

# Typewriter Emergencies

## A Journal of Furry Lit



May 2017

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## **Typewriter Emergencies**

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# True Feast

Mary E. Lowd

Argelnox hunched her shoulders inside her mechanical shell. The metal casing chaffed against her soft, wrinkly green skin. She'd been traveling for months, solo-zipping from one planet to the next, skimming only deep enough into each planet's atmosphere to replenish her oxygen and basic nutrients, soaking them into her suit's mechanical gills before sling-shotting towards the next.

The purple-blue world beneath her was the last planet in this star-system. Once she left it behind, she'd fall into deep hibernation, solo-zipping through the deep space between here and the next star. The next palette of worlds to tickle her taste buds and tempt her. She shouldn't stop here; it would only slow her down, and she'd fallen far enough behind the migration.

Yet, the sun glowed orange over the purple rocky mountains in the distance, and her determination faltered. She dropped the power of her jets, letting herself fall into a descending orbit. Argelnox spiraled downward, the atmosphere burning against her metal shell. Wind whistled and roared against the clear dome shielding her oblong head; it was a glorious noise after months of only her own breathing echoed in her auditory canals.

Argelnox landed lightly on one of the purple mountaintops and descended the clear dome over her head backward into her mechanical shell, allowing the alien air and golden sunlight to bathe the naked green skin of her face. Her inner eyelids closed, slowly, luxuriously, as if she preparing for a hundred year nap—the kind of nap that had left her behind the rest of the migration in the first place — but she didn't fall into hibernation this time.

She needed respite, but she needed to keep it short. Only a few days for searching out and collecting creepy crawlies among the purple rocks; a few more days to shed her mechanical shell and swim through the blue ocean, catching fish and jellies; then a week to say the prayers and perform the rites before finally settling down to a true feast.

She savored every bite taken with her chitinous beak—crunching the insects, chewing the jellies, and rolling the flaky fish over her tongue. It was all so much more revitalizing than a thin soup of gases absorbed through her mechanical



shell. That could keep her alive, but this would keep her going.

When the feast was done, Argelnox ignited her rockets, blasted back through the atmosphere, and fell into the numbing rhythm of flying through space. She would catch up to her people eventually.





## TV-P

James L. Steele

Lisa shouldered the door open and walked inside, clutching three bags of groceries on two arms. The elderly woman closed the door with one foot and looked around the living room.

"Babies! Mommy's home! Babies, where are you?"

Lisa stood at the door for a moment. Uncertainty quickly changed to bewilderment. This wasn't normal. They always came to the door and welcomed her home, but her three dogs and four cats were nowhere in sight. She glanced at the fish tank against the far wall. She didn't see the fish in it, just empty water bubbling away. Next to the fish tank was Larry's tank. The plastic roof and sunlamp had fallen on the floor, and the gecko was gone.

The fish tank and the muffled drone of the refrigerator were the only sounds in the house. It was quiet. It even smelled different.

Lisa looked around one more time. She didn't see or hear any movement through the whole house. Shrugging off a slight chill, she stepped into the living room, grocery bags carefully balanced between both arms.

Suddenly a lone howl came from the bedroom. The howl was joined by two others and rose in pitch through the back hallway. Lisa's three shiba inus stormed into the living room and surrounded her on three sides. The ankle-high dogs snarled at her, teeth bared, curled tails held as high as they could be.

"Babies?" Lisa said, taking a step back.

She walked right into the jaws of the little dog behind her. As one the pack jumped on her, grabbing her pants with diminutive jaws, pulling her in three directions at once. Lisa tipped from one side to the other. Groceries spilled out the top of the bags as she tried to steady them.

Her shibas tugged and growled and yanked her from side to side. Finally Lisa tipped over and fell down on the carpet. The bags of groceries split open and spilled produce, coffee cans, frozen boxes and glass jars around the living room. The bags of sugar and flour burst open and covered a blast radius in white powder.

Lisa screamed as the shibas jumped on her and tore at her pants. One of the dogs worked loose a strip of cloth. He held it in his muzzle and shook his head violently. The other two dogs let go of Lisa and chased the one with the piece of cloth. The victor ran from the living room to the back of the house, the other two shibas following close behind. A second later, a chorus of howls came from the bedroom.

Lisa was about to roll over and stand up, but she noticed somebody watching her from atop one of the floor lamps next to the couch, her black and white feline, Oswald. His mouth was partially open, and the look in his eyes was...predatory.

Lisa saw movement out the corner of her eye, and she turned her body around to look. Her three other cats had appeared from nowhere. All of them looked at her in a way that made Lisa feel like a helpless, wounded animal.

All four cats had elongated fangs. They were so large they made their entire mouths hang open. She glanced at Oswald, who had just hopped down from the lamp and was stalking her from the other side.

All four cats jumped on her at the same time, going for the throat. She felt little teeth on her neck, and something else poking her that didn't feel like teeth. Lisa rolled over, screaming and waving her arms. She hit a few bodies. One grey cat flipped over, landed on his side, his long fangs flying from his mouth. As if realizing he was naked, the cat scampered away and melted into the house. Oswald and the two white cats, however, hadn't lost their fangs, and they hopped on the couch and...snarled at her.

Lisa had never heard a cat snarl before, and it was funny. She rolled to her feet and stood up. The cats snarled again, flashing their elongated canines at her. Lisa took one step towards them. The cats scrambled away and scattered through the house.

Lisa felt something pricking her in the neck. She plucked it out. It was a piece of plastic. It looked like a fragment of a drinking straw. She looked on the floor, between the groceries strewn about. Other pieces of plastic straws, nibbled down to look like fangs, lay scattered around. She picked them up one by one, surveyed the damage to her shopping, and shouted to the house.

"You're all in big trouble! You can't hide forever! When I find you, you've got some explaining to do!"

Finding no more fangs, Lisa stormed into the kitchen. Multiple straws of various colors lay about, torn to bits. The entire counter was covered in prototype fangs, pieces of failed teeth, and finished teeth too large or small to fit in a cat's mouth. Also on the counter was food coloring, used paint brushes, and fragments of construction paper. Lisa pondered this for a moment, and then saw movement from the corner of her eye.

Her gecko, Larry, stood at the end of the kitchen counter, upright on his hind legs, very wobbly. A few pieces of red and blue cardboard were taped to his back, making him look like he had ridges. He held his hands in front of him. Scotch-taped to his hands were larger pieces of drinking straws ranging in color from blue to pink, cut and nibbled into the shape of sickle claws. Taped to each of his hind feet were two large plastic claws on the inner toes, both of them green. Lisa wanted to yell at the gecko and laugh at him at the same time.

"Larry?"

The tiny lizard hissed and tried to make a growling sound. He charged her like a dinosaur, flat feet making light thumping noises on the kitchen counter. Lisa didn't feel the slightest inclination of fight or flight. In fact, she smirked. Larry awkwardly pounced on her and sank his teeth into her skin.

Lisa just now noticed he had a mouthful of tiny, plastic teeth as well. They pricked her. She yelped, lifted her hand and backed away from the kitchen counter. She shook Larry off and the lizard plopped onto the counter. Larry's plastic teeth and claws fell off. Most of the paper ridges on his back also peeled off, leaving him tangled up in tape now. He scampered on all fours behind the sugar canister.

Lisa looked down at her hand. A small, plastic tooth stuck out of it. She brushed it off, sighed, and looked around her.

"Playtime's over, kids," Lisa said to the house. "Who started this? Who put you up to this?"

She waited. No answer came, but she thought she heard cat laughter from the living room.

"I have a hunch," she shouted. "Any of you want to own up to it now, or do I have to find out for myself?"

No answer, but more cat laughter. She even heard lizard snickering from behind the sugar.



"All right then, I'm turning on the TV."

She walked out of the kitchen, stepped over the busted bags of groceries, and stopped at the couch. She found the remote on the coffee table, bent over to pick it up and heard a splash from the fish tank. She looked up just in time to see a goldfish with large plastic teeth sailing through the air right for her face. Lisa inhaled to scream, but the fish landed square on her nose and latched on. Six more fish flew out of the water and landed on Lisa's face. The impact was like a hail of golf balls. Lisa careened backwards and landed flat on the carpet, head just missing the coffee table.

The fish chewed on her. It didn't hurt, but it was unexpected. Lisa flailed about, then realized she wasn't in pain, and her fish were actually the ones in trouble. She regained her composure, rose to her feet and stood up. The fish were still latched onto her, still chewing but not even coming close to breaking the skin.

She walked to the tank, plucked the fish off her face one by one, and dropped them back in the water. Plastic straw-teeth popped from their open mouths and drifted to the bottom. Lisa flicked the pieces of fake teeth off her skin, sat on the couch, picked up the remote again, and hit the power button.

She turned on the DVR. She navigated to the programming history. In the background she heard the cats snickering, the fish laughing, dog tails thumping against the carpet, and the gecko trying to hold it in. Lisa read the list of TV shows aloud.

"Wolves at Our Door. Smilodon: the Saber-toothed Cat. Walking With Dinosaurs. And River Monsters: Piranha."

The house itself seemed to be laughing behind her back. Lisa set the remote on the couch and stared at the list.

"All right, everybody, no use hiding from mommy. Time to come out."

Like a gallows march, the cats and dogs came out of hiding from all around the house. Larry emerged from the kitchen, walking on all fours, tape sticking to the carpet. The group gathered in front of her, looking at her, but just avoiding eye contact.

She looked at everyone as she spoke. "I'm very disappointed in you. All of you! How many times have I told you? Animals on TV do things, and it's okay for them, but it's not okay for you!"

The animals fidgeted.

"You could really hurt someone that way," Lisa continued. She turned and looked over her shoulder, at the fish in the tank. "And you! I'm surprised! You know you could've put yourself in real danger."

She turned back to the cats and dogs and lizard once more. Their eyes wandered, looking at everything but her.

"You've broken my trust. As punishment, I'm setting parental controls on the TV."

The fish, cats, dogs and lizard collectively awwwww'd.

"Don't awww me," Lisa said, shaking her head, smiling. "You knew what would happen. Now go, run along, think about what you've done and how you could've hurt yourselves."

The animals wandered back through the house. Lisa picked up Larry and placed him in his tank. She replaced the cover and heat lamp as the gecko peeled the tape off his body. He sunned himself under the lamp for a minute, and then disappeared into his little cave, giggling.

