



THE LAUREL

ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY



THE LAUREL

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"THE RUIN OF WHITBY ABBEY"

by Dr. Andrew Gertner Belfield





UNTITLED
by Luka Galle





A Wicker Chain

by Ethan Schwandt





foothills; rainbows

by Ethan Schwandt

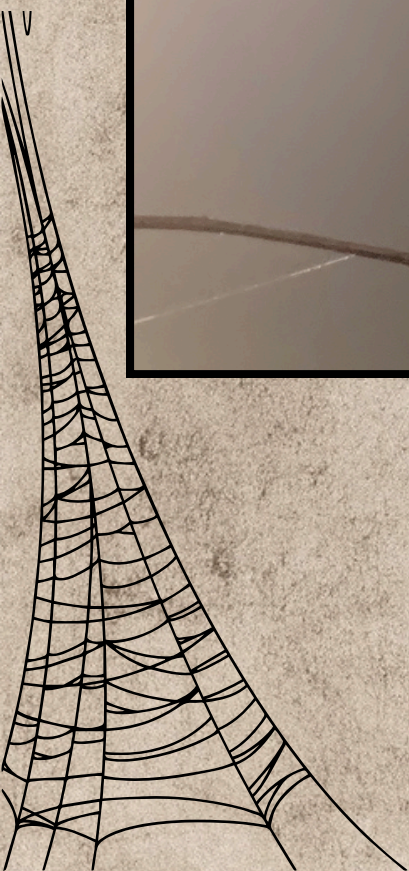




Gone, is it?
by Ethan Schwandt



Croquet in the Alps
by Ethan Schwandt





FROMAGE

by Ethan Schwandt





Rainy (afternoon)

by Ethan Schwandt





The Place

by Ethan Schwandt





o' misery! o' bealu!

by Ethan Schwandt





UNTITLED

by Anonymous





FEAR

by Luka Galle

I'm scared I'll work under fluorescent LED lights and in cubicles doing something I hate.

I'm scared of being so exhausted that I go to bed at eight.

I'm scared that in recovery I'm going to gain weight.

I'm scared of waking up in my mid-thirties,
wanting to be anywhere but where I am.

I'm scared of last-minute plans and having to messily cram.

I'm scared to make a change,

I'm scared of not leaving an impact.

I've accepted that I'll be chained to the feeling for the rest
of my life.

But I'm still scared one day my anger-driven words will cut
deeper than a knife,

I'm scared shitless of living my time in strife.

I'm scared that I'll never have a sense of normalcy.

I'm scared by the mere thought of intimacy.

I'm scared of people knowing the real me.

But I'm also scared that I'll never be understood.





FEAR

by Luka Galle

I'm scared that if I ever have kids, they'll be like me, and
envy their names.
I'm scared they'll be too fearful of judgment and shame.
I'm scared I'll always be the one to blame.
I'm scared our mistakes will be the same.
I'm scared I'll never be proud of the person I became-
I'm scared of living,
I'm now scared of death.
I'm scared of not knowing when I'll take my very last breath.
I'm scared of the unknown
I'm scared of my artwork never being good enough to be
shown.
I'm scared of being left alone.
I'm scared of judgment coming from you.
I'm scared I won't make it past 2032.
I'm scared of this paranoia that engulfs my mind.
I'm scared in this confession, I will find
I am just a mosaic of fear.
I write to deal with these constraints.
But poetry is not as pretty as reality,
I've had to accept that there are poems inside of me,
which paper would redact and lead would shiver before
scribbling





FEAR

by Luka Galle

Because it is so petrifying that it has burrowed into my skin

Becoming the one part of me that I am fearful to creating about

But I continue to display my life on paper and canvas
Disguising, romanticizing it in metaphors and saturated colors

In hopes of making it look perfect.

But it is not pretty- nor beautiful.

It is not art.

But the idea that my fears could be composed and lovely as the pieces I create...

It is such a comforting fantasy





INDEPENDENT POEM

by Anonymous

Oh, sweet little niece, just four months old,
With eyes like the stars and a heart of pure gold.
Your laughter, a song that dances in air,
A treasure, a joy, beyond all.
Tiny fingers grasping, so small, but so strong
Ripping out my hair piece by piece
You bring such delight.
A bond that's forever, we'll never be apart.
As seasons will change and time rushes by,
Know Auntie is here, with a love that won't die.
Life is so fun, and you'll learn a lot,
Just remember, I'll always be here,
That's what Aunts are for.
So grow, little darling, with wonder and glee,
For you are my sunshine.





