

~SPOOKY SHORT STORIES~

**By CLOVERLEAF HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS**

Sponsored by the Creative Writing Club

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A NOTE FROM OUR JUDGES

Thanks to everyone who participated in our inaugural competition. We're delighted by the quantity AND quality of submissions we received, and we hope to see this become a Cloverleaf tradition in the years to come!

-Ms. Charek, Gwen Strehle, Kayleigh Ethington and the Varsity Just Write Team





"A NIGHTLY VISITOR" BY CLARA NEVILLE

The sound of footsteps making their way up the stairs entered my unconscious mind and lifted my heavy lids against their will. My eyes had trouble adjusting to the light of the room, or rather the absence of it, as it was the dead of a lonesome October night. With my head feeling as if it was weighed down with a sack of bricks, I rotated sideways to look at the digital alarm clock on the bedside table to my left. The numbers, illuminating with a devilish crimson light, displayed that it was 2:16 in the morning. Upon this observation, I found that my body and mind were immediately alert. I did not leap out of bed and start running, but it felt as if my heart did so. It bolted out the bedroom door, down the stairs and out the front, racing down the lawn and onto the road, pounding furiously, blood both boiling and chilling my aching bones.

The door creaked open ever so slightly, and in the position in which I lay, I could make out the faint outline of a dark figure. Despite the poor visibility, I could recognize this spectre without any clear features provided. It was my son, entering my room as he had been doing every night as of late, unable to



rest soundly without me there at his side. At first, his visits were a welcome delight. This was something he would often do as a little boy- so sweet, innocent, and vulnerable- whenever he could not sleep. Now in his teens, it was more than unusual when this reoccurred, but I was more than happy to oblige. I loved my son dearly, and would not waste any chance to hold him in my arms, no matter how grown or changed he may be.

But now my heart sank like an anchor as I recognized his figure in the dark, hazy shadows of the door frame. I heard him walk in, saying nothing. He didn't have to. He had been doing this every night, after all.

Please, I begged, not daring to say the words aloud and refusing to show any visible indications that I was awake and aware of his presence. Just let me sleep one night. Please.

I could feel him crawl into bed and settle under the sheets to my right, laying down beside me, as was his nightly routine. My heart pounded in my chest, my body felt numb, but I dared not turn and steal a glance at my beloved child. It didn't matter anyways, I could picture his appearance well enough based on his past visitations. Skin unclean, dirt caked underneath the unkempt fingernails, the decaying autumnal leaves in his fluffy locks of hair. Despite my penetrating terror, it took my greatest will to suppress a choking sob at this mere mental image.

Oh my darling son, I inwardly wept. Why can't you stay buried?



IN THE COLD I HEAR IT BY SPENCER SCHMIDT

The silent night. I cannot stand it. The sinister snow sounds as though it is pounding down upon my home as the howling wind so swipes at my windows. Its claws scratch at my mind, slowly whittling away my sanity. I cannot forget that wind swept night.

One day, one hour, one moment I was upon a ship in the Northern Pacific. It was quality time with my father, all it was to be. I heard the waves who so gracefully climbed the sides of the boat, and that wind which so bites me now cooling off the stress of the day. We were upon a small fishing boat that my father so loved, sometimes more than my mother I believe. But the calm was broken by storm, not now but the thought of that boat makes me remember it. We rode out into the deep blue, far enough to stop seeing the land clearly, all I could see by the end of it was the mountains. We cast our anchor, which pulled the boat down as though it was grabbing the boat. We casted our rods and kept on with the day.





That dreadful day. The storm picked up quickly. The quiet splashes turned to ravenous slams of water. The water swirled around us. I saw something within the water, bright yellow and grotesque. It rose up and out of it. Gripped the ship with its monstrous tentacle, or was it a hand, a leg? It dragged us below. I don't know what saved me. Why me and not my father? Why us at all? It doesn't matter. The wind turned sour as I woke up at night upon the shores of Alaska, ice cold. My skin felt frozen and the water splashed against my body in such a way it felt as though it was pulling me in! Calling forth my existence for the monstrosity I had seen that night! But it mustn't have been a natural thing, yes? It had to be something other than reality. I must've forgotten something or didn't have my coffee, right?



The snow outside kept pushing against my window, wanting in. I lay in my bed, shaking in fear as the unnamable monster filled my mind. I saw its eyes. Infinitely many all staring at me. I clutch my pillow as the cold continues to fill my body and mind, chilling my thoughts beyond my own belief. It wasn't cold, couldn't be, the room had been warm from when I went to bed. And then I heard something. I heard a noise when nothing else indicated something coming up to it or being there. I heard a noise outside my door. And from that I heard a familiar voice dreadfully speak out from the cold desolate wall that was my door.