Lisa set the password and the parental controls to block every program that did not have a TV-P rating (suitable for pets). Lisa left the TV on some talk show and started gathering up the groceries. She wished she could make them help clean up the flour and sugar, but she was sure they'd learned their lesson.

"What has television come to these days?" she mused. "Even pets aren't safe! Someone should pass a law against so-called educational programming. Think of the animals. Think of the animals!"

## Typewriter Chats with Klace

*Klace is a writer, fursuiter, and Creative Director at Tall Tale Studios. His visual novel, Major/Minor has been nominated for an Ursa Major award, available on Steam. He is currently working on a second visual novel titled Winds of Change.*

### **1. Tell us about yourself. What is your focus as a writer? What do you like to write the most?**

Well, my name is Klace. I live in Canada, and I've been studying creative writing for about a decade. I mainly studied narratology and the use of allegory and metaphors as a storytelling mechanic. My main focus in writing is to tell stories that aren't realistic—but also grounded in reality (an oxymoron, I know); enough that the reader can relate to everything going on, yet also experience an escape. I don't like to write about any one thing the most, instead I'll make each major project have a different theme. For Major\Minor, it was grief. For my next story, it will be sacrifice in the pursuit of freedom. I usually tie all of these elements together while conforming to the Monomyth, my personal favorite narrative structure. The Hero with a Thousand Faces is something I've studied a lot.

### **2. I see you've put out a game, Major/Minor, what was your process for it? How was your experience in working on a visual novel?**

I originally wanted to write a novel, but the furry fandom is quite visual in nature. I thought that telling it with portraits and music might help reach a wider audience. At least during the start-up phase of my studio, it was about finding out how to reach the largest amount of people without compromising the vision of my story. After a few postings, I was able to gather up a team, and we started

finding donors in the community, with the reward of having their character in the game. After all of the assets were created, I formulated a 12 month development schedule and stuck to it right until the end. It was fun, though I'm sure I developed a caffeine addiction during those many sleepless nights while trying to adhere to my monthly chapter release plan.

**3. Now that you have this project out, what was your best marketing resource? Did you find more attention from social media like Twitter? Or were there other outlets that helped get your project out there?**

My best marketing resource was definitely Valve. They have a built-in launch exposure tool to offer new projects traction on their storefront. Honestly, nothing I could have done would even come close to what they did for the project. Major\Minor was even on their best sellers list that week. In fact, it wouldn't be too much of a stretch to say that it was the game that gave my social media networks attention, not the other way around.

**4. Outside of Social media, how else do you promote your work?**

I attend several furry conventions a year, don my fursuit, and hand out postcards, posters, and physical DVD's free of charge. It usually gets quite a positive reception, and I like to sign them to make them more personal. Everyone generally enjoys this. I try not to get tables because I like the freedom of being able to walk around and interact with people more. I've done interviews, appeared on podcasts and recorded videos with other furries as well during conventions. It's a great thing, to be able to mix work and play—and I'm grateful for this opportunity and the reception.

**5. What's next on your agenda? What releases do you have planned?**

I'm currently working on the follow-up to Major\Minor, entitled Winds of Change. But because of the Kickstarter, I'm also going to be writing a prequel novel to the game. It was one of our stretch goals, and I'm happy it was hit—because writing a standard novel will be a nice change of pace. It will be good to not be limited by assets, and have my imagination take charge. There's no budget constraints on creative thoughts.

## **6. What has been your experience using Kickstarter as a writer?**

Crowdfunding is still something relatively new in this generation, but there's one thing that is very clear. There are so many creative visions that are only seeing the light of day because of Kickstarter. While Major\Minor wasn't created through Kickstarter (we sold character slots at auction), my next game was. Letting the world put money into ideas that they see worth in, is an amazing concept. I'm not sure that my experience with Kickstarter differed because I'm a writer, exactly. I think that the concept and execution of crowdfunding is the same throughout genres and creators. You need a great idea, something tangible to go along with it, and a nice set of rewards. That, and constant communication. It's also nice to have people involved throughout the creative process. They'll watch the game get created step by step.

## **7. For people interested in getting into the Visual Novel side of writing, how different is it from writing a novel?**

When you're writing a novel, you're not really held back by anything. It's just you and your imagination. When you're creating a visual novel, you'll definitely be held back by quite a few things. You need money, and you need assets—and then you're tied down to these assets. In a way, the character portraits and

environmental art dictate the way you can tell the story. The budget cannot be infinite, so you will always come to a point where you have all you can afford. It will require careful planning and budgeting to tell the story you want to tell, without hitting roadblocks.

**8. What advice do you have for writers who want to dive into visual novels, or just writing in general? Never give up. Never tell a story you think others want to hear; tell the story you want to tell.**

Never give up. Never tell a story you think others want to hear; tell the story you want to tell.

**9. Let the folks know where they can support you and your projects and where your work can be published.**

Major\Minor is available on Steam, and Winds of Change will be fully releasing on Steam in 2018. I am writing a prequel novel for Winds of Change, and plan to release it digitally. Though I would like to have it published.

**10. What is furry to you? What's your definition of it?**

My definition of a furry, would be someone who has an appreciation of anthropomorphic animals—in any capacity. To me, it's a hobby. I'm just very lucky that I've been able to work myself into a career around it. Just like any group, it has its good people and bad people. But you learn to love the community as a whole. It's very unique. The fandom almost has its own economy keeping it afloat. There's people from so many walks of life, all sharing



one common interest. At an anime convention, you're going to run into fans of anime. Same goes for a comic book convention. But at a furry convention, everyone is so vastly different from one another, it's a fantastic mosaic of individuals. I just don't think you can capture that feeling anywhere else. At least, not that I've experienced.



# **Fox in Starbucks**

Daniel Lowd

Once upon a time there was a fox. He was in Starbucks. What a scoundrel! He was in Starbucks because Tully's was on the other side of the street, and he did not want to get hit by a car. Also, the fox really liked frappuccinos. He called them foxaccinos. Because he was a fox. And had questionable taste in nomenclature.

Anyway, the fox was in Starbucks trying to get a frappuccino, but he didn't have any money. Since he didn't have any money, no one would give him even a taste of frappuccino. How sad. He thought about baring his teeth and trying to scare the baristas into making him a frappuccino, but that wouldn't be very nice. Also, the baristas were larger and outnumbered him by a lot. He could maybe take on a baby barista— lunge for the throat, crush the windpipe, let it bleed out, and feast on the corpse— but not a group of adults. Besides, he would rather have a frappuccino. And maybe a muffin.

Since he had no money and did not want to resort to violence, he decided he needed a job. So he looked around for a place to work. Well, he was already in Starbucks, so he tried to get a job in Starbucks. Unfortunately, he didn't speak English. And his resume was out of date. Actually, he didn't have a resume. Or a briefcase to carry it in. Or a nice suit. Or any qualifications for being a barista, like the ability to operate an espresso machine, or the ability to count money, or opposable thumbs.

Disheartened, he left Starbucks and went to Hollywood, in hopes of making it big as a movie star. At least, big enough to afford a frappuccino. It was a long, long walk to Hollywood. He kept walking and walking and walking. He didn't even know what direction it was in. But he kept walking. Because he had a dream, a dream of being a famous movie star that could drink frappuccinos, and he couldn't give up on his dream.

After walking for many hours, the sun began to set. Soon it was dark. And he was hungry. So he gave up on his dream and ate some garbage out of a dumpster.





# **Sleeping with Wolves**

Carmen Welsh Jr. AKA CopperSphinx

**1933, New York City, Harlem**

My daughter had a visitor and I could hear them arguing downstairs. This dog had a gruff voice; very low and yet it carried, as if he spoke to crowds as a preacher could. Not saying he sounded like a preacher; his speech was awfully slang-filled and he clipped pieces off of certain words. A minister would enunciate.

He wasn't the landlord either, whom I already met. A mincing, sniveling, three-quarter lump that dog was when we met. Whoever my Stacey was talking to sounded like two people.

I tiptoed to where I could look over the railing to see the front door. I kept hopefully out of sight and out of smell. Stacey had the door partially open, speaking low and pantomiming to whoever was on the other side. My daughter had two-toned fur like me and my younger sister. I could see the dark line of fur that went in the opposite direction down my daughter's neck and that's what she gained from my Rhodesian ridgeback husband. However, Stacey was chestnut and white like my sister whereas I was brown and white. We are Basenji folks. My daughter learned to curl her tail over hip as I and her aunt had taught her. Right now, it stiffly wagged because she was anxious by whoever was at the door.

*He's persistent!* I thought. He constantly tried to come in. I saw pointed ears that nearly scraped the top frame. If he wanted to shove in the door, my daughter couldn't stop him. He was partly in, but, with all his height and size, he seemed to defer to her. I crept down two steps at a time to see better. He looked like a snowy-looking wolf! Or, strongly resembled one. Not as fluffy but it was summer.

"Slash! Slasher, you can't be here!"

*Slash! What sort of name is that?*



“I know your old lady’s visiting, so I gotta see her!”

*He wants to see me?*

“Not now!” Stacey told him.

*No doubt here is the mystery man my daughter claimed she wasn’t seeing!*

“But Stace, you’re killin’ me! I’ve got to talk to you! And to your ma!”

My daughter tried to close the door on him but he held it with a large white paw.

“Woman, you’re not ending this! Not after all we’ve been through! All we’ve got between us! Done in our spare time--together!”

“Will you please lower your voice, Slasher? Don’t you get it? I can’t--I shan’t see you Right Now!”

“You can’t break up with me! You’re not breakin’ up with me, so help-”

“Slasher-”

“Woman, if you do, I’ll break your neck.”

And that’s all it took. All I needed. I quietly went back into the living area, searching wildly for the broom. After locating it, I dashed downstairs, broom in paw, and hoped he was still there.

“Mom?” When Stacey saw me.

He came inside. “Ma’am, I-” I didn’t see when he proffered his paw to shake. I lifted the broom. My first swing missed but my next swing caught him on the upper left shoulder. It took him by surprise and nearly knocked him off his feet. He quickly recovered. Good reflexes, but I had those too. I swung again.

“Momma!” She tried to stop me. By this time, this ‘Slasher’ was out her door. I chased him downstairs to the apartment’s first floor.

