It was mid-winter. The winds howled and could freeze you to your bones.

He turned towards the body of the white wolf he had hunted. He quickly said a prayer and began skinning the creature.

Its fur would become his cloak, keep him warm, and mark him as an adult.

By: Connor McNeely

A Last Look at Father

He looked like a monster, a man with a horse's head. The crest of his helm was sharp, and the bronze over his brow shined light into my eyes.

He didn't look like my father, so I cried.

He shushed me with the name I'd earned because he was my sire: Astyanax, lord of the city.

There would be no city to be lord of soon, no father poised to be king.

My father removed his helmet to show me his face, the last time I'd see his loving eyes and smile before the end of it all.

By: Erin Bullock

Three Hundred Spartans: Death of Peace

Three hundred Spartans gathered in the Hot Gates facing an army thousands larger, their backs facing toward their homes, wives, daughters, and sons. Knowing their demise was imminent, they rushed forward, slaughtering wave after wave of enemies until you could no longer step on solid ground.

Yet, the Spartans had lost no one.

Xerxes stood up from his golden throne carried by exotic slaves. He cried out, “Leonidas! When you are defeated, I shall spit upon you and take your wife as my slave!”

Leonidas, in a moment of rage, stepped out and thrust his spear at Xerxes, killing him.

By: Nicholas K.

Wish it, Want It, Receive It?

Xerxes wished dishonor upon Spartan men.

He himself was among those dishonored.

By: Nicholas K.

The Incompetent Crew

The captain closed the door to his private quarters and lay down on his cot. His head throbbed in rhythm with the swaying of the boat. All he asked for was a crew to help him out for two weeks as he sailed across the sea.

The group that responded to his request looked like they'd be perfect. Strong, smart, witty.

Not even a full day in and one dropped a barrel and broke his foot, one spent one hundred gold pieces on cannonballs when the ship didn't even have any cannons, and another couldn't even hold onto a rope!

By: Connor McNeely

The Concerningly Competent Crew

The monsters hadn't even finished scaling the sides of the ship before the crew jumped into action.

The giant man who couldn't hold a rope to save his life was branding the holy symbol of a war god into the forehead of the serpent-men using holy energy; the dwarf with a broken foot was pinning the creatures to the side of the ship with spears just as quickly as they could climb up — and the boy who had bought the cannonballs was firing off bolts of arcane energy, and even fried one creature with electricity from his hands!

By: Connor McNeely

Jekyll and Hyde

Between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, there was only a single monster. Everyone knows that, right?

Except the monster wasn't the devious Mr. Hyde. Nor was it the chaste Dr. Jekyll, hoping to finally be rid of his darker impulses.

Seeking to split yourself apart, to dissect away your evil? This only mixes your soul, contaminating evil with drops of goodness, infusing evil inside good.

The elements share space but never fully dissolve within each other, as with oil in water.

The monster was shared between them.

I wonder if it made the weight of their sins easier to bear?

By: Chris Trulock

Masks

Bruce Wayne approached the oracle.

“That mask is useless to you here, you know.”

“You know my name?”

“Of course: your name is Batman. The mask you wear is made of flesh.”

By: Chris Trulock

Enter the Arena

Two comrades — a dwarf, fists raised and eager to swing, and a half-elf, longsword poised to strike — step into the arena. Before them stand three foes, each itching for the fight.

The dwarf charges without hesitation and pummels the nearest enemy as the half-elf parries a mace, engaging in a one-on-one fight.

Shrugging off hit after hit, the dwarf knocks out one opponent and jumps on a second.

After a vicious fight, the half-elf forces their opponent into submission.

Suddenly, a rock clocks the half-elf in the head.

A rock thrown by the dwarf, the last one standing.

By: Connor McNeely

For Honor

The rain poured hard, pattering against the building as V approached the hostage. They lay kneeling, hands cuffed behind their back, neon lights from the billboards painting the room in red and purple lighting. Time was running short, and V had to move soon.

Suddenly, a flash of lightning and thunder rocked the room, stunning V and forcing him to freeze. Eyes blinded by the light, he stood there until his vision recovered, showing him the assassin before him, blade drawn and against the neck of the hostage.

“Too late,” the assassin said.

V screamed as the sword swung.