EIGHT LEGGED

by Ana Dobrot

she spins silver silk into splendid suspended
dreamcatchers drawing depth from the dead and embedded
star-studded stuck insects, husks sealed in sticky string
sarcophagi
dotted by dewy droplets dripping dawn's red, displaying in
detail the dreaded—

she strikes straight and springy, steel-soft and sardonic
delivering doses of dope like a tonic
seductress, with pincers an insult to flimsy shell skeletons
discards them dismembered and drained and beheaded...

artist and seamstress, the mistress of snares
dexterous digits molding her medium into delicate doilies
the cycle, she says,
demands that death befriend the daring, lending
the scythe to the huntress who skewers the
dumb underdog
it's just selection!





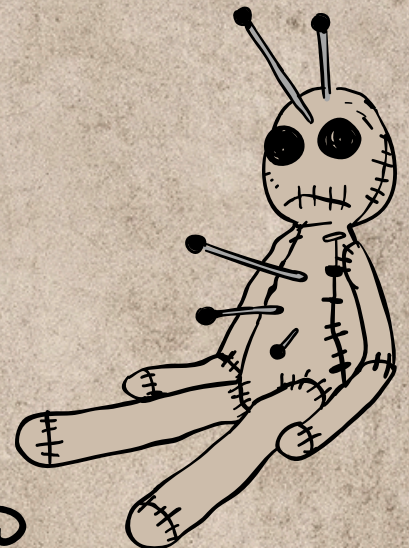
EVERYBODY HAS THEIR FAVORITE SWEATSHIRT!

by Ana Dobrot

I pull you off the top shelf and am
Engulfed in bounding hills of freshly laundered fabric
April fresh crisp rain spring daydream sonic boom
You spill into my arms and I want you to swallow me
Like a boa constrictor

Small static bursts when I pull you on over my hair
Little fireworks celebrating your warmth
I remember when your string slipped back into the hood, so
I spent an hour operating on you with the precision of a surgeon
And the careful touch of a mother

You and I are cotton blend, worn in
Vaguely human-shaped with our two arms
So similar, we wrap our soft touch around a
Person, someone solid and real
Giving comfort to find some structure
Like a sock puppet finding its bones in a hand





FALL
by Ella Ballowe



FALL with grace

Swinging

Twirling

Jumping

Spinning

they lay upon each other

with passionate colors

that strike with reds, orange, yellow and brown

crunching under that sneaker

that's placed so perfectly above it

waiting all year for the change

that brings along pumpkin

spice and sweaters

rainy days

sunday football games

crisp air

What A Wonderful Time Of The Year!





A COLD NOVEMBER'S NIGHT

by Anonymous



A hawk skims the rim of a

skeletal tree line. Dances around

waltzing, rumbaing, waiting for

the mouse scurries along the seem of snow's blanket

running from or running to something

unaware of the watchful eyes gleaming from above

waiting for a moment an opening to widen its talons and

POUNCE

the mouse slips into a tree root pavilion

shocked stiff but will soon forget.

The hawk sweeps away into the night

w a l t z i n g, r u m b a i n g

to seek a different victim.





(A LETTER) TO THE MEN I'VE KNOWN,
by Micky Carneiro (Editor-in-Chief)

My heart mourns for your mother.
I'm sure she had no idea of the
Abomination her son grew into.

My sympathies lie with your sister,
For the model you set in place of all the
Men she'll run into.

My condolences go out to your daughter,
The only woman in your eyes worth shielding from the
Monsters of your own creation.

I didn't realize my
Kindness
Was an invitation!

Perhaps I should learn to be more
Hateful, spiteful, ungrateful,
Then will you let me be?

How many times do I have to say "no"
Before you finally listen to
My pleas?

If I say "yes" this one time,
Will you finally stop
Asking?