“Momma! Momma, STOP.” Stacey close behind. The main doors were open. He was gone.

*Boy can run! I thought. But with them legs...*

“Momma, come inside, pleeease!”

The other tenants had opened their doors, watching us.

We were back inside her apartment. Stacey paced back and forth, biting her thumb claw.

“Momma, why’d you do that for?”

“You sound like you didn’t want him hurt even though he was plain in wanting to hurt you!”

“Momma, he wasn’t going to hurt me! It’s how he talks! He meant figuratively not literally.”

“So he goes ‘round issuing threats, but you just happen to know when he’s not to be taken seriously? You sure know a lot about this man...”

She kept sighing and rubbing her arms. Her tail rigid.

“Did you actually think you could get away with lying to me, girl?”

“Mom-”

“Don’t ‘Mom’ me, girl! I ought to slap you silly!”

My daughter suddenly turned and faced me. I watched her change before my eyes. I could see her low fur, like mine, bristle. Her large bat-like ears, from my side, were down and flat. In that moment, I saw myself.

“Don’t you even dare!” she said as she bared her teeth at me. Bared her teeth! At me!

I stomped right up to her. She took a step back but I could feel her low snarling.

“Who do you think you are, snarlin’ at me? Who you think I AM?”

“Beatrice Lucinda Surrey Hankin!” she said, “And I’m Stacey Lucinda Emily Hankin! And you won’t lay one finger on me, Mom! Not one! You do and I’ll fight back!”

“You’re threatening me?”

“No, Momma, but I’m not a puppy anymore! I’m no whelp for you to whup me! Not anymore! I’m 19!”

“I can’t believe what my ears are hearin’!”

“I’m a grown woman.” Stacey stopped snarling. “I’ve made a life for myself

here.” She straightened her back and her paws clenched. I do the same thing: clench mine so my claws dig into my palm pads to keep me from doing something rash.

“Momma, you can’t just come here and begin ordering me around! And hitting my friends!”

“Girl, I didn’t expect you to graduate from one of the top Negro high schools before you decided to run off to another state just so you could take up with some Anglo bootlegger!”

My daughter looked stunned. Her bat-like ears stood straight.

“How did you know about his--occupation?”

“Elspeth told me.” I said.

Stacey sat down. “Damn her.” she muttered.

“And I suppose you learned that from him?”

“Elspeth is a gossip! A silly idiot!” Stacey jumped up and growled, “She had NO RIGHT to tell you! Only I-”

“And when were you going to tell me?” Now I was growling, I was so hot.

“When this man was finished with you? I know his type. Lots of women! Can chat gravy off a bone! You his first Negro or has he tried out others before?”

“That’s a cruel thing to say, Mother! I know he looks like a brute but he’s-”

“I’m ‘Mother’ now? That man IS a brute! Talkin’ ‘bout how he’d like to break your neck! How long’s this been going on? Because when his type gets you in the family way, as his type will, and they leave you high and dry, as I know he will, what were you gonna do?”

“That-that wouldn’t happen.” Stacey said quietly. I watched the inside of her ears become pinker.

“You were going to STOP what God intended between a man and a woman, and you ‘a grown woman’ after all! You said so yourself!”

We heard knocking. Stacey remained where she stood and fidgeted.

“Aren’t you going to get that door?” I asked.

“I need to speak with your mother, Stace. NO pussy-footin’.” I heard from where I was seated.

When he came into the apartment, I got a good look at how powerful and tall he was. There was no way he was at least 6 feet. There were inches and more in that dark two-piece suit. He seemed to glide in. I went for the broom. He grabbed it before I did.

Stacey put herself between us. “Slasher Castellano! Leave my mother be!”

He gave a short chuckle and cocked his head to regard her with a half-grin.

“Kid, I wouldn’t hurt your mother! You know me better! But I don’t want her hurtin’ me.” He let the broom lean away until it hit the kitchenette counter where it stayed. Real smooth, indeed. Now he looked at me and smiled. I noticed his scent. He smelled real good that charm seemed to drip from him. Wasn’t bad looking, either. In fact, he looked finer than fine. Even his rough, raspy voice fit well on him, like a crooner in some jook joint. His snowy fur, black ear tips and wolf-like face fit his dark, tailored two-piece as well.

*No wonder he has my baby girl bad and she can’t, or won’t, shake him.*

I hated him for this. He returned my glaring with a winsome smile.

“You ever thought about a career in baseball, ma’am?”

“What kind of nonsense is this? Why are you here?”

My daughter sniffed and we both turned to her.

“Stace, you okay?” he asked and it burned me to hear the concern in his voice.

“I’m gonna ask you one question, Mr-”

“Castellano.”

I wondered if he was South American.

“Is my daughter---Is she one of your kept women? Do you have other girls with my daughter?”

Handsome devil grinned. “I understood the question, Ma’am. Just ‘cause my surname’s Castellano doesn’t mean I don’t comprehend.”

I blushed. I hadn’t intended to give the impression I didn’t think he spoke English. I had heard him and my daughter arguing plain enough.

“And ‘kept’? Of course not!” he said.

“I can’t believe you don’t have other women!” My throat went dry.

By now, Stacey came to his side. He put his arm around her.

“I did, ma’am, but I gave them up.”

“Why don’t you ask me these questions, Mom?” Stacey asked.

“Would you actually answer? Like how you told me them bite marks were from your cousin!”

“Momma!” Stacey covered her cheeks.

“Tellin’ me you got them in a scuffle with Elspeth... What sort of fool do you take me for? You think I can’t tell bite marks from lovebites? Do you really think I’m born yesterday, girl?”

The scoundrel chuckled before I glared at him and he quickly stopped.

I approached Stacey. I expected her to take a step back again but this time she didn’t. Instead, she crossed her arms across her bosom.

“When you ran away, you didn’t get in touch with anybody!”

“Yes I did, Momma! Don’t say that! I called my aunties’ houses! I tried to call you!”

“For almost a month after you came here?”

“No it wasn’t, Momma! I called weeks after I got settled. When-I got a job here...” I saw her give him a glance before she focused on me again.

“You worried me!” I snarled, “And then you send home these letters filled with lies!”

“I-I-didn’t-”

“Don’t you dare interrupt me! And then I get this call from your cousin that you were no longer living with her at the boardinghouse! And then I come here and find you in your own fancy apartment! Cheapening yourself!”

“I have me a good job! This, all this, Momma, is my OWN MONEY.”

“Lies! All of it! And now just a whore to this-” I smacked her. The man gasped. One moment he was beside her. Next, he was between us, barring me from her.

“First, I respect you, ma’am. I respect a mother givin’ her pups a good wallop! I should know, my own mother is tiny compared to you and she can still wallop me, but, I’m not going to stand here and let anyone call Stacey names and strike her! She’s not my or anybody’s whore! Stacey is a good kid. I oughta know. We’ve been friends for almost a year. We started seeing each other a few months back...”

“And sleeping with you!”

“With all due respect, ma’am, that ain’t any of your business what your daughter and I do in our free time. I could understand if she was underage, but she ain’t! And that makes the difference.”

Well. There you have it. Laid bare for me to see. I didn’t want to. I was so fit to be tied that I couldn’t think straight. I could feel as if every hair on me bristled. I didn’t want this for her but she had made her choice. There was an option for me, however. I would pack my suitcase and parcels and return to Tennessee. I knew when and what I couldn’t fight and I couldn’t fight this.







# Over the Top

Mog Moogle

He clutched the gold heart-shaped locket in his paws. Loving care kept it polished to a high shine. It was open to reveal a faded picture of the young otter in his finest suit standing next to his new bride. Despite the trends of the time, the shorter otter in her white dress had a smile. It always brought him comfort.

Lowell stepped from the carriage onto the platform. The smell of the coal fired boilers and engine grease permeated the air. Steam hissed from the front of the train as it bled off. Lowell took it all in, happy to be stretching his legs and his tail that had been curled behind him for almost three hours. Despite that, the prospect of seeing the cliffs kept a smile on his face.

With no plans to stay more than the afternoon, he had brought no luggage with him. Lowell stretched as he walked to the back of the platform and through the green painted iron gate for arriving passengers. Moving along the footpath beside the road with no real aim, it surprised the otter to see the roads with nearly as many motorized carriages as in Chiswick. He turned toward the center of town and was half way up the street when one of the automobiles grabbed his attention.

He saw a Rolls-Royce with gold accents stop in front of a cafe. The driver got out and walked around to the curb side and opened the door. Holding it open, he offered his paw to a young woman in a long dress and a plumed hat.

Lowell watched as the young lady stepped down to the curb. She briefly straightened her dress as an older gentleman slid over and stepped out of the automobile. He was a well-dressed, but appeared to be in his late fifties. Lowell saw him offer his arm to the much younger otter and then escort her into the cafe.

Lowell was amazed by her beauty. He had never seen another otter his age that just drew his gaze the way she had. He looked up the street, then at the cafe, down toward the station he had come from, and then at the cafe again. The rest

of Dover could wait.

He waited for an automobile and a horse drawn carriage to pass then crossed the brick road. Lowell moved around the front of Rolls and up onto the footpath in front of the cafe. Opening the door and stepping in, he was greeted with the aroma of fresh baked pastries and strong steeping tea.

After a quick glance around the interior, he saw the young lady and older gentleman settling in at a table near the back wall. He walked back toward them, stopping when the young otter looked up at him and locked eyes for a moment. He felt his heart flutter as she gave him a little smile before looking away and back at the older otter across from her.

Lowell sighed as he tried to compose himself. He was often brash and cocksure among his friends, so being suddenly taken aback from just a glance shook him. When he was reasonably sure he could once again conduct himself, he continued to the empty table and sat down with the older otter's back to him.

He watched as the server went over to the two otters with a silver tray, a tea pot with two cups and two small plates, one with a small slice of cake and the other with a few biscuits. The vixen in her apron walked up to Lowell and asked, "What can I get for you?" with an added sweet smile.

"Just some tea, thank you," Lowell replied.

"Do you take sugar?"

"No, just tea," Lowell said politely but dismissively as he tried to focus back on the two at the table. He perked his ears toward the two and did his best to listen in on them. Eavesdropping might not have been the most gentlemanly thing to do, but his curiosity overwhelmed him and he had to know more about the young otter.