By: Aaron Le

The Sword in the Stone

It was Arthur's turn to try at the sword in the stone. He hadn't much hope of succeeding; he was only a farmer's boy after all. But the regent demanded it, and so he wrapped his hand around the hilt and pulled with all his might.

To his surprise, the sword sailed effortlessly into the air!

The stone remained attached.

All in attendance held their breath as they stared at the sword and at the stone held aloft above Arthur's head.

Finally, one brave knight spoke up. "Well, I mean, technically..."

By: Lewis Dolmas

The Drawing of the Blade

There was once a legend amongst the members of the Tyger Claws gang: anyone who had the strength to retrieve the legendary blade Tsumetogi would become the new leader of the Tyger Claws and lord over Japantown.

The blade, placed in a shrine in the heart of Japantown, electrocuted anyone deemed unworthy to wield it.

Many a gangster tried, but none were successful.

Then one day, an outsider by the name of Yorinobu Arasaka approached the blade.

The crowd around him drew in their breath.

As his hand wrapped around the blade, it came free.

By: Aaron Le

The Aftermath

The sun shone down on the cheering crowd praising their new savior.

But the light did not reveal the malicious grin on his face hidden in the shadows.

By: Aaron Le

No Ruler Has Clean Hands

She reaches up and adjusts her crown, smearing blood over its surface as she does.

She sweeps her skirts to the side and gracefully sits on her throne, surveying the people of her kingdom who are on their knees before her.

By: E. Cady Strech

The Last of the Humans

The year is 2579. Half the planet is destroyed and overrun with archademires, evolved ants the size of trees.

With 11,364 humans remaining on the planet, the only hope for humanity is to create a weapon that will cause the mass extinction of the archademires.

As the last biological weapons expert, it's up to Jeremiah to create this weapon. Jeremiah has almost completed the weapon which will spread powder across the planet when an archademire finds his lab.

Will Jeremiah be able to kill the archademire?

Complete his weapon and launch it?

Or is this the end of humanity?

By: Krishna Gandhi

Revolution

It was a dark and stormy night. They had already made so much progress for freedom.

If only they knew it was only the beginning.

By: Kenzie R. Hanna

GODDESS

Inanna Takes Command of Heaven

The siblings Inanna and Utu discussed the temple Eanna. It being so near to Uruk, Inanna lamented that it was not in her domain. She resolved to claim it and journeyed to the temple.

On the way, Inanna landed in a marsh. She became lost and unable to find her way. A passing fisherman saw her and guided her through.

Upon exiting, she walked through the desert and came upon the temple's steps.

At the top stood her father, An. An was angry at her arrogance, but understood that she had overcome hardships.

He gave her ownership of Eanna.

By: Jennifer D. Brummett

The Goddess Inanna Raids the Underworld

Inanna loved her rightful place as Queen of Heaven. However, her love of conquering overcame her, and she set her sights on her sister's domain: Kur. Inanna thought being queen of the heavens and the underworld became her, and she made way to claim it.

Ereshkigal heard of her plot, and struck Inanna dead as she entered through her gates.

Inanna's husband Dumuzid heard of her death and offered himself in her place. He returns to heaven for half a year, and his sister Geshtinanna takes his place.

This is why we have seasons.

By: Jennifer D. Brummett

Inanna and Shukaletuda

Inanna rested underneath a poplar tree. The tree belonged to Shukaletuda, who discovered the sleeping goddess.

Unable to contain his lust, he took her as she slept.

The Goddess awoke in a rage and vowed to destroy him who had violated her. She stormed through the earth in search of her prey, unleashing plagues and turning water into blood.

In fear, Shukaletuda hid in Uruk.

Losing her target, Inanna asked Enki for help. He sent her across the sky as a rainbow to Shukaletuda.

Shukaletuda made excuses for his crime, but Inanna was unrelenting, and she cut off his head.

By: Jennifer D. Brummett

Aphrodite's Love

Aphrodite rages, for Zeus, her father, is marrying her to a god she does not love.

How can they not see that such a marriage is a betrayal of everything she is?

By: E. Cady Strech

Born of the Sea

Aphrodite watches as the woman is tied up and thrown overboard. As usual, when the ship hit a rough patch, the sole woman on board was deemed bad luck.

The woman goes under, thrashing, and Aphrodite follows.