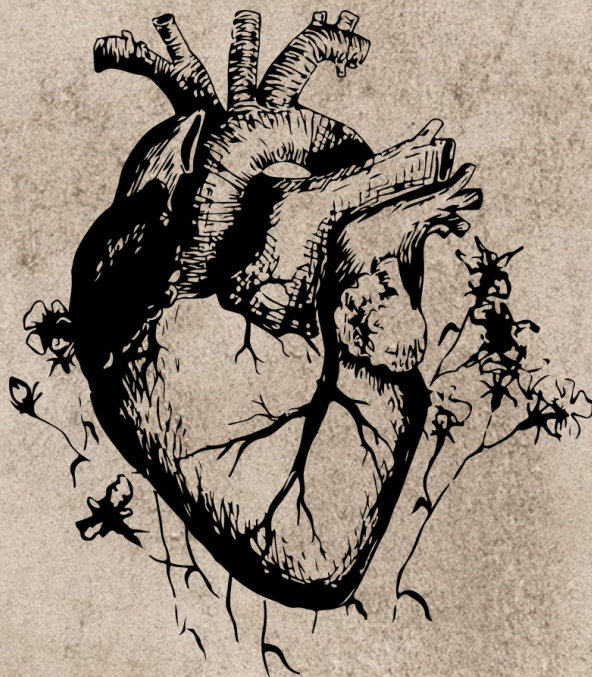


(A LETTER) TO THE MEN I'VE KNOWN,
by Micky Carneiro

A joke isn't funny when
You're the only one
Laughing.

Perhaps that thought never crossed your
Cold, empty mind
The day you

Slid out from between your mother's legs
And invited yourself
Between my own.





WHEN YOU RETURN

by Cody Rogers

I lay my head to rest at night with the comfort that you are there. We had so much fun today. So much that I wish I could hold onto this feeling forever and never break the embrace.

We went for a walk today. Along the summer-boiled streets, we strolled. Smiling as if yesterday's problems have been erased and laughing as if tomorrow's mysteries are full of good fortune. Worries and fear are what we do not share on this walk. We stop and say "hello" to our friends. You watch me play, the smile on your face ever-growing, seeing me enjoy life. I see your face behind closed doors. Scared, very much so. I notice you tend to blush when thinking about things you don't like, it's your tell sign for those sorts of things. But, when you are around me, you shed not one tear. You never let your frustration boil out of control. I know your mind is a complex place with many imperfections, when you look into my eyes, all I see is perfection. Your mistakes from the prior days are blocked from my vision, all I see is you for what you are. When you look at me, I see the pain wipe away. The way the sadness evades your gaze illuminates my soul. Like the last leaf hanging from the tree in the fall, you drop. Your supposed "impenetrable forcefield" that you allow yourself to put up is deactivated. You are now vulnerable. Not weak, but vulnerable. I see the way you care for me as if I could do no wrong.

You always seem to get me out of trouble and put yourself in it in return. The days go by, and we feel unstoppable. Batman and Robin Esc, we take on the world and all of its challenges. We are stronger with each other. Our bond is something not even I can grasp. Ever since you were the first one to hold me, we have been connected. As if a supernatural occurrence struck us, we will forever be connected. My favorite part of the day is waking up and running into your room





WHEN YOU RETURN

by Cody Rogers

to see you. My body exuberates with joy when I think about seeing you. I plow through your door and launch onto your bed to wake you. I have a feeling sometimes you are mad when I do this, but you will never let it show. Be mad at me, never.

Weeks go by, time flies by. I know that time is going by too fast, but I refuse to acknowledge it. I see you notice it, too. How do you feel? Is it sadness or happiness, or are you just trying to forget about it, too? One day, I noticed a change. You were not the same anymore. A part of you feared to see me. Why did you feel this way? I began to worry if I did something. Not even I could see into your forcefield anymore. That extraterrestrial feeling of seeing beyond you has faded. Your eyes no longer look at me with the same flare and spark as they did before, I can tell you are holding something behind those eyes. I thought we shared everything with each other. Have I lost your trust? I felt like I had done everything to gain it, but that just could be my insecurities showing. Our walks were no longer the same. Every step, you were there physically, but mentally, you have drifted to a different place. Every turn, getting deeper in thought. Your mind appeared to be a waterfall with rapid waves, constant waves, running from reality and waiting until they hit the bottom of the water. We saw no friends on those final walks. Just me and you, with the lingering secret hovering over us. A dark cloud trailed us all the way. Not over us, but close enough to feel its presence breathing down our spines. Our playtime no longer consisted of laughs. You fought, fought extremely hard to hold back your emotions. I could see you taking it all in. Looking at the sky as if it was crashing down on your head. The way your eyes glanced at me said it all. With every bounce of the ball, your heart bounced, mine. did too. At night, the





WHEN YOU RETURN

by Cody Rogers

shows that we loved to watch together no longer illuminated our living room. Why are we avoiding them? Do they remind us of good times? Or are we reminded of what is to come? In the proceeding hours after dinner. I saw the boxes pile. So high to the ceiling, it seemed as if it was a mountain to me. I wanted to knock it all down and hope to knock you off the hill, too. I needed you back off that mountain. I needed you present, but you no longer were present, you left.