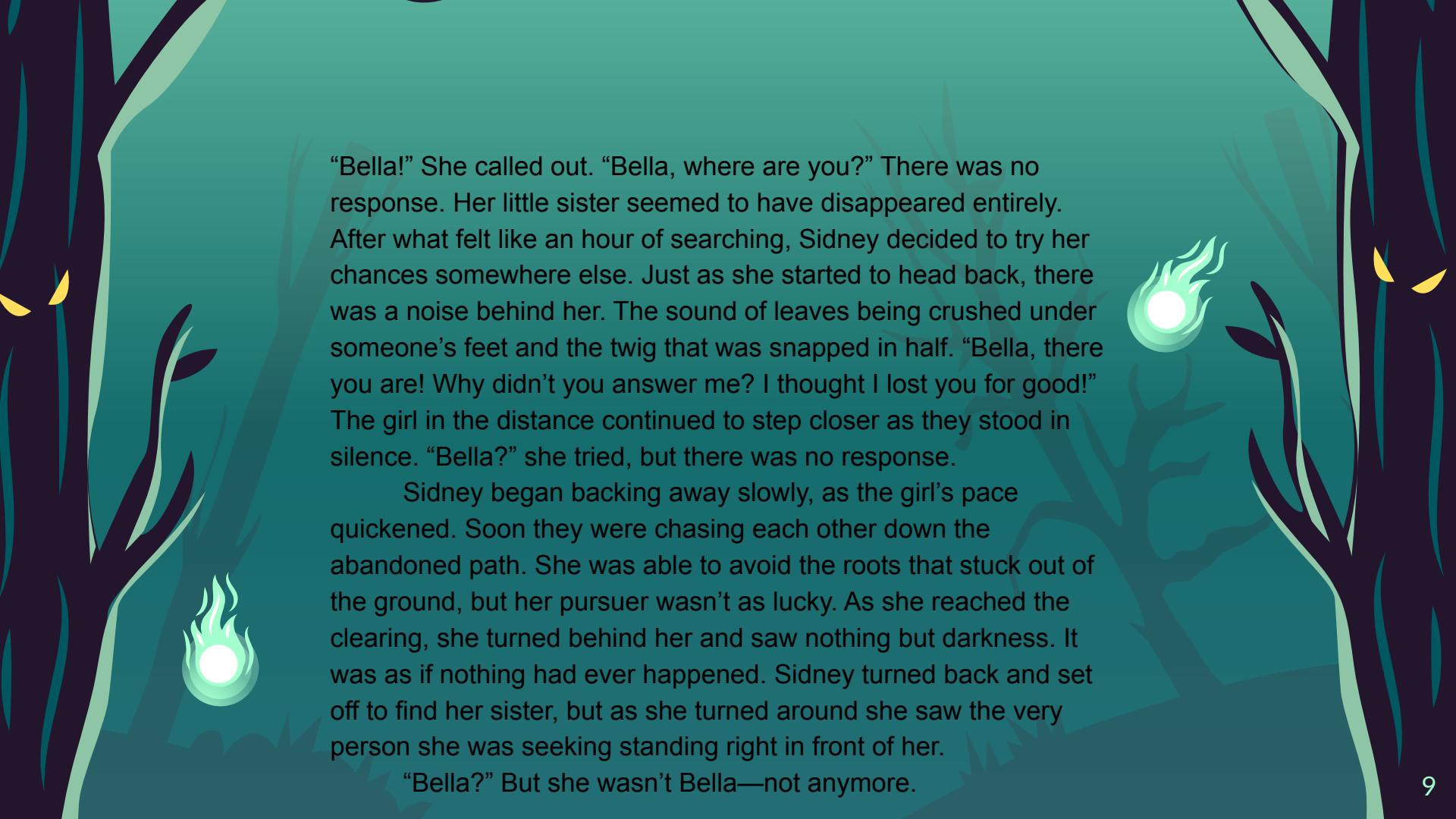
"Son, we're leaving, come out."

BELLA

BY ALLISON WHITACRE



As she approached the dark, beaten down pathway, Sidney began to walk a little faster. Dread rose up from the pit of her stomach as she thought of all the terrible things that could have happened to her sister. The area was never known for being very safe, and Bella had walked off all on her own at night. It didn't help that it was Halloween night; the night kids would be going around the neighborhood in search of candy. Suddenly someone offering candy from the back of their van didn't seem like a poor choice of judgement to these kids. It would be so easy to pluck them up, right off the street, and no one would have a clue. Their parents wouldn't be expecting them home for at least an hour, leaving plenty of time to escape.