"...he's actually quite handsome, and I would trust he'd make a good husband," he overheard the older otter say. "The word is, with the new rail-lines going north, we're both in line to be among the wealthiest families in England by the end of this decade."

"But, father, I still feel like I am too young to consider marriage," she replied as she continued to focus more on her cake instead of him.

So she was his daughter, but there was a potential suitor. Lowell shook his head and smiled to himself. The notion that he wanted to try and court someone, and a total stranger he'd just seen on the street no less, did feel a little silly.

“Don’t be that way, Anne. You’re every bit as beautiful as your mother, and she was two years your junior when we were married. Both your sisters have taken husbands.”

“Times are a little different now, Father. I will have plenty of time for a family,” she paused as she chewed down a nibble-sized bite of her cake. “Besides, cementing your business partnership with a marriage feels a little archaic, don’t you think?”

“Now dearest, you know it’s not like that. I would just like to make sure you are firmly placed in the station you deserve.”

“Pardon me for saying so, father, but this coming from the man who always talks about how he came from very little and built his business from the ground up?”

“Mmm,” he murmured as he looked at the face of the brass pocket watch he’d pulled from his vest pocket, “speaking of which, I’ll be late for my meeting if I don’t leave now. The only thing of your mother’s you inherited I didn’t wish you to is one of your more prominent features. It takes you ages to get ready to go anywhere.”

She giggled softly and then waved it off. “Tend your affairs, Father. I will be fine.”

“I’ll send Joseph back with the carriage to pick you up after he drops me at the office.” And with that, he finished the tea in his cup, pulled out a few pennies and left them on the table, then rose from his chair and hurried past Lowell and out the door.

Lowell casually watched as Anne’s father left, trying not to make it obvious that he was doing so. He looked back at the young lady as she took a few more nibble sized bites of her cake. He barely noticed the vixen return with a silver tray like the one on the young lady’s table and put it down in front of him. Ignoring his tea, he instead drank in the features of the otter.

It was only when she glanced up and caught him in the act that he pulled his gaze away. His pulse raced and his cheeks heated. He had never been so instantly smitten with someone. A soft giggle pulled his attention back to her.

“I couldn’t help but notice that you were staring,” she said softly.

“I beg your pardon, miss,” Lowell said as he rubbed the back of his neck.

“It’s understandable. They make a wonderful sponge cake. You should give it a try.”

“Uh, yes,” he said before he sighed. “I wouldn’t normally stare. I apologize for my rude behavior.”

“I should probably be offended, but I actually find it flattering.”

At that Lowell perked his head up. He saw her smile again and felt the heat return to his face. “Uh, say,” Lowell paused as he rose up from the table, “would you join me for a stroll?”

Anne chuckled then shook her head. “I’m afraid I wouldn’t have the time. Joseph will be returning momentarily.”

“Well, a quick stroll around wouldn’t hurt, would it?” Lowell stepped over to her table beside her.

“I really shouldn’t,” she said as she looked away.

“Ah-ha! That means that you want to.”

Anne looked up at him curiously then shook her head. “No, I really can’t.”

Lowell extended his elbow out and offered his arm with a coy grin. Anne rolled her eyes and sighed. Lowell’s grin extended to a smile as she rose from her chair and hooked her paw under his arm. Lowell stopped at his table with his untouched tea and fished a few loose pennies out of his pocket, leaving them on the silver tray before he escorted Anne out of the cafe. He held the door for her then offered his arm again when they were both on the footpath.

Her delicate paw was hooked under his arm resting on the sleeve of his wool suit jacket, but he would have sworn he could feel how soft her pad was even through the material. “Pardon me for overhearing, but there might be a suitor for you?” Lowell asked as he looked down at her.

“Yes, well, I think it would be improper to discuss personal matters with a stranger.”

The comment made Lowell immediately realize his mistake. He hadn’t even introduced himself before he asked to take her for a walk. “My apologies, milady. My name is Lowell.”

“Charmed to meet you, Lowell. I’m Anne,” she said and then chuckled. “And I hope you’ll avoid too many ‘miladies.’ I never agreed with the idea that just

because one has some station, they should be held on a pedestal above the rest of society.”

“A bit of a revolutionary for social reform, are you?”

“No, no, it’s not like that. I just remember what it was like when I was young and we were...substantially less well off, shall we say?”

“Ah, I see. Well, my family hasn’t always been the most well off. Supposedly, I’m a distant cousin of Alexander Duff. That doesn’t really mean anything, but it’s enough that my papa insisted I go to Oxford.”

“An Oxford student?”

“Yeah. Studying the Classics. *Literae Humaniores*.”

“Age quod agis,” she said in perfect Latin.

“Scientia ipsa potentia est,” Lowell replied. “Or so I’m told. I’m only a first-year, I’m afraid my Latin isn’t very strong yet.”

“Your pronunciation could use a little polish, too.”

Lowell chuckled and shook his head. “You’re really something special, miss Anne.”

“And you’re a silly oaf,” she said and smiled. “But you’re also handsome and polite.”

“Thank you,” Lowell said and smiled. He felt her tug against his arm as she stopped walking. Looking down at her curiously, he saw her expression waiver for the first time. “Are you all right?”

“I’m not sure,” she said and looked up at him. “What does it feel like when you fall in love?”

Lowell shook his head. “Yesterday, I wouldn’t be able to tell you.”

“Today?”

Lowell’s heart pounded and he drew a shaky breath. He leaned down and Anne closed her eyes, cocking her head to the side. Their lips pressed together for the first time.

“Fix bayonets!” echoed down the line.

Lowell closed the locket and kissed it before tucking it under his uniform blouse. He drew his bayonet and attached it to the end of his rifle as he turned around and faced the parapet. Closing his eyes, he breathed in and exhaled with a quick prayer. A dull whistle sounded and his platoon went over the top.



## **Gabriel's Hounds**

Have you heard Gabriel's Hounds  
over the moors,  
or is it honking of geese?

Have you seen feasting  
on the beast  
by dead forgotten soldiers

in gulley or shell shattered?  
Have you heard the hunt  
over ripening fields?

And as they come close up  
their growling gets quieter  
and you know your end is near.

The hounds of your mind  
are after you for what you  
meant to do and what you are.

—Paul Brookes





# **The Day the Music Died**

Billy Leigh

Daniel was a handsome Foxhound, my first love in fact. I was a smaller and skinny looking black and tan Alastian, which marked me out given the typical athletic stature of my breed. Daniel always made me feel confident and happy.

We met on a cold February evening, on which I had been dragged to a community event organized by my mother. My parents were both influential canines in our town, my father owned a factory that still employs a lot of local people, while my mother directed social events in the town hall for everyone to get together. Daniel's father worked for mine. His family lived in a smaller house on the other side of the railway track, and we went to separate schools, but despite our differences, we became inseparable.

As soon as we were alone for the first time, I whispered I want to hold your paw, borrowing the line from a song I'd heard on the radio. Surprisingly, he said yes. Our friendship grew from there and it soon developed into something more. The nature of our subsequent relationship was secret, but it was still fun.

My parents were often out, my father busy with his job and my mother off socializing at her events. Daniel came to my house after school with the excuse that I was helping him with homework. However, we'd steal my brother's records and dance in the front room, enjoying the intimacy of being alone together.

We joked that we would become famous rock stars one day. Dancing at my parent's house was risky since my mother disapproved of the music my brother owned, she would have thrown his records out had she discovered them. Daniel and I would sing and dance paw in paw to "Satisfaction" by The Rolling Stones, which was ironic since we gave each other more than enough satisfaction.

We used to sneak off and drive my father's Chevy down to the river where we would drink whisky and rye under a tree. We'd kiss and make love under the stars when the hot summer arrived. If there were other folk by the river, we drove up to a hill that overlooked our town. We'd watch the sunset as our tails brushed.

I never grew tired of the view. I could see for miles and miles and miles, over the town and to the mountains in the distance. I thought it would never end and I made plans in my head for our future. God only knows what I'd be without him I thought to myself.

I wanted to ask Daniel to my high school prom, but he talked me out of it, saying everyone would freak out. However, he still appreciated the gesture and said we could go out afterwards. I left shortly before it ended and went to his house, still in my tuxedo with a pink carnation in the button hole. We took his father's pickup truck and went to our usual spot under the tree, making up for the time that we didn't get to spend together.

However, things began to change after I graduated from high school.

Battle lines had been drawn and I realized that our lives were set on two different paths. I was the fortunate one. He chose to enlist in the army while I went off to college. I tried moving on, chasing after a white Husky by sending him notes in class until he agreed to date me, but it didn't last.

No one could replace Daniel.

I could not forget his hypnotic brown eyes and glossy fur. I missed his strong, muscular body as he held me close under the night sky.

I joined a flurry of protests on campus, then blew my mind as I experimented with drugs and alcohol. It was exciting while it lasted, but it came to a sudden end with a cloud of CS gas in my face.

My time in college drifted by in a haze, but I still listened to the record collection and thought of Daniel every day. He was away fighting a war in a jungle while I was indulging in a decadent lifestyle. His breed of canine were effective at sniffing out the enemy, so they patrolled in the danger zones. I watched the news footage of the helicopters and planes climbing high into the night, fireballs erupting over the trees and the fighting in the streets. I longed for his safe return.

Then, I got the news I'd been dreading on the last day of my final semester.

That was it, I couldn't listen to our songs anymore. The records stopped spinning on the turntable with a final click.

That was the day the music died.

## **Typewriter Chats with Rechan**

*Rechan has been writing since 2007, published primarily in the fandom but a few horror pieces have been accepted outside the fandom. In addition to writing, he loves puns, stand-up comedy, and his passion is politics. It's also rather weird to be writing about himself in the third person, but if you're still reading this then it must be working out.*

*You can find Rechan on FurAffinity as "Rechan" and you can catch up with his writing activities by following @molewords on Twitter.*

### **Why do you write, and what is your focus as a writer?**

I write because I can't get an idea out of my head, and it needs to get out so there's room for more. I write because "I haven't seen x done before" or "I can write y better than this" or "Hee, z is a funny concept, I shall do z."

Genre wise, I mostly write slice of life erotica/romance, but I also have horror and fantasy stories out there in and outside the fandom. I focus on short stories because I've yet to develop the discipline for longer works. While I'd love to put out novels, my attention span and work ethic won't yet let me.