I slept that night, wondering if my friend would ever be the same. I nestled into my blanket and let my anxieties float away. I woke up and went to your room, which is the same thing I have done for days. Today was different when I busted through that door and catapulted onto your bed. You were gone. Like a magician who disappeared, you vanished. I stormed out to the living to see that the mountain of boxes had been removed. I frantically ran to the window to see your car. Gone. Everything was gone. I sat in utter disbelief, crushed by what had just occurred. My best friend, partner in crime, had just bailed on me. We have gone through so much together was this the end? Was this the secret? What friend you are, I thought to myself. I spent the rest of the day blaming you for why I felt so shallow. Why did you leave? I did nothing wrong. My confusion only mounted into more frustration than I could handle. I needed to let off some steam. Since you are no longer around to play with me, I had to take matters into my own hands. I moped along to the backyard alone. For the first time, I was playing alone. This was a new low. I went to retrieve our ball and saw a note. It was from you. It was a heart-shaped letter with the words "Until we play again." You'll be back! I exploded with joy and zoomed all throughout the yard. You haven't abandoned me. I will never abandon you. We have that supernatural bond; we will always be one.





WHEN YOU RETURN

by Cody Rogers

That night, I laid my head down with the comfort of knowing you will return again. It may not be today or tomorrow, but I know you are not going anywhere. No matter where life takes us, I will always be here looking out the window, waiting to play once more.





THE EAGLE'S SEND HOTEL

by Rose Pfeiffer (Fiction Editor)

The halls grew endless as the two kept running- on and on- then one was gone. He never made it out of the room. The other got out, but he tried to call for some help- perhaps one went through- but the damned hotel pulled him right back in.

Ferris:

"On a dark desert highway, cool wind in my hair..." I winced. The air felt heavier the closer they got. My hands tightened on the steering wheel, attempting to fight off the growing headache. "A very- ironic song to play right now, huh? Totally not a bad sign at all..."

Elise turned from the window to look at me. She pursed her lips and listened. "Yeaaaah, not ominous at all..."

Mallory was in the back, scrolling through stuff on her phone. We'd invited our friend Clark as well. He also sat in the back, and was checking some of the equipment over. I can see them through the mirror. The glow of Mallory's phone screen- the shuffling of Clark checking. "Ooo, this is a great song! Turn it up!" Mallory grinned.

I gave a half-assed chuckle. "Okay, suuure! We're on our what, sixth paranormal investigation? And it's at a haunted hotel. Yeaahh, let's embrace the creepy song about a hotel! Sounds perfect!"

Elise rolled her eyes. Mallory seemed confused. "Oh, fair enough I guess." She focused back on her phone.

A few moments later Elise speaks up. "Almost there!" Down a hill, they see a sign in the distance, display shimmering.

"There it is, the Eagle's Send hotel," Elise points. Mallory and Clark looked over too.





THE EAGLE'S SEND HOTEL

by Rose Pfeiffer (Fiction Editor)

I took the risk to lift a hand from the steering wheel and rub my temples. This headache is making it hard to focus... A necklace with two crystals hanging on it dropped out of my shirt. Rose quartz, and amethyst. Supposedly they will help. Not sure about it.

Some of the lights on the sign were out, making it read "THE EAGLE'S END". I blinked and the lights were back to normal, though flickering slightly. Cars were scarce in the parking lot. Maybe one or two others. I pulled into one of the many vacant spots and parked. I parked the car in one of the fading parking spots.

I stepped out and stretched... Finally getting some fresh air after a long ride. The girls were chatting as they got out a bit of the equipment. As soon as I set my eyes on the place, I got a weird feeling. Like rocks piling up in my chest.

There was a woman standing, leaning by the door. She has dark hair and is in an employee uniform. The lights on the signs keep flickering... "Hello everyone, sorry for the lights, they're acting a bit strange..." her voice was soft, distant. "Welcome... To the Eagle's Send."

Elise:

I smiled at the woman at the door. "It's ok. The lights seem fine to me."

She slowly smiled, it was small, sweet. Nothing seemed like it was flickering too bad. There was just a cool breeze saving us from the heat. Ferris looked uneasy. Mallory just grinned.

"Well, glad we made it, miss-uh-" Mallory tipped her head.





THE EAGLE'S SEND HOTEL

by Rose Pfeiffer (Fiction Editor)

"Mellie, call me Mellie," she smiled. It was warm, and inviting.

"Well, come on in." She motioned inside.

"Thank you so much!"

Ferris was looking at me weirdly, raising an eyebrow and grimacing. Mallory threw back her dark bangs and marched in first with a grin.

"Come on guys," I glance back at Clark and Ferris with a smile.