“Bella!” She called out. “Bella, where are you?” There was no response. Her little sister seemed to have disappeared entirely. After what felt like an hour of searching, Sidney decided to try her chances somewhere else. Just as she started to head back, there was a noise behind her. The sound of leaves being crushed under someone’s feet and the twig that was snapped in half. “Bella, there you are! Why didn’t you answer me? I thought I lost you for good!” The girl in the distance continued to step closer as they stood in silence. “Bella?” she tried, but there was no response.

Sidney began backing away slowly, as the girl’s pace quickened. Soon they were chasing each other down the abandoned path. She was able to avoid the roots that stuck out of the ground, but her pursuer wasn’t as lucky. As she reached the clearing, she turned behind her and saw nothing but darkness. It was as if nothing had ever happened. Sidney turned back and set off to find her sister, but as she turned around she saw the very person she was seeking standing right in front of her.

“Bella?” But she wasn’t Bella—not anymore.



THE MAN IN ORANGE BY ALYSSA BERGMAN

Staring into the young boy's eyes I knew he was being honest with me. All of the tall tales he'd told me about this town were true. Tears beaded in his eyes as he stared up at me.

"Please," he squeaked out. "Get out while you still can, before they realize I told you."

I shook my head no. "If what you say is true, how can you expect me to leave without you?"

Tears were now streaming down his small face. "They already think I'm up to something, the abba has been paying extra attention to me."



"I'm getting you out of here John, I promise," I told the small boy, starting to grab my belongings that were scattered around the disgusting hotel room I'd been put in in this evil town, filled with monsters who worship a man who hurts children.

"I have to go now, they'll notice I'm gone soon." He began to leave but stopped and turned around and looked at me. "Make sure you say goodbye before you leave," he said before scampering down the hallway.



It was heartbreaking to see a boy of his age (no older than seven) be so convinced he couldn't have any other life. That this was all his life was meant to be. He didn't understand the joys of being a kid; of sleeping in, not having to worry about anything other than whether or not you'd like what your mom made for dinner, playing with your neighborhood buddies, being able to wear whatever color you wanted instead of that nauseating orange,

having crushes, not having to worry about arranged marriages or five hour long sermons where you're told you're the reason that it hadn't rained in a week or you're having a particularly bad winter. This kid, and all of the kids in the town, didn't know what actual living was like.

Without another thought, I started planning how I'd save John.

A few hours later I found myself on the edge of the town, hiding in the shadows of a large tree, waiting for the boy to come by.

I saw a small figure in the dark, clad in orange. I didn't move because I couldn't be sure it was John, but before I knew it, his face was shining in the moonlight.

I let out a breath of relief. "Thank God it's you John, I've been waiting for you forever," I said, holding out a hand to him.

He smiled at me before two taller figures showed up behind him. "Here he is!" he yelled. "I've found the traitor!"

I could feel my face fall and panic sweep over my body in a wave.

The figures became more clear, and I could tell they were two big men who I'd only seen by their leader's side, and one put a hand on the little boy's head. "Good job John." The man looked up at me, with a sick, evil smile on his face. "Now we'll be able to fix our bad crop."





THE ULTIMATE BY GRAEME DRAKE

The great rivers that carry the world between their banks have always been cherished by many. From the very beginning, whether or not the people knew their purpose, they have been dependent on these rivers. These great streams have carried weapons, soldiers, and life-giving supplies to armys all across the grounds they cover. These rivers of life and prosperity were always compared to many things in an effort to explain them, theories such as magic and science being crafted in desperate attempts to give them the power they sought.



Of course, the people weren't the only ones trying to understand what gives them life. Deep in the center of these rivers, the machines and creatures who have kept them alive have always been doing the exact opposite; trying to figure out what it was they were keeping alive..

They believed they were the Ultimate, a power and resource no other could have. They were incredibly spiteful, only gracious to the select few that would benefit the Ultimate, at the cost of the visitors' own

Upon learning of the people's desire to learn what was keeping them alive, the Ultimates believed they were being disrespected. In an act of rebellion, all of the great rivers through all of the people came to a conclusion; give them what they want. In an instant, the rivers overflowed, breaking through their tunnels and breaking through to the peoples land. Their blood flooded throughout every opening, every crack in the people's being. For this was the power they longed for, their own rivers of blood now being used against them, producing tons upon tons of the liquid they once called magic. Drowning in their own life, the Ultimates job was now complete. They had righted the wrongs, justified the speculated unjust that was merely a thought by few people that we were not, in fact, magic. What the last few people witnessed spurting from their own cherished bodys was the only true form of power: their own life.



ABOUT JUST WRITE

Cloverleaf High School's Creative Writing Club is thrilled to once again host the Northeast Ohio regional Just Write competition on December 11th, 2021!

Students from 15-20 visiting schools are given a genre-specific prompt and have 45 minutes per round, competing in a total of three rounds. Winners will advance to the State Competition in May at the University of Findlay to compete for accolades and scholarship money.