**What has been your best marketing strategy for your projects? Do you find that social media is more helpful or are there other methods you use that benefit you more?**

I'll let you know when I figure it out. My books sell because of FurPlanet's hard work. Marketing seems like dark sorcery, but here are the three things I've tips I've picked up: 1) Keep producing. The more material you have out there, the more there is for people to find. A reader who likes one story will read more than one. 2) Be active online, talk about writing, about ideas, talk to other writers. Just be a presence and people will notice you. 3) On social media, talk about your project as you are working on it. Mention word counts, the things you're struggling with, etc., so by the time the piece is out, people are aware of it, are looking forward to it.

**What is your take on Furry Cons? How beneficial are they for an author just trying to get out into furry publishing?**

I love cons, specifically writing panels. I adore being on them, but just attending them is good. Being around other creative people makes you want to create more. If you're a new intermediate author, a con is a good place to go to panels, to network, to support the writing community by buying books. However, a Furry con is not the place to go for getting published—publishers are distracted, they don't want your manuscript then and there, and outside of a panel explaining how to get published, there's nothing at the con to help you get into print.

**What are you expecting to release this year?**

Both my piece in Bleak Horizons and my short story collection Intimate Little Secrets will be out at the end of March. I have a story in Rabbit Valley's Fur to Skin: Straight Up which doesn't have a release date yet, but it should be this year. I'm currently editing two small anthologies, one focusing on transformation and the other on four-legged characters, which will probably be out by the end of the year. Also, I've been wrestling with launching a Patreon. As with most things, all of that is subject to change...

**Tell us a little bit about your upcoming short story collection. What was the process like as you were putting it together?**

Intimate Little Secrets is a collection of slice of life erotica mostly focusing on serious character arcs. Nine stories in total, five of which are new, three have been online, and one has only been in Heat #12.

The process was long. I'd write a story for the book, then an anthology would open up and I'd say, "Well I have this finished story, I'll just send that in." Finally, I had to bite down and finish it. I'm eager and nervous for the reception, and quite proud of it; the book shows the range of my adult writing.

**I see you're going to Texas Furry Fiesta 2017. Do you have any other cons or book signings planned for 2017?**

Possibly MFF. I try to do two cons a year.

**What's frustrated you most about being a writer?**

I don't write as much as I want to, because of the aforementioned discipline issues.



Beyond me and my shortcomings, the most frustrating thing is that the fandom's literary community isn't growing fast enough. More publishers are opening, more anthologies are happening, more writers are out there, but the readership hasn't exploded yet, we're not flooded with reviews, furry writing isn't as big as furry art. If you're reading these words, firstly bless you, but know that you're a fraction of a fraction of a fraction. Those that buy our stuff give no reaction. It's hard as an author, feeling like you're taking hard work into a void where no one seems to notice it.

### **What advice can you offer other furry authors just starting out?**

Don't stop writing. I made the mistake of giving up for years because I was embarrassed by how bad I was, and now I regret how I could've advanced in those lost years. Write as much as you can.

Read as much as you can. Read in the fandom, read in your genre, read outside your genre. This supports other writers, but more importantly it's broadening your knowledge of stories, words, it's filling your tank.

The easiest way to get published in the fandom is submitting stories to anthologies. Publishers are less likely to take a novel from someone they haven't worked with before. Self-publishing is a much rockier road.

Check out the Furry Writers Guild. You do not have to be published to join the forum or the Slack discussion feed. Networking with other writers and publishers is the fastest way to learn about open calls, get help with writing or editing your story, or other opportunities. Similarly, check out the podcasts Independent Claws and Fangs and Fonts.

## **Where can readers support your work?**

You can find my work at FurPlanet and BadDogBooks. On FA I go by "rechan" and on my user profile there's a link to my published works list; there you'll find links to all my stuff. Free stories are also on my FA.

## **What is your definition of furry? What is furry to you?**

Does it have a muzzle? If yes, then furry. Sorry, catgirls.

Beyond that narrow aesthetic descriptor, I think "furry" is two things. One is the feeling that a person gets when they look at an anthro, or at something like The Lion King. That's your personal feeling. The second thing furry is: a community. I don't know if it's okay to call something "furry" when it's created outside the fandom by non-furs for non-furs, it's merely an interest of ours. But if it's made inside the fandom, for us? It's furry. I have no idea how furry music works, but I'm happy it's out there bringing people together.

## **Downy Woodpecker**

(Picoides pubescens)

We are the same size you and me  
six & a half to six & three quarters in length  
& we both know how important that extra  
quarter inch is

We both have a red nape patch  
but mine has faded with age, baldness  
yet there is still some left by hand & razor  
leaving a touch right above my other neck

You have been hitting my window suet feeder hammering  
Away at its soft waffle cake, secured by suction cups,

Trapped in the square wire cage, like those gym baskets  
Back in high school for our stripped adolescent clothes

If I was in that locker room shower packed with your black and white  
Soft adorable feathers - I know now which boys would sing.

—Bill Garten





Alu  
17

## Raise 'Em

Thurston Howl

“Fuck,” Garret said, taking another puff of his cigarette. His opponent was decimating him at the game of poker, and the other casino watchers leaned over the table, anxious to watch him fail. Garret was a ferret, a red one with a blue stripe down his back, and people always assumed--and correctly--that he was good at bluffing. He had a fox’s luck and wolf’s smile. But neither of those could change the cards in his hand. “I fold, dammit.” He threw the cards face up on the green felt table, wincing as the tremendous wolf opposite him scooped up all the chips in his bulky arms. *Wonder if he’s as good in the sheets as he is on the table.* It was a gay casino, and the crazy stories that happened here never ceased to amaze him. Even the most macho wolf loved raising the stakes out here. He took another puff of his Black Horse and started to walk away. He had shit to do.

“Hey,” a meek voice called from behind him.

Turning, he saw a young fox, either an albino, or an arctic, or one of those hipsters who dyed all their fur white. “What do you want, kid?”

The fox crossed his arms almost comically. “I’m not a kid. I’m the poker champion from Carlton Heights Community College.”

Garret sneered. “They’re big enough to *have* a poker club?”

Glaring, the fox responded, “Look, I saw how you played in that last game. I have as many chips as you started with, so here’s a chance for you to win them back.”

This caught Garret’s attention. He turned to face the fox fully. “Look, I know I just got my ass trashed by McHowler over there, but I’ve got some decent chops myself. I don’t think you’d do well, kid. And I’m not in the habit of bullying kids either.”

The fox leaned forward as threateningly as possible, his white tail bristling visibly. “Well, you’re a coward.” Garret smiled. *How cute. The little fox calling the big ol’ ferret a coward.* “A-and, you’re a...you’re a *faggot!*”

Garret’s eyes widened. A coward was one thing, but in the middle of a room full of cigarette-smoking gamblers, many of whom having turned to stare at the

two, he was not going to sit there and be called a faggot. “Oh yeah? Well, how about we up the stakes then?”

“Huh?” the fox’s ears flattened as he spoke.

Garret stepped forward, wrapping a lithe arm around the fox’s shoulder and turning him toward the table. “This is a *gay* casino, kid. Let’s up the stakes. Loser gets fucked right on this table.”

He saw the fox’s tail twitch, though he wasn’t sure if it was from excitement or terror. “That...that’s not...”

“*Do it!*” a voice shouted from the onlookers.

“That way,” Garret said with a grin, “we can see who the faggot is. The weaker player.”

The fox clenched his paws into a fist and glared at the taller ferret. “Deal.” He moved over to the table and waited for the dealer, a grinning bloodhound, to start sending the two of them cards. As he dealt, he explained the rules of this variant which had three rounds and was basically best-two-out-of-three, rather than relying on chips.

The two considered their cards in silence for a moment.

“So, Garret said, breaking the silence, “what’s your name, kid?”

The fox growled back, “I told you, I’m not a kid. And my name is Dare.”

This caused laughter all around, but Garret simply grinned. “Alright, Dare, your move.”

The spectators circled around the two, trying to learn what their cards were across the table. Of course, there was the rule of common courtesy that such spectators shouldn’t verbally say what cards the opponent had, but that never stopped them from gossiping and placing bets. However, Garret’s grin faded when he heard across the crowd, “That’s Dare O’Conner? He’s been coming here once a week. He always cleans out his opponent!”

Garret’s teeth ground, but he did not let it show. If this was true, he might have to be on his guard more than he had expected. However, he trusted his hand: he had three 10s. What could go wrong? A corner of his mouth curled upward in a smirk. When he called at last, the flesh under his fur paled. Dare laid out a full house, and the spectators went wild in surprise and laughter.



Now, it was Dare's turn to smile, and his ears were pricked, long and narrow. *Fucking foxes*, Garret thought with irritation. Garret was all concentration now. As each card was added to their hands, Garret felt himself sweating beneath his fur. Even the dealer was grinning, and Garret knew he couldn't handle this embarrassment all night. He had already had his ass handed to him by the wolf earlier. He was *not* about to be beat twice in a row. Putting his cigarette up to his mouth again, he inhaled a huge puff of smoke, breathing it back out over the table in a haze. The ferret looked down at his cards hopefully. Once the last card was dealt, he smiled inwardly. The hand would be his. And his straight won the second round.

As the spectators cheered again, even louder at the climactic nature of the tie, Garret looked up through the smoke at Dare, but Dare's face was calm, passive, emotionless...a true poker face. *The kid was good.*

"Last hand," the bloodhound announced loudly, more for dramatic effect than to inform them. The dealing seemed to go by more slowly than before. While Garret kept his eyes on the fox, Dare stared at the face down cards before him, as if he were trying to read them through their plain backs. What Garret could not see however was Dare manipulating a card inside his sleeve under the table, an ace of clubs.

The two pulled their cards up. Garret kept his eyes planted on Dare to see if he revealed any reaction to the cards, but true to the gossip, Dare kept a solid face. Garret sighed mentally and looked down at his cards. A pair of Jacks. That was a good start. As the dealer took turns giving them more cards, neither giving in, Dare considered his options. By the second-to-last card handed out, he already had two Aces. He smirked in his head. There was a third one he had at his disposal. Garret on the other hand had only received one more Jack to complement his pair. And the ferret hoped to God that the fox couldn't beat his three of a kind.

"Alright," the dealer called. "Show what you got."

Garret sighed, his heart pounding against his ribs, and laid out his cards, pulling the two Jacks forward. He looked up at the fox anxiously.