"Yep," Clark nods, and we all go and enter.

This was supposed to be a fun excursion— but now... What the hell is this place-? My friend's gotten hurt- is there anyone here who can help? There's got to be— something feels like it's changed.

"Come on- get up please- come on, there's something different- maybe you can get some help—"

He's trembling, barely moving, hand glued to his arm. "You're hurt too y'know..."

"Not as bad, maybe mentally but is worse but—"

He doesn't say anything else, giving a slight nod of his head to say 'fair enough'.

His face is pale like the moonlight—if it even got in this place. I don't know what time it is. It feels like it's only been a few hours- but I don't know. Watches mean nothing here, I swear. Last time I checked, it said it was 2021... Yeah, as if.

"Is there anyone here?!" I call out, trying to peer around the disorienting corridors—they shift like we're walking through a kaleidoscope. I feel my arm grabbed- I struggle and try to tear away.

"Wait..." My friend speaks up, voice faint. He's got my arm.





THE EAGLE'S SEND HOTEL

by Rose Pfeiffer (Fiction Editor)

"You're right, we're not alone in here anymore..." God- his hand is like ice, with bits of red- screw it. I take my flannel from around my waist.

"If we make it out of this alive, you're buying me a new one." I started tying it around his wound, shooting a glare.

He weakly chuckles. "And if I die, I'm gonna haunt your sorry ass. Because this is all your fault."

I try to ignore the guilt I already feel and give a weak laugh. "I know, I know- I'm trying my best..." I go and call out again. "Hello? Anyone here? Please..."

Ferris:

I stop in my tracks. I swear I heard a voice. We're barely across the main lobby. "Wait... Did any of you hear that?" I look around, tearing a hand through my hair.

I get a collective: "No?" I reach and rub my temples. "Shiiiiit..."

They're staring at me, I think I randomly flinched. My arm feels weird... So I move and put my hand on it. It covers a tattoo I got a few years ago that's peeking out of my sleeve, it consists of a dagger and some astral stuff, moon, planets, and stars.

"This is gonna suck for me..." I mutter. Mellie is just standing there idly, head tilted.

Elise:

"Now, should we get the tour started?" Mellie asks, stepping aside.

"Yeah, sounds good," I smile.

Mellie dips her head. "I'll go get him."





THE EAGLE'S SEND HOTEL

by Rose Pfeiffer (Fiction Editor)

"Well, thanks -" Mallory trails off, Mellie had already gone and disappeared down a hall (probably?).

A young man walks in, from a door behind the receiving desk, startling Mallory. "Ah-! Hello!"

A smile appears on his face, he has bangs that fall over one of his eyes and neck-length wavy but fluffy hair that makes him look like a rocker.

"Hi there, I'm Chandler. Welcome to the Eagle's Send. Ready for that tour?" His smile was inviting, despite the stud lip piercing. He wore a hotel uniform, a red button-down polo kind of deal, 'Eagle's Send' embroidered on his chest in a gold color. On the opposite side of his chest was his name tag.

I smile. "Thank you so much,"

'Of course, just stay close. These halls can be—confusing sometimes. Never know what you'll run into."

With that- wonderful message, he started leading us on the tour.

Ferris:

Chandler's smile was unsettling at best on a pale face. His posture stiff, jerky. I might be seeing stuff, being paranoid about this whole thing. But if I looked at an angle—I don't know if his top was attached to his bottom.

He went on explaining. "There's probably at least one haunted room on each of the four floors."

He didn't mention the basement, weird. So I'll ask. "Isn't there a basement, too?" I pipe

in, he turns to look at me from- a different hallway I thought he was in originally. I'd only blinked and Chandler seemed to suddenly





THE EAGLE'S SEND HOTEL

by Rose Pfeiffer (Fiction Editor)

have more color to him. The girls look at me weirdly for a second. Clark furrowed his brow, like he was trying to figure that out too.

"Didn't he just mention it?" Mallory tilts her head.

No, I don't think that he did. Or maybe he did? This place is already messing with my mind.

"I did. It's ok if you didn't hear me—" Chandler pauses. "Can I ask if you're particularly sensitive to the paranormal?"

Is it that obvious? Sure—I see things, hear them. It's kind of inconsistent, though. "Yes, I am..."

Elise puts a hand out as she speaks. "You saw something already? Okay, that's fucking crazy."

Chandler gives a slight shrug. "Then you must've seen the bellhop, he likes to double me sometimes..."

"Why would he do that?" Clark asks, raising an eyebrow.

I have a feeling I know the answer already, we stop at the elevator.