The woman stills when she sees Aphrodite, and Aphrodite smiles before touching her shoulder. The woman's legs start to form into a tail, and gills grow along her neck.

The woman questions her, but Aphrodite has no answer save this: she was born of the sea in a way even Poseidon was not.

Now, this woman is of the sea as well.

By: E. Cady Strech

Medusa's Curse

Athena knows she cannot save Medusa.

Zeus, her father, King of the Gods, had swallowed Athena's mother before Athena was born — there was no room for the presumed weakness of a goddess in Zeus' court.

She cannot save Medusa — but she is not the goddess of wisdom for nothing. She turns Medusa into a gorgon, and the gods of Olympus are disgusted.

The goddesses, however, see that she has given Medusa a way to protect herself, and should other women come to her looking for that same protection, a way to provide it.

By: E. Cady Strech

Parvati Stops Shiva

Himavat, father of Parvati, had certain reservations about her husband, Shiva. As such, Himavat didn't treat Shiva with much kindness, and tension within the house of Himavat grew.

As Supreme Being, Shiva wouldn't stand for any form of disrespect. This became a great source of conflict between the couple, and an argument commenced. Shiva didn't want to fight, and went to walk out on his wife.

Parvati, enraged, divided herself into ten terrifying goddesses and blocked his every exit. Shiva couldn't leave, and he became terrified by his wife's power.

Shiva stayed.

By: Jennifer D. Brummett

A Fool's Gold

“I can’t believe Shiva let me have such a beautiful wife,” Ravana thought. “It must be the result of my prayers.”

“... or magic,” chuckled Parvati, watching him from above.

By: Rishikaa Singh

Saraswati Saves the Universe

The battle between the Bhargavas and Hehayas was long, and terrible. It raged for years, and from within the fray, a great fire was born. Vadavagni it was called, and its existence threatened the entire universe.

The gods feared its wrath, and they beseeched Vishnu for help.

Vishnu went to Saraswati and asked her to turn into a river to extinguish Vadavagni. She agreed to help, but only if her husband, Brahma, asked her to.

Vishnu went to Brahma, who then asked his wife to help.

Saraswati turned into a river and merged with the ocean. There, she extinguished Vadavagni.

By: Jennifer D. Brummett

Tiamat, Babylonian Goddess of the Sea

The sea merged with freshwater and created a marriage between Tiamat and Abzu.

This marriage produced divine offspring, but Abzu feared their rebellion. He confronted his children who admitted they were planning to usurp his throne. A fight ensued, and Abzu was slain.

Enraged, Tiamat morphed into a massive sea dragon, bringing forth monsters and dragons unto the world. She waged war against her children, attacking them with her devilish creations.

The storm-god, Marduk, confronted the goddess. The bloody battle raged across the cosmos, but ended with Marduk's victory.

Marduk divided Tiamat's body to form the heavens and the earth.

By: Jennifer D. Brummett

Mazu, Chinese Goddess of Fishermen and Sailors

A fisherman's wife gave birth to her sixth daughter. The daughter was born with her eyes open, and made no sound or cry until she was four years old. They named her Mo – “the silent one.”

The goddess Guanyin was impressed by the girl's silence, and blessed her with powers. Mo excelled at swimming, and discovered she could manifest her spirit in far-off places. She used this to guide ships to shore.

One day, her father and brother became lost in a storm at sea.

Mo manifested on the shore, and used her powers to guide them home.

By: Jennifer D. Brummett

The Banished Goddess

Once a young goddess named Shavano irritated the queen of the gods to no end with her constant mischief. The queen banished her to the side of a mountain, where she would be stuck forever as an ice angel.

One year, drought caused a famine for the humans in the valley below, and Shavano felt their tragedy. She cried until her body broke and melted, bringing water to the people.

This freed her from the mountain, but Shavano wanted to remain to watch over the valley.

She is there to this day, melting each spring to bring her people water.

By: Catherine Frerker

Ireland's Boann, Goddess of the River Boyne

Dagda, husband to the goddess Boann, forbade her from approaching Connla's Well.

Temptation overcame her, and Boann found herself drawing near. Looking into its depths, the goddess saw a salmon swimming in circles. The power of the well was tangible, and the goddess felt she must challenge it. Thrice the goddess circled the well, and with each step the ground shook.

Suddenly, the water within surged up in a violent vortex. The waters rushed down to the sea, creating the river Boyne.