The fox laid down his cards, still not revealing any emotion. As he moved his arms, Garret's eye twitched. He thought he saw a firm shape against the fox's left sleeve. But when the cards were revealed, he froze. A pair of Aces.

The crowd roared with feverish intensity, and the smoke in the room seemed

to ignite.

Garret grinned, showing his teeth, as he walked around the table and approached the fox. Dare's ears flattened as he cowered reflexively against the table. Garret patted the fox's legs. "Alright, fox, raise 'em."

The fox started to lift one leg shakily, but he smiled inwardly.





## **How Raven Brought the Tides**

(Very, very loosely based on a Tlingit legend)

BanWynn Oakshadow

Once, long ago, when the world was new, and cool and white people hadn't screwed it up yet, there was Raven. Raven was one of the First People: those created by the Great Spirit and given a world to live on. The first world was made of just land and water and it was pretty boring, so the Great Spirit scrapped that project and made a new one with lands waters and trees and animals. It was most tranquil...and got boring. Then, He made a third one and added the First People. These were the first creations that the Great Spirit could actually interact with, and He gave them great medicine so that they could enjoy the world He had created for them. Then Coyote (who wasn't called that yet) managed to poke a hole in it and flooded it. The Great Spirit made another one. It was the fourth that he had created and the Great Spirit said, "Enough! This is getting old and my fingers hurt. If this one gets broken...it's over! Kaput! Curtains! Geendikt! Avslutade! Finito! You get my drift?"

In this fourth world, he also created something new. A different kind of people who he did not give powerful medicine to. He decided that for this world, his First People should take a form and a name, and he would give each medicine made just for them. There was much rejoicing. All of the First People could not wait to get in line and land a really cool gig like Golden Eagle, or Wolf.

The Great Spirit chose four from among the First People and said, "You have seen the new people that I have created. I have decided that they need to be taught the ways to become wise, and protected so that they can learn to prosper and grow. They will learn much more from a fool than a wise man, so I have chosen you four Tricksters to be their guides and guardians. I have chosen a special name and medicine for each of you."

"Kokopelli, the flute player, I am sending you to teach those I put in the desserts and cliffs far to the South. Spider Iktomi, the medicine man, you will teach those to the East. Coyote, I charge you watch over the people on the Plains of the West. Raven, use your wings to fly far to the North to guide and protect

the people I have placed at the edge of the Big Water. One Trickster for each of the Four Directions.”

When the people to the West heard this, they said, “We’re screwed...in lots of ways. They immediately put up an ACME warehouse right next-door to Home Depot.”

Kokopelli used his flute to seduce many maidens and so those in the South were screwed...not that the maidens complained, mind you.

Iktomi slipped from his old wife’s bed and under the buffalo robes of many maidens, and so those to the East were screwed. Then white people appeared on the shore and the people there said, “Crap! And here we thought we were already getting screwed! Ah well, let us do as we have been taught, be gracious and bring them a turkey. That shall surely make them friends.”

The Great Spirit saw the whites and thought. “Well, that shoots any plans I might have had for this fourth and last world, and got on “Linkedin” and began looking for career opportunities by networking with other Creators.”

All four Tricksters sometimes got bored and changed gender for some variety...so, like I said. Pretty much everyone was screwed.

It was not all screwing for the Tricksters, nor was it always bad for the people. I will tell you how Raven’s greed saved the people of the North.

Raven and his people lived far to the North where snow and ice ruled their world for much of the year. Then mosquitos almost as large as Raven made spring and early summer just as miserable and went on to become the state bird. During the two or three weeks of warm, sunny, glorious weather they did get there was no night and they all got grumpy from sleep deprivation and began to wonder what they had done to piss off the Great Spirit before they were even created. Then Dog gave them huskies and malamutes. These were so awesome that the people decided to call the living situation a draw.

They were very new to the world and the Great Spirit had chosen to give them a home on the edge of the Big Water. They had not yet learned to hunt seals or the great white bears on the ice. They had not learned how to make skin boats that would allow them to go out on the water and hunt whales...or even to weave nets and catch fish. They had not even figured out what to do with all of the AOL discs that kept arriving in the mail. Instead, they did as Raven did and ate what they could find at the edges of the Big Water. They ate many clams, mussels and sometimes crabs that they found in the rocks.

At this time there were no tides, and the people would get their food from the Big Water only when winds moved the water and made good things to eat like clams, wash up along the shore. But the people could not go out into the Big Water, for it was very deep. And clams are not very big, so instead of eating much at once, they were forced to eat just a little bit very often and never had an hour to wait after eating before they had to eat again. This meant that they were not allowed to swim in the Big Water for food without risking cramps.

A few brave men tried, but even in summer the waters were as cold as ice and turned even the proudest men into little boys who had to wait hours for their stones to reappear from where they hid from the cold water way up in their throats. Sometimes, one of a man's stones got stuck there and this is why only men have a bulge on their throats.

After a while, the people became many and soon there was not enough food for all the people and for Raven. You see, Raven was very greedy and loved to eat the good things that washed up on the shore, even if he didn't always leave enough left for the people he was supposed to protect. His belly always felt just a little too empty to him.

Now even though Raven was greedy, he did take his duty as teacher and caretaker seriously, and was feeling a little guilty that there was not enough to eat and fill the bellies of his hungry people. Raven sat down and began to think about this problem. Soon he fell into a deep sleep. Great Spirit, having forgotten what they had done to make him put Raven's people in such a place, took pity on them and came to Raven in a dream.

He said to Raven, "Raven, I have seen that you and the people are suffering because there is not enough to eat. There lies at the end of the world, at the edge of the Big Water, a cave. In this cave sits an old woman who holds a rope full of strong medicine across her lap. She uses this to hold the waters still so that they do not come into her cave. She holds this line very strongly. If, perhaps, you can get her to let go of the line, the water will fall and the people will be able to get some of the good things to eat from the Big Water, because clams and crabs and other good things to eat will be uncovered. This will not be easy for you to do, Raven, for the woman holds the line very tightly. Remember that I gave you medicine to make you clever. Use your medicine to make her let go of the line."

Soon Raven awoke from his dream. Raven knew what he must do to help the people and to feed his hungry belly.

So Raven flew. He flew and flew. For four days and nights Raven flew. He

was rather lazy as well as greedy, so had purchased the cheapest ticket he could find, and had several layovers over ten hours long. He decided that he was never flying American Airlines again and would use his own wings to get home. During the waits between changing planes, he met many strange and different people and realized that he could have done a lot worse than be given the people on the edge of the Big Water, and became even more determined to get the old hag in the cave to give up her rope. Finally, Raven came to the cave at the end of the world, at the edge of the Big Water.

Raven looked and saw the old woman sitting in the cave with a thick rope woven from kelp held across her lap. He could see that the rope was full of very powerful medicine from many, many pissed-off sea otters who had really liked that kelp. It was so strong that Raven did not think even he had the power to cut it with his long, sharp beak. She was holding it very tightly and he realized that even the power in his beautiful, black wings would not be enough to pull it from her grasp.

Raven began walking in front of the cave; rubbing his belly, and saying in a loud voice, “Mmm..., Mmm...these clams sure are good!”

The old woman heard Raven just outside the cave. There was not supposed to be any edge to the Big Water right outside her cave, so she leaned a little forward to see Raven, saying, “Raven, Raven! Where did you get those clams?”

Raven paid no attention to the woman (a habit that many men learned from Raven) and walked again in front of the cave, rubbing his belly saying, “My, this crab is delicious. I’ll go over there and will look around the edge of the Big Water and find another!”

The old woman leaned forward even further and said, “Raven, Raven! Where did you get that crab?”

Raven used several of the AOL discs that his people had tossed away to reflect the light of the sun into her eyes so that she had to shade them and could not see him. He walked again in front of the cave, rubbing his belly and saying, “Mmm..., Yum! I sure wish I had some more of those mussels, maybe there are more over there!”

The old woman leaned even further forward. Suddenly, Raven kicked some sand up into the woman’s eyes. She could not see, and tried to brush the sand out of her eyes. When she tried, she let go of the line! The waters fell back from what had been the edge and soon some of the land under the Big Water was



uncovered. Raven saw what had happened and was happy. He flew home thinking of all of the good things that he would soon be eating.

When Raven arrived home the people were happy. Now they had many good things to eat from the Big Water. Even the huskies and malamutes had much to eat and showed their thanks by saluting the giant tree that Raven made his nest in until its base was encased in a thick sheath of yellow ice.

The people thanked Raven and Great Spirit for helping them and held a big feast. Kelp had been uncovered when the Big Water fell back; and Raven taught the people how to put the good things in wet kelp and lay it on top of the fire to cook and make them even better to eat. He was happy because his belly was soon full of all the good things that he loved to eat and many new ones that he had not been able to try before.

For many days, Raven and his people ate all the good things from the Big Water. But soon many of the creatures of the Big Water began to die. They laid on the shore and began to rot and smell. A delegation from the World Wildlife Conservation Society arrived and said that what Raven and the people were doing was wrong, damaging the environment and threatened a great protest with network coverage and a Twitter campaign against the people. The people went to Raven and said, "Raven, you must do something! The creatures of the Big Water are dying! We will also die for we will soon have nothing to eat! Help us, Raven! Do something before PETA shows up too!"

So Raven flew. He flew and flew. For four days and nights he flew to the end of the world, at the edge of the Big Water, to the cave of the woman who held the tide.

When Raven got there, he looked into the cave. The woman was still trying to get the sand out of her eyes. Her fingers were so bent and cramped from holding the line so tightly for so long that she could not use them to brush away the sand. She heard Raven approach and said, "Raven, Raven! Is that you? You tricked me! Help me get the sand out of my eyes, and help me to find the tide line!"

Raven said, "Yes, I tricked you. I wanted to get all of the good things from the Big Water that I love to eat. So I tricked you into letting go and the waters fell. But now, the creatures of the Big Water are dying, and the people have little to eat. If I help you, will you help the people by letting go of the tide line from time to time? Then the people will be able to get some of the good things from the Big Water that they like to eat and the creatures of the Big Water will not die because the waters that are their home will cover them again."

The old woman said, “Yes, Raven, I agree, if you will help me, I will help the people. But, when my monthlies come, I will make the waters rise and fall very far, so that your people will suffer when I do.”