"Funny you should mention that. There was an unfortunate accident regarding this elevator and the bellhop. Supposedly, he looked kind of like me in life. You know, minus the piercings," he does a motion across his face, he has nose and ear piercings. "And... It's not as easy to greet guests when you're in two pieces."

Clark's eyes go wide.

"Oh. Neat." I roll mine, but stop. There's a heaviness in the air here. It feels so wrong, like you're holding the roof of the building on your shoulders.





THE EAGLE'S SEND HOTEL

by Rose Pfeiffer (Fiction Editor)

Elise:

The lights seem to be struggling to stay on. Chandler just sighed. "Quit that racket! Save it for their YouTube video or whatever, a thing where a lot of people will see," He calls toward the lights.

They immediately stop flickering.

Frankly, I'm amazed. Honestly, I chuckle some, Mallory, too. Clark sort of scoffs but Ferris remains stone-faced.

"There's quite a few spirits that reside here at the Eagle's Send.. I'll tell you some of the more notable ones. There's the bellhop I mentioned, he goes by Eddie. There's a nurse from the asylum days, Mary is her name. She's usually on the fourth floor, in her story, a violent patient woke up. The first floor has a section closed off because it once had some of the operations there. That's right ahead of us." He motions, we all look.

Mallory mumbles. "It's always a 'Mary'."

I think I hear running footsteps above us. "Hey, you hear that?" I look around. "I thought this place was mostly empty."

Chandler looks over. "It is, the ex-asylum thing makes us not a super popular place. It could be one of the kids. There's a few. That's probably Tommy. He died from a freak accident in the hotel. We don't know what happened to him exactly, he might've fallen down the stairs and died from head trauma. He tends to be in room 247. He touches people, maybe you'll feel him tug on your clothes. He plays with light-up equipment, but he's shy too."

I nod, a sort of sadness washes over me. I think Mallory feels the same way.

"But, the most famous one is a little girl named Alice, she unfortunately passed away during an operation when Eagle's Send





THE EAGLE'S SEND HOTEL

by Rose Pfeiffer (Fiction Editor)

was an asylum, in room 114..."

"Oh... That's awful.." I say.

He nods. "It is, but 'course, it could also be whatever resides in the basement messing with people. I don't know what it is, but I don't think it's human. It roams around the whole building and appears as a seven-foot shadow. Usually, if the warden shows up, it follows."

"Oh- damn, right, the shadow was mentioned."

Clark looks at me, weirdly gaping, "Not to me!"

Mallory shrugs. "Well, now you know."

Clark exhales. "Riiiiight."

Ferris speaks up. "Could you tell us about the warden?"

"Oh, sure. Believe it or not, the last warden here was a woman. Her name was Abigail Mackade. She seems to still run the place. Originally, her husband, Stanford Mackade ran the place. Until, supposedly, he himself was admitted to the Asylum. She followed every ruthless step Stanford used to take."

"I'd be like, 'woo, woman power!' but none of the things that took place here are cheerworthy." I say.

Chandler gives a half-hearted laugh. "Yeeeaahhhh, you're right about that. Although, Mrs. Warden Mackade is rumored to have taken her own life in a room on the third floor, supposedly when it was announced the asylum would be closing. Personally, I don't believe it was by her hand, but instead, it was made to look that way. I think a darker force resides in the same room."

"Have you ever had any experiences?" Mallory raises an eyebrow.

"Oh, plenty. Trust me, you will not be bored here," Chandler chuckles a bit.

"Where would you say the most active places are?" I take out our





THE EAGLE'S SEND HOTEL

by Rose Pfeiffer (Fiction Editor)

camera. He thinks a bit. "Well, the fourth floor is pretty laid back compared to the others, there's only voices and footsteps there. Probably residual. But for most haunted—there's the basement, definitely, but also rooms 114, 247, and 335. Hotel patrons tend to outright refuse to stay in those. No one can even stay in 335, or the wing it's in."





A PIT CREW SHORT STORY

#450 – ROLLING HILLS ASYLUM

by Brooke Johnpier (Fiction Editor)

Bridget: I woke up and groaned. I had been back with my parents for two days, and the act was taking its toll on me. I prayed that today would be better. At least, I hope it will. The irony was funny, though, as we were going to an insane asylum. To tour, of course.

I got dressed, grabbed my phone and earbuds, and headed downstairs. My parents were in the kitchen getting everything ready for the trip. We all got some breakfast, watched TV for a while, and headed out to the truck to go to the asylum.