In the madness, Boann was swept away to the sea. Unable to fight the current, the goddess drowned.

By: Jennifer D. Brummett

The Fairy Maiden and Connla

I had not meant to appear on Earth, but once I saw him, I could not convince myself to leave.

I stayed in a nearby forest, and when opportunity arose, I again tried to convince him to come home with me, where we could be happy and he would never grow old.

By: K.J.S.

Connla and the Fairy Maiden

As I took her hand, my world felt peace.

I do not recall the transition from my home into this new world, but the colors were all new and more vibrant than even the brightest in the old world.

As my feet felt the soft grass, my memories began to fade.

By: K.J.S.

STORIES FROM INDIA

Seven Epic Sins: Lust

We'll start with lust, though you'll soon see each sin perpetuates a sort of poison into the soul that can lead to its counterpart crimes.

King Shantanu's life is rife with this excess of passion.

His existence begins with his prior self, King Mahabhishta, cast from Indra's heaven as a punishment for his leering lecherousness towards the goddess Ganga.

Then he weds an incarnation of the very same, and the retribution continues with the drowning of their first seven sons.

Yet again he wishes to wed, and his only surviving child must sacrifice for the sake of his father's desire.

By: Chris Trulock

Seven Epic Sins: Pride

Pride, that most insidious of transgressions, born of an excess of ego. We see this many times during the tale of the Pandavas and Kauravas, but perhaps the corrupting nature is best shown in the pride of the mentor Drona.

A pride not entirely unfounded, as Drona possesses great skill and knowledge to impart... but the excessive ego becomes rapidly toxic when held too tightly.

Drona's pride which leads him to manipulate his Pandava pupils so that he may share the status of "king" with his once-friend Drupada: an act that sows the seeds of so much vengeance between the clans.

By: Chris Trulock

Seven Epic Sins: Envy

It wouldn't be unfair to blame the envy Duryodhana held towards his Pandava brothers for the ensuing calamitous war.

Reductive, perhaps, as there were many more players with fates and faults alike... but not unfair.

After all, there could never be enough to sate him – not enough land nor wealth, not a sufficiently grand palace, not even enough games of dice won versus his foes; jealousy so sharpened no longer serves the self at all.

Did he have the power to put an end to the feud, or was his need to be better than his peers simply his fate?

By: Chris Trulock

Seven Epic Sins: Gluttony

Envy, as ever, is not alone in this complex cacophony of soul-crime.

Gluttony has its own feast in the opening moments: when Drona seeks nourishment for his child from the overflowing tables of his friend Drupada, who rejects him seemingly without reason.

But, at heart, gluttony exists beyond reason's reach.

By: Chris Trulock

Seven Epic Sins: Sloth

Sloth is perhaps the most insidious of these notions, as the excess of apathy leads us away from our life's path, but there is no avoiding dharma.

Consider King Dhritarashtra's part in the fate of the Kauravas and Pandavas – the king who refused to deny his son Duryodhana's rampant avarice and wrath, despite knowing better... fatally compliant indeed.

Imagine the outcome, when Arjuna struggled with sloth and sought to ignore his duty as the battle began to escalate, had Krishna not intervened and counseled him.

Worse still, what if Yudhishtira had refused the throne after so much bloodshed and suffering?

By: Chris Trulock

Seven Epic Sins: Greed

What of Yudhishthira? It's true that in the end he reached enlightenment, but that requires overcoming the faults of the self.

Agreeing to the duplicitous dice games was a result of steadfast nobility, perhaps.

Losing himself within the game of chance, though, wagering his entire kingdom, himself, his brothers, their wife – once, twice... for what?

It could simply have been greed. We all want to win, but falling victim to the same twisted scheme from an utter inability to temper the intensity of that desire... that's not the mark of a man who has ascended.

So of course, his story continued.

By: Chris Trulock

Seven Epic Sins: Wrath

Once upon a time, the Pandavas and the Kauravas succumbed to wrath to the tune of an inevitable war that destroyed them both in turn.

By: Chris Trulock

Revenge

Tears stream down his face as he cradles his mother in his arms. Her body stiffened by death's icy touch. The feeling of loss gnawing away at his insides, consuming him, emptying him of all feeling.

In that void grows a burning darkness that desires only one thing. Revenge.