Raven cleared the sand out of the woman’s eyes, gave her a box of Midol, sat her back in the cave and gave her the tide line to hold across her lap. From time to time the woman would let go of the line and the waters would fall back, and that is how the tides began. Raven then flew back home to his people, who gave thanks to Raven for helping them.

He asked the dogs what their favorite thing to eat was. They liked crab most of all because it was crunchy on the outside and chewy in the middle...just like cat poop in a litterbox. Dogs tended to be cute and friendly, but not too bright, and frequently got things bass-ackwards.

They said, “Barc! Barc!” when he asked them what their favorite food was. Raven laughed so hard that some of his medicine accidentally fell off on them and made that word stick in their muzzles. He made sure that many crabs were given to the dogs at the feast.

After feasting he returned to his tree, saw the trunk, and muttered “Damn dogs!” Before he could fly up to his nest, the dogs rushed up and tried to salute him in thanks as well. He was able to fly to his nest, but his belly was very full and his feet did not get high enough. He used his medicine to clean himself off, but to this day common ravens are sometimes born with yellow legs, and people named the boxes of medicine used to clean these stains out “Tide” in honor of Raven’s deeds.

## **Typewriter Chats with Arrkay**

*Arrkay is a host of the youtube channel Culturally F'd, which focuses on researching the furry fandom. Culturally F'd has analyzed furry literature, furs in science, furry music, artwork, and various other aspects that continue to shape and mold the fandom.*

**Tell us a bit about yourself and the team!**

I'm a red-winged blackbird from Toronto. Originally from Hamilton, ON. I went to school for English but didn't finish, then went to do a 1 year program for Arts Management in the music industry. I like to make costumes, laze on beaches, and walk around the city. Underbite is a dragon from Newfoundland, with a background in graphic design. He came to Toronto to study illustration. He likes fursuiting, coffee, cars and bicycles. We met at the monthly furry dance party Howl.

**Why did you want to start exploring the fandom? What sparked interest in starting a channel like this?**

I moved to Toronto for school when I met up with a random group of furs at a college night bar event, and after getting to know them personally they pulled me into the fandom. Next thing you know I'm going to cons and making my own fursuit. For a time I would look for obscure or foreign anthro-animal animations and I like to collect graphic novels that feature anthro-animals, for no other reason than just to nerd out. I had read "Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors" by Carl Sagan, and it got me thinking about cave paintings and sculptures from pre-history and how the anthropomorphic animals from 30,000+ year ago could

draw a direct line through history to our contemporary artwork of anthro-animals. I was also really getting into YouTube as a primary source of entertainment. My favourite channels were VSauce, Idea Channel, Crash Course, and other, similar educational/informative video essay channels. At the time these were mostly science focused and most of the pop-culture content was focused on video games. Likewise the Furry content on YouTube was skit comedy, convention videos, music videos, and scattered vlogs of varying quality. I saw a clear opening for something more anthropological, and based in the humanities, with the target focus of talking animals throughout history, culture and mass media.

**What's your goal for Culturally F'd? Where do you see it heading in say, 5 years?**

Culturally F'ds main goal, "A video for every furry, a channel for the entire fandom". To break that down, Culturally F'd wants to explore everything that could possibly interest furries and in a way we're trying to place the furry fandom in historical context. There's plenty of stereotyping that happens to furries, so we wanted to create a one-click resource for furs to send out links to help explain to others: "This is why I'm furry" whether it's comics, TV shows from the 90's, or the social aspects of the fandom itself. And of course, we made "17 Misconceptions about Furries and the Furry Fandom" to help combat those stereotypes, now nominated for the 2016 Ursa Major Award for "Best Non-Fiction".

My personal goal for Culturally F'd is to get it sustainable financially, it's my dream to be a full-time furry, which is why we have been actively seeking out sponsorships, and constantly pushing our Patreon page and our merchandise store. That's where I hope it is in 5 years. I also want to try to expand into a network with more creators and have multiple shows come online throughout the week.

**What is your definition of furry? How has it changed since starting Culturally F'd?**

“Furry” is so ambiguous. Most people use it for any number of things. I can’t say that Culturally F’d has really changed my definition of Furry, but it has perhaps made it a little more clear. We spent a whole episode on this “Defining Furry”. It’s a lifestyle for some, while a private hobby for others. It’s definitely a fandom very comparable to Anime or Comics. That’s usually what I tell non-furs. A more technical term might be “A Social and Arts movement dedicated to anthropomorphic animals” emphasis on movement.

**What’s the most interesting thing you’ve explored in the fandom since starting your channel?**

I really enjoyed the research on the early 1980’s fan-zine culture and movement that brought us TMNT, Usagi Yojumbo, Tank Girl and many others. It helped organize furries back before we called ourselves that and before we had the internet. I managed to get a small stack of original “Albedo Anthropomorphics” from my local comic shop for some “fandom archeology”.

**Your fanbase is growing, what do you think has been the best platform to get your channel out there? Which social media outlet helped you more?**

Being responsive to comments, critiques and questions across all platforms get people’s attention and lets them know that you’ve taken their invitation to interact. Twitter especially, I find it easy to use and fast feedback. On YouTube itself I only really reply to comments on a video for a week after release, then we

film comment responses with Rusty's F'd Up Dates.

**What aspects of furry literature have you looked at, and what has become your favorite title so far?**

We have a playlist of all our videos on literature and books, though not all of it is "Furry" like part of the fandom. We did an episode on furry poetry and music. We also talked about the history of fan-zine culture and the explosion of anthro-media from TMNT. And we looked at author's H.P. Lovecraft and Richard Adams. We hope to have more author focused episodes in the future. My favourite title, if graphic novels count, is BlackSad, which as of writing we are working on a script for an episode about. For furry literature, I suppose "Summer Hill" by Kevin Frane, though we haven't looked at it for the show. We also have a Redwall episode in the works.

**Is there anything you would like to see change about the fandom's literary scene?**

Cheaper Canadian distribution for physical copies. It would be pretty cool if I could go into any bookstore any time of the year and pick up the latest from Kyell Gold, but for reasons of scale (and import laws between Canada and the US) I don't think that's going to happen anytime soon.

**What advice do you have for people interested in starting their own channels?**

Start small, practice, do your research. Before starting Culturally F'd, I did a

student project where I had to make 6 YouTube videos, which gave me a pretty good idea of what goes into writing, filming, editing and uploading well before I had the idea for Culturally F'd. Free online tutorials are everywhere and available for every program, it's super important to train yourself on all that as you get into it.







Re  
17

## Mr. Piggy Wiggy's Market

Ken MacGregor

Felicity Rabbit put her tiny hand on Mr. Piggywiggy's. The nails were painted dark pink. Some were chipped.

Looking down and away, Mr. Piggywiggy dragged his hand out and across the counter.

Felicity's hand fell to the smooth wood with a soft *slap*. After staring down at it for a moment, Felicity withdrew it and sighed.

"Is there nothing you can do? My children need to eat."

"I'm terribly sorry, Mrs. Rabbit," Mr. Piggywiggy said. "You still owe me from the last time I extended credit."

"But, my children—"

He cut her off.

"Perhaps if you'd stop having them."

Felicity's jaw dropped. Her whiskers twitched. Straightening her gingham skirts, she turned on one heel and stalked out of the store with her chin held high.

Mr. Piggywiggy shook his head and *tsked*.

"Things are tough all over, lady."

He gathered the flour, milk and canned soup Felicity had brought to the counter and put them back where they belonged, facing the labels outward.

Retrieving yesterday's paper, one of nine that hadn't sold, Mr. Piggywiggy resumed the crossword at the bottom of the comics' page. Seventeen down was a six-letter word for 'loose woman.' He chuckled softly and pretended to fill in the white squares.

"R.A.B.B.I.T."

The bells at the top of the front door jingled; Mr. Piggywiggy set the pen on the paper and looked up. The door was still mostly closed but inching inward.

The wall clocked audibly ticked off forty-seven seconds before the door was wide enough to admit Old Benjamin Tortoise. The sticky summer air filled the shop, elevating the ambient temperature to sweat-inducing. Mr. Piggywiggy glanced at the dairy cooler; the milk bottles were sweating.

Old Ben stretched his neck another foot and grinned his empty beak at the pig proprietor. Plodding on ponderous feet, the immense amphibian made his way to the counter. It was two full minutes before the door, finally freed, swung shut.

"I came for a little something," Old Ben said. The bass voice rumbled from inside the massive shell, the words rolling out one at a time as if the tortoise tasted each one before letting it go.

"Let me guess," Mr. Piggywiggy said, "cabbage and carrots."

"Cabbage and carrots," Old Ben said, overlapping the pig.

"Excellent. And, did you, um, bring something to buy it with this time?"

The smile fell from Old Ben's lips.

"I don't much appreciate your tone, young man."

Mr. Piggywiggy shrugged.

Dipping his head, Old Ben pulled it back into his shell, leaving a dark, blank space.

Mr. Piggywiggy gazed into it. *And the abyss also stares into you.*

Several seconds later, Ben reemerged with a small coin. In the huge beak, it looked like a tiny piece of candy. The pig took the coin and studied it.

"For this," he said to Old Ben, "you get one head of cabbage and four carrots."

"But," the tortoise rumbled, "that's silver."

"Tarnished, and no more than a tenth of an ounce. One head, four carrots: take it or leave it."

Old Ben threw the pig a look of pure contempt, but took his head of cabbage and four carrots and left without another word.

Eventually.

He had the crossword half filled-in when the door opened once again to tinkly bells.

Harriet Henpenny let it close behind her, but stayed by the entrance. Tremors shook the feathers on her neck and she fiddled with the handles of the basket she carried. Mr. Piggywiggy watched her in silence as she checked over her shoulder twice before mincing her way to the counter.

He gave her an almost predatory smile.

“Good afternoon, Harriet.”

She flinched at the too-familiar use of her first name.

“Good afternoon, Mr. Piggywiggy.” There was the slightest emphasis on her use of his last name, accompanied by a dip of her chin and admonishing look in her eye.

“I have filled your order,” he said. Mr. Piggywiggy looked at the basket in Harriet’s clutching hands. A red-and-white checked napkin covered its contents; round little bumps dotted the surface. The pig reached under the counter and set a large paper bag on top. The name ‘Henpenny’ was charcoal-penciled across the side in Mr. Piggywiggy’s block letters, all caps.