I was blasting my music when I noticed we were coming up in the area. I slowly took my earbuds out and placed them on the seat next to me. As we rolled up to the corner, my dad cursed, and I grinned. On the far-left side of the four-way stop was a neon green Dodge Ram 2500.

Jack: “No fucking shit,” I said.

James looked over at me. “What?” he asked.

I jabbed my head over in the direction of the vehicle to my right.

“Look,” I said.

James looked and his mouth dropped open.

“No shit,” he said. “Well, seems like somebody had the same idea as us.”

I smirked, shifted into first, and followed behind my girlfriend’s dad’s truck. I pulled up behind the Jones’ in front of the parking lot.

“What in the fucking bullshit is this?” James asked.

I shrugged. “Clearly, the owner of this place is crazier than I thought,” I said.





A PIT CREW SHORT STORY

#450 – ROLLING HILLS ASYLUM

by Brooke Johnpier (Fiction Editor)

I put Matilda into neutral and shut her off. I then got out of my truck. I stood up to my full height and smiled as I saw my girlfriend hop out of the truck. Her mother got out of the truck as well and glared at me as I waved at her. To hell with Bridget's parents if they were going to be that petty to me still. I knew that I would be nice to them no matter what, because even as much as I hate them now for what they did to my girlfriend, they're still family.

James: I grimaced as I stepped onto the ground. Bridget's parents hated Jack and I, and we were officially banished from their house earlier this summer. But this was the 3rd time during the course of the year that we had run into them.

I watched as Bridget and her mom went to the porta-potties, and the two Jacks nodded at each other. I felt awkward standing on the passenger's side of the truck, so I decided to walk over to the driver's side.

I got over there right as the two women were coming back from going to the bathroom. Bridget's dad went over next, and an awkward silence hung between Bridget, Jane, Jack, and I. Finally, Bridget rushed forward, jumped into Jack's arms, and kissed him passionately. I could see Jane was infuriated with the embrace, and I just smiled awkwardly at her. Jane turned on her heel and went to go take photos of the signs. Jack smirked.

"You know what this means, don't you?" he asked.

"Nooooooooo," I said. "What does it mean?"

"It means we go take photos this way!"

Jack spun around with Bridget in his arms and ran to the front of





A PIT CREW SHORT STORY

#450 – ROLLING HILLS ASYLUM

by Brooke Johnpier (Fiction Editor)

“Noooooooo,” I said. “What does it mean?”

“It means we go take photos this way!”

Jack spun around with Bridget in his arms and ran to the front of the asylum. I ran after him.

Bridget: We were finally inside after going through airport-like security and had just finished watching a video about the asylum. The owner of the place was telling all of us about the place, and to not piss off the ghosts or scream because she’ll call the authorities.

Finally, she got done, and we were free to roam. We all walked out into the main hallway, and my parents asked me where I wanted to go first.

“I vote we go down to the basement first,” Jack said.

We all looked at Jack. Well hell, everyone was looking at Jack; he’s an 8’2 tall man. But we were looking at him because his idea was great.

“I second that,” my mom said.

With that sentiment, it was decided that we would head down to the basement first. And we did. And it went very well. We then went all over the place together, taking photos and videos, and trying to find paranormal activity in the building. We were acting like a huge family that got along...until shit hit the fan.

Jack: We decided to head back down to the basement. Yeah, that was a bad idea. Earlier on, I felt something ominous down there, but I thought nothing of it. I also felt something present in the baby carriage that Bridget’s parents insisted was rocking on its own





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accord. I decided to think nothing of that either, but I should've because what happened down in the basement is something I'll never forget.

As we walked back down the hallway that headed to the morgue, I felt a very heavy presence.

"Guys," I said. "I don't think this is a good idea."

Jack laughed.

"What," he said. "Are you scared of some ghosts? A big Army general like you, scared. That's some funny shit."

"No," I sneered. "I'm not scared. I just don't want...anything bad to happen."

On the word "want", the red lights in the basement went out, and Jane's battery completely drained. The air also dropped about 20 degrees. It was so cold that when Bridget turned on her flashlight, everyone's breath could be seen.

"I have a feeling no one else will be coming down here," James whispered.

"Yeah," I said. "You're right. Ain't no-one gonna come down here until we deal with these fuckers."

And with that, I walked forward, straight into the pitch-black morgue.

James: Not knowing what to do, I followed right behind Jack. If I were to survive against whatever paranormal being was messing with us, I had to stick with Jack. Walking into the dark room that had dead people chopped up in it felt creepy as fuck. I felt Bridget and her





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parents follow behind me, or at least that's what I thought.