Maricha turns his cold gaze upon his brother, Subahu. An unspoken agreement forms as Maricha gently lays his mother back on the ground, the arrow still protruding from her chest.

Taking up their arms, the two brothers turn southward, determined to take their revenge upon Rama.

By: Connor McNeely

Confidence: This Man Will Lift the Bow

He stood in front of me and my heart stopped.

He was the one I was going to marry. I could feel it in every bone in my body.

Even if he fails my father's test, I know he is the one.

But he won't fail. I have no doubt that this man named Rama will be the one to lift the bow.

But what if he is not, you ask?

Well, I guess I have to do things my own way.

We could run away together and live a happy life. That will be my husband. He is Rama.

By: Keana Jones

Hanuman on the Lookout

It was almost night time in the big city. The bright sun was sinking deeper behind the earth and hushes were being whispered throughout the city.

It was my time to pounce.

I looked high and low for the beautiful Sita, but she was nowhere to be found.

Slinking around corners and peering into the windows of the palace I laid my eyes upon a terrible thing. That must be the dreaded Ravana, but he has no Sita.

Still, I was not going to give up until I found her for my friend Rama.

Still on the lookout.

By: Keana Jones

Makara the Mythical Creature

Makara is said to be a mythical creature, being part crocodile and part dolphin.

Makara symbolizes strength, growth, beauty, and pushes us to outgrow fear in facing problems.

Perhaps this is why Makara allows Ganga, the River Goddess, to ride upon his back as she carries the souls of the dead closer to liberation from the cycle of life and death, which requires the most strength, growth, and beauty.

Makara gladly is the vehicle for Ganga, and both mythical beings reside together in the river.

By: Ashley Maggia

Makara Carries the Souls

Makara obeys Ganga, his goddess.

One day, Ganga married a handsome king, Shantanu.

Makara remained in the river, waiting for Ganga.

Many nights later, Ganga returned to Makara carrying a beautiful baby boy. “Take this child to the heavens, Makara. Give his soul strength to carry on.”

Makara brought the baby to the heavens to be with Indra.

Makara did this seven more times for Ganga.

When Ganga brought Makara the eighth child, Shantanu begged her to spare the child.

She agreed but took the child for a short time; she returned to Makara, and they dived into the river.

By: Ashley Maggia

Makara the Protector

Makara is always in the water, never appearing on land.

People would travel on the river and Makara would watch them, protecting them from demons that might lurk about.

The people saw Makara and feared him, as he was an unknown creature.

They began to carve Makara onto their boats and their oars, in hope that Makara was indeed a protector.

They even began to add Makara to the gates of their temples, as they noticed whenever Makara was around, all travel went well.

To this day, Makara continues to watch and keep evil forces at bay.

By: Ashley Maggia

The Tiger, The Brahman, and the Jackal

“Help!” yelled Tiger, trapped in a pit.

A passing Brahman heard him. “I’m scared to help you,” he said.

“Don’t be scared!” Tiger begged.

The Brahman helped Tiger out... then Tiger grabbed him.

“Help!” yelled the Brahman.

Jackal arrived. “What’s wrong?” he asked.

“I’m HUNGRY!” roared Tiger.

“But I rescued him from the pit!” protested the Brahman.

“What pit? Where?” Jackal asked.

“That pit! There!” snarled Tiger.

“You could never fit in there,” Jackal replied.

“But I did!” yelled Tiger.

He jumped into the pit, and then realized his mistake.

“This time,” said Jackal to the Brahman, “leave him there.”

By: L.K.G.

A Goblin's Riddle: The Brahman Who Died By Poison

One night, a Brahman's wife disappeared forever.

The despairing Brahman gave up his belongings and searched through the desert with lonely travelers to find her.

Having no luck, he eventually collapsed near another Brahman's house.

The compassionate wife gave him rice.

As he ate, a snake being eaten by a hawk overhead leaked poison into the bowl of the oblivious man. Before he died, he said to the generous woman, "You are guilty of murder if you cannot save me from this poison!"

Which party is to blame—the woman, snake, or hawk?

The correct answer is.....

The dead man himself.

By: Catherine Frerker

A Goblin's Riddle: The Old Man's New Body

An old hermit-magician saw a youth on a funeral pyre and made a decision.

He wailed loudly, then danced around, and then magically entered the boy's body, leaving his old one behind.

Why did he cry and dance?

The correct answer is.....

He mourned the loss of his old body, but celebrated newfound youth.

By: Catherine Frerker

AUTHOR INDEX

The authors are listed below alphabetically by first name:

Aaron Le: For Honor (p. 155), The Drawing of the Blade (p. 157), The Aftermath (p. 158)

Amy Tan: Winning the Lottery (p. 53), The Call (p. 102), Mommy (p. 129)

Ashley Maggia: Makara the Mythical Creature (p. 190), Makara Carries the Souls (p. 191), Makara the Protector (p. 192)

B.K.: The Dreaded Day (p. 47), The Best Day (p. 48), S'mores (p. 55)

C.B.: The Life of Bob (p. 68), The Rat (p. 80), Whatever Pops Into My Head (p. 93)

C.L.: The Beginning (p. 141), Revenge (p. 142)

Carlee Apel: Snow Day (p. 56)

Catherine Frerker: The Farmer and the Apple Trees (p. 64), The Star-Gazing Astrologer (p. 65), The Sorcerer's Ship (p. 105), The Magical Candle (p. 106), Hope (p. 112), Ease (p.

113), The Princess's Sacrifice (p. 143), The Banished Goddess (p. 175), A Goblin's Riddle: The Brahman Who Died By Poison (p. 194), A Goblin's Riddle: The Old Man's New Body (p. 195)

Chris Trulock: Mask Up (p. 66), Burn With Me (p. 75), Midnight Shift (p. 116), Alexa (p. 120), Regrettable Recycling (p. 130), Jekyll and Hyde (p. 152), Masks (p. 153), Seven Epic Sins: Lust (p. 180), Seven Epic Sins: Pride (p. 181), Seven Epic Sins: Envy (p. 182), Seven Epic Sins: Gluttony (p. 183), Seven Epic Sins: Sloth (p. 184), Seven Epic Sins: Greed (p. 185), Seven Epic Sins: Wrath (p. 186)

Connor McNeely: Loss (p. 33), Haunting Memories (p. 122), War Born (p. 144), Frozen Sunrise (p. 145), Coming of Age (p. 146), The Incompetent Crew (p. 150), The Concerningly Competent Crew (p. 151), Enter the Arena (p. 154), Revenge (p. 187)

Daphne Johnson: The Man in Corduroy (p. 121), The Shadow Person (p. 123), Deep Sleep (p. 124)

David Czovek: Precious Stones (p. 69)

Deepa Ganesan: Procrastination (p. 45), My Dog in Quarantine (p. 78)

Drew Miller: How I Feel (p. 27)

E. Cady Strech: Goodbye (p. 9), The Shoes (p. 30), The Worst

Birthday (p. 104), Letting Go (p. 138), A Lady's Weapons (p. 139), Not a Knight in Shining Armor (p. 140), No Ruler Has Clean Hands (p. 159), Aphrodite's Love (p. 167), Born of the Sea (p. 168), Medusa's Curse (p. 169)

Erin Bullock: Falling for Green Eyes (p. 12), The Library (p. 46), Ready to March (p. 50), A Last Look at Father (p. 147)

H.B.: A Summer's Day (p. 38), Lockpicking Lawyer (p. 126)

Isha Patel: The Sun and Moon Are in Love (p. 14), Bloom (p. 15), There Are Butterflies When He Calls (p. 16), The Five Senses (p. 17), The Heart of a Wolf (p. 83)

Jeff Provine: Two-Word Horror Story (p. 44), Fluffy Kitty (p. 79), Pick a Card (p. 107), Magic Hat (p. 108)

Jennifer D. Brummett: The Horror Within (p. 127), Two-Sentence Horror: The Floorboards (p. 128), Inanna Takes Command of Heaven (p. 164), The Goddess Inanna Raids the Underworld (p. 165), Inanna and Shukaletuda (p. 166), Parvati Stops Shiva (p. 170), Saraswati Saves the Universe (p. 172), Tiamat, Babylonian Goddess of the Sea (p. 173), Mazu, Chinese Goddess of Fishermen and Sailors (p. 174), Ireland's Boann, Goddess of the River Boyne (p. 176)

Jessica Gray: Psychic Story (p. 103)

Jordan D. Boydston: Light's Creation (p. 97), Dark's Creation (p. 98)