Bridget stopped at the threshold of the morgue entrance, and I could see the fear in her eyes. I looked over at Jack, and I saw a look of alarm on his face. Just as he was about to say something, Bridget looked behind her and then shrieked. Before our eyes, she was pulled away from the entrance, and her scream echoed around the corner and was gone. During that time, Jack ran to the door to go after her, but the morgue door slammed shut on him.

"FUCK!" Jack screamed.

I rushed over and asked if he was okay.

"Yes," Jack snapped. "I'm fine. But I gotta get to Bridget."

Jack started banging and pulling on the door, to no avail. Bridget's father, Jack, had turned on his phone's flashlight, and had come over. Jack was still not making any progress on the door, but as he went to the back of the morgue and ran forward to kick the door open, the table was flipped over, and the door was thrown open. Jack landed in a full split but flipped right back around. He then looked back at all of us, threw his hands up in the air, and screamed at us to follow him. We all ran after him to find Bridget.

Bridget: I couldn't move, I couldn't speak, I couldn't even blink. I could feel the tears streaming down my face from lack of blinking. I was praying that Jack would come save me from whatever the fuck had grabbed me.

I had tried to fight it off, believe me. I had scratches all over my arms from it, as well as my leggings now had tears in them. I could hear





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the drip-drip of my blood hitting the chapel floor because of the gash on my right forearm.

Whatever had taken me wasn't invisible, although all it had to show for itself was a shadow and glowing eyes. Whatever it was, it was scary.

As I sat there feeling my eyes getting more painful by the second, I heard booming footfalls. I got scared for a minute and thought it might've been more demons coming to torture me, but then I heard my father yell, "slow down!" I knew at that moment Jack and James were in the lead, running to come save me.

Jack: I could feel the presence getting more profound as I ran down the hallway leading to the chapel. As we were running, a black mist appeared in front of us, and I didn't have a second thought as I made fire on my left palm and burned the black mist away. Jack had yelled at me to slow down, but James was keeping up with me and that was all that mattered.

As I stepped into the chapel, I stopped dead in my tracks.

"Holy fuck," I said.

James skidded to a stop next to me and I heard an audible shaky breath.

"Whoa," he said.

About a minute later, Jack and Jane showed up and they were dead silent. James looked up at me and said,

"Welp, how the fuck do you plan on fixing this?"

I sighed. "I got something," I said.

With that, I walked forward, slowly, toward the spirit that had





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Bridget in its clutches.

The spirit was about 6 feet tall and was a flowing black shadow. It had glowing eyes that felt as though it could see your soul with, and I wouldn't be surprised that it could. As I stepped closer, I could see that Bridget was not only injured, but temporarily paralyzed in her seat. I growled and the spirit dug its claw-like fingers into her shoulder. I could see the fear and pain on Bridget's face, and it hurt me deeply.

"Let go of her," I hissed.

"Noooooooo," the spirit replied.

It did let Bridget's vocal box go though, and an ear-piercing scream was let go. That was the straw that broke the camel's back for me, and I charged the spirit. It was so startled that it let Bridget go, and she ran over to James, who immediately started tending to her wounds. I jumped on the spirit, and immediately felt it try to enter me to possess me. I wrestled with it and started chanting some Satanic spells. It began screaming in a demonic way, and then it scratched my back. I gritted my teeth and took out my pocket knife. I whipped it open, and stabbed the spirit in the eye, getting some black mist goo on my hand that burned me pretty badly.

The spirit screamed again, and I climbed off it, panting. I felt something compressing on my chest and heard the words "you fucking asshole" come into my head. As I held my knife to my side, I saw the spirit crawl toward me but was disintegrating in the process. Before I knew it, the spirit was gone forever, and the little light that was in the basement came back on.





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I turned back towards my family, and said, “Let’s get the fuck out of here.”

James: I had fixed Bridget’s wounds and had tended to Jack’s burn and back injury. After that, we walked out of the chapel, up the stairs, and never looked back.

After we told the owner that we were done for the day, and were escorted out like prisoners, we walked across the parking lot and got into our respective vehicles. Neither of Bridget’s parents had thanked us for our help today.

“Well, that sure was something,” I said.

“Yeah,” Jack laughed. “It was. Seems that nothing ever goes right with us.”

“Yessir. You’re 100% right.”

Jack started Matilda up, shifted her into first, and started heading down the road to head back to his house in Syracuse. As we passed the Jones’ car, we both waved to them. Bridget waved and blew a kiss, Jane sat there sulkily, and Jack raised one finger from the wheel.

“Hey,” Jack said. “I got a salute!”

I laughed as we barreled down the road.



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