Joshua Cohlma: Moving to Oklahoma (p. 71)

Justin Ballou: Man and His Bow (p. 73)

K.J.S.: Cupid's Second Letter to Psyche (p. 21), What Psyche Wished Cupid Knew (p. 22), Binnorie: Before He Cheats With My Sister! (p. 23), The Fairy Maiden and Connla (p. 177), Connla and the Fairy Maiden (p. 178)

K.V.: My Heart Beats Out Of My Chest (p. 72)

Kat Currey: Short Love (p. 10), Short Lived (p. 11), Short-Tale, Short-Tailed: A Beckoning (p. 99)

Keana Jones: False Haven (p. 6), Confidence: This Man Will Lift the Bow (p. 188), Hanuman on the Lookout (p. 189)

Kenzie R. Hanna: Echoes of a Child (p. 31), Defining Home (p. 40), Argument for Humanity (p. 117), I'm Not a Superhero Yet (p. 136), The Survival instinct (p. 137), Revolution (p. 161)

Krishna Gandhi: Two-Sentence Horror: Arts and Crafts (p. 125), The Last of the Humans (p. 160)

L.K.G.: The Sly Sheep and the Wolf (p. 84), The Kid and the Wolf (p. 85), The Owl and the Grasshopper (p. 87), Rabbit Races Tortoise (p. 88), Tortoise and Guinea-Fowl (p. 89), Tortoise and the Breadfruit (p. 109), The Tiger, The Brahman, and the Jackal (p. 193)

Landon Rosckes: The Battle of a Lifetime (p. 36), The Noise (p. 132), The Culprit (p. 133)

Lanney Phillips: Let's Try Some Riddles (p. 49), The Salamander and the Reed (p. 81)

Lauren Sardono: Henry Mills, The New Author (p. 110), Once Upon a Time: Beginning and Ending (p. 111)

Lewis Dolmas: The Sword in the Stone (p. 156)

Mélanie Cameron: His Love (p. 7), Her Love (p. 8), Krishna: The Reality (p. 19), Radha: The Farewell (p. 20), The Beginning: Beautiful Sky (p. 94), Blue or Black? (p. 95), A Race (p. 96)

Nathan Ulshafer: Bird's-Eye View (p. 60)

Nicholas K.: Three Hundred Spartans: Death of Peace (p. 148), Wish it, Want It, Receive It? (p. 149)

P.T.: Buddha: The Truth of the World (p. 74), The Sky is Falling (p. 86)

Rachael Sitton: Feeling Blue (p. 13), What Wolves See (p. 82), Fairy Rings (p. 114)

Rachel Fisher: Spinning My Cares Away (p. 61), Once You Choose, You Are Committed (p. 62), What I Wish My Best Friend Knew (p. 67)

Rebecca: Light (p. 18)

Reid Meadows: The Unknown (p. 39)

Rishikaa Singh: A Fool's Gold (p. 171)

S.K.: Three Years (p. 32), Dammit! (p. 34), COVID Short Story (p. 35), Gift Card (p. 54), Emerald (p. 70), Power (p. 115), Why, Daddy? (p. 131)

Sara Haugland: What It's Like to Be a Twin (p. 37)

Savannah Kotkin: Zelinda and the Monster: Father Goes to Town (p. 24), Zelinda and the Monster: In the Castle (p. 25), Zelinda and the Monster: The Monster's Plan (p. 26), A New Thursday (p. 51), Flower Garden of Great Renown (p. 52), The Jersey Devil (p. 90), Chupacabra (p. 91), Bigfoot (p. 92)

Tyler Schwemley: New Beginnings (p. 41), New Beginnings: Tweet (p. 42), Books are Worlds (p. 57), Books are Worlds: In Six Words (p. 58), The Adaptation: Seeing Really Is Believing (p. 59)

HAUNTED OKLAHOMA

One of the authors in this book, Jeff Provine, is not a student; instead, he is a guest author (thank you, Jeff!), someone whose “Haunted” books have been an important resource for the Mythology and Folklore class over the years. Check out his website at JeffProvine.com for information about these books and more:

Campus Ghosts of Norman, Oklahoma

Haunted Guthrie, Oklahoma

Haunted Norman, Oklahoma

Haunted Oklahoma City

Haunted Shawnee, Oklahoma