Tears fell down Harriet’s face as she lifted the basket and put it on the counter next to the bag. Mr. Piggywiggy took the handle in one hand, but Harriet held on. After a brief tug-of-war, she let go with a loud sob, grabbed her groceries, whipped open the door, and ran out. The bells overhead protested their ill treatment.

Peeling back the blanket, Mr. Piggywiggy counted the eggs. Thirteen: a baker’s dozen. He grinned.

*No wonder she looked tired.*

The next hour was a quiet one. Only two clues remained on the crossword, but he was unable to fill them in. The five blank squares taunted him from the page.

At about twenty to six, Mr. Piggywiggy, with thoughts of a mushroom omelet bubbling in his brain, walked to the front door to throw the bolt.

It opened before he got there and the afternoon sunlight was swallowed by coarse, brown fur. From near the top of the doorframe, a head bigger than Harriet Hennypenny’s whole body dipped down. A long snout tipped with a black nose poked very close to the pig.

Mr. Piggywiggy's nose was assaulted with a powerful, woodsy musk. It made him sneeze.

"Um. I'm sorry. We're closed."

The enormous head glanced to one side and came back.

"Sign says you're open 'til six," the giant creature said. Mr. Piggywiggy could smell copper on the animal's breath. Its teeth were yellow. Tiny red flecks dotted them near the gums.

"That's more of a guideline, really," he said, taking a step back. "You know how these mom-and-pop businesses work: the owners open and close whenever they feel like it."

"Who's the owner?"

The silence stretched out for a long time as the pig met the black eyes of the bear.

"I suppose I could stay open for a little longer. I mean, as long as you can be quick about it."

Nodding, the beast worked his way inside, leaving a tuft of fur snagged in one of the hinges. Mr. Piggywiggy took his usual place behind the counter and picked up the puzzle; he put random vowels and consonants into the blank spaces so they looked like words. Glancing at the clock, he sighed.

"I don't believe I've seen you in here before, Mr..."

"Bear. Joseph Tiberius Bear. Call me Joe. I usually shop at Vinnie's Fish Market, but they're closed; owner's on vacation."

"Oh, I know Vinnie; pelican, isn't he?"

"Cormorant."

"Right. Cormorant. Um, Mr. Bear. I mean Joe. I'm not sure we're going to have what you're looking for here. This is more of an, ah, *herbivore* kind of market."

Mr. Bear turned and looked at the pig for a long moment. His eyes were holes in his head. The proprietor's pink face flushed a deeper red.

"I'm an omnivore," the Bear said. "I eat pretty much everything."

Mr. Piggywiggy was quite suddenly aware of his full bladder.

“Of course. Please, carry on. Don’t mind me.” He gulped loudly. “Only, we close in ten minutes, so please hurry. Thank you.”

Mr. Bear poked around the shelves aimlessly for a bit; he finally grabbed the biggest honey jar he could find. In his hand, the glass quart of amber liquid looked like a shot glass. He brought it to the counter and set it down. The pig lifted it to check the price tag on the bottom.

“\$3.69, please.”

“I don’t have that,” Mr. Bear said. “I have thirty-four cents.”

He pulled the coins from his buckskin vest pocket and set them next to the honey.

“I’m sorry,” the pig said. “That’s the price. You have to pay the money, or you don’t get the honey.”

Mr. Piggywiggy chuckled at his own witticism.

Mr. Bear looked at him, then at the honey. He nodded and walked to the door empty-handed.

Mr. Piggywiggy called after him.

“Have a nice evening.”

Mr. Bear stopped at the door, cranked the deadbolt and flipped the sign to ‘closed’. Pulling the shade down with his claws, Mr. Bear smiled at the pig.

“Vinnie, you know, the *cormorant*, he’s looking to expand into new markets.”

Mr. Piggywiggy swallowed.

“He may have mentioned that a while back, I think.”

“Uh huh. He said he’d talked to you. Said, you basically told him where he could put his fish market. Said you were ‘unkind’.”

Mr. Piggywiggy shot a glance at the locked door.

Mr. Bear sidled over so he was in front of it.

“Look, I’m sure Vinny and I can come to some sort of arrangement. I happen to know for a fact that the old tortoise is behind on his house payments. It’d be a snap to scoop up that property.”

“Mm. Vinny was thinking more ... retail.”

Mr. Piggywiggy writhed with the need to leave.

“I don’t-“

Mr. Bear growled, cutting him off.

“I smell eggs.”

“I accepted some today - as payment,” Mr. Piggywiggy said. “I, too am an omnivore, you know.”

Mr. Bear grinned, exposing a mouthful of yellowy spears.

“Do you know what goes really well with eggs, Mr. Pig?”

“Piggywiggy.”

“Do you?”

Mr. Piggywiggy shook his head. Sweat dripped into his eyes, making him blink. His bladder suddenly seemed about to burst. Without taking his eyes off the approaching bear, he cringed behind the counter.

Mr. Bear leaned on the heavy, wooden counter. It groaned, threatening to crack.

“Bacon.”

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Shortly after dawn the next day, Felicity Rabbit pushed through the door of Mr. Piggywiggy’s shop. Her head hung; her eyes stayed on the floor.

“I’m prepared to offer you *anything* if you can extend my credit for just a little longer.”

“Hm.”

It was a much louder and deeper voice than she’d been expecting. Mrs. Rabbit looked up. Then, up some more, into Mr. Bear’s eyes. Again, her jaw fell.

“I’m sorry.” Her eyes darted around. “Am I in the wrong place?”

“Nope. This is the market. The pig no longer works here.”

She goggled at him.

“And you are?”

He smiled, careful not to show teeth.

“Mr. Bear, if you please. The new proprietor.”

“Oh. Oh my. I hope you don’t think...”

“I don’t think anything at all, miss.”

“Mrs. Mrs. Rabbit.”

“How d’you do?”

“I’m fine, thank you. And you?”

The bear nodded.

“Fine. Just fine. Now, when you came in, you mentioned something about credit.”

She flushed. It was visible under the white fur of her face.

Mr. Bear held up a hand.

“Now, wait. Don’t say anything. I’m sure you need to feed your family. How many kids?”

“Forty-seven.”

His eyebrows crawled upward.

“Right. Perhaps you could send some of the older ones over here. I could use a hand running the store, and that would help to pay off your debt to the previous owner.”

“Really? You’d do that?”

This time, the bear smiled with teeth.

“Certainly. I love rabbits.”

“You do?”

“Doesn’t everybody?”

“I guess.” She paused, cocked her head to the side. “You said ‘previous owner.’ Does that mean Mr. Piggywiggy won’t be coming back?”

Mr. Bear put his hands on his somewhat distended stomach.

“That’s right. He’s moved on. Permanently.”

An expression that may have been fear flickered across Mrs. Rabbit’s face.



Mr. Bear, without looking at her, calmly put several different vegetables in a bag. He pushed it across the counter.

“I’ll send my four oldest later today.”

“Thank you, ma’am.”

She turned to go, stopped and looked at the bear. He waited.

“My boys ... what will they be doing?”

“Unpacking.”

“Unpacking what?”

“Fish.”

“Oh.”

Before long, the sign out front was changed to “Vinny’s Fish and Grocery.”

It thrived.

Every few months, one of Mrs. Rabbit’s older children stopped coming home. Mr. Bear told her they had decided to go work for Vinny at his other store, where the money was better.

She believed him. After all, he wouldn’t lie to her. He loved rabbits.

## Biographies

Paul Brookes was shop assistant, security guard, postman, admin. assistant, poetry performer with “Rats for Love” and his work included in “Rats for Love: The Book”, Bristol Broadides, 1990. His first chapbook was “The Fabulous Invention Of Barnsley”, Dearne Community Arts, 1993. He has read his work on BBC Radio Bristol and had a creative writing workshop for sixth formers broadcast on BBC Radio Five Live. Recently published in “Clear Poetry”, “The Beatnik Cowboy”, “Ekphrastic Review”, “In Between Hangovers”, “Three Drops From The Cauldron.”

Bill Garten has published poetry in Rattle, Asheville Poetry Review, California State Poetry Quarterly, Portland Review, Wisconsin Review, Antietam Review, The Comstock Review, Hawaii Review and others. He is a graduate student in the MFA Program in Creative Writing at Ashland University. He also has been anthologized in Wild Sweet Notes, And Now The Magpie and What The Mountains Yield.

Billy Leigh is a Wolf who enjoys writing stories and sharing them in his free time. So far, he has been published in Thurston Howl’s “Seven Deadly Sins” and “SPECIES: Wolves” anthologies. When he is not writing, Billy likes to spend time listening to music, reading or going out for walks and hikes with his boyfriend.

Daniel Lowd likes dogs, unicycles, and researching artificial intelligence. By day, he is a computer science professor. By night, he is also a computer science professor, because he tends to work odd hours. At various other times (dusk? gloaming? teatime?) he writes a few words of fiction or the occasional song.

Mary E. Lowd writes stories and collects creatures. She's had three novels and more than seventy-five short stories published so far. Her fiction has won an Ursa Major Award and two C6yotl Awards. Meanwhile, she's collected a husband, daughter, son, bevy of cats and dogs, and the occasional fish. The stories, creatures, and Mary live together in a crashed spaceship disguised as a house, hidden in a rose garden in Oregon. Learn more at [www.marylwd.com](http://www.marylwd.com).

Ken MacGregor's written work has appeared in dozens of anthologies and magazines, and the occasional podcast. He has two story collections, AN ABERRANT MIND, and SEX, GORE & MILLIPEDES. He edits an annual anthology (RECURRING NIGHTMARES) for the Great Lakes Association of Horror Writers. Ken is an Affiliate member of HWA. He has also written TV commercials, sketch comedy, a music video, and even a zombie movie. Recently, he co-wrote a novel and is working on the sequel. Ken lives in Michigan with his family and three cats, one of whom is dead but still haunts the place. Website: <http://ken-macgregor.com>

Twitter: [@kenmacgregor](https://twitter.com/kenmacgregor)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/KenMacGregorAuthor?ref=hl>

Mog Moogles has been lurking around the fandom since the early 2000's. He started writing furry stuff just for fun in 2004. Since then, he's posted several free stories on SoFurry.com and his first printed stories released in 2016. When not doing furry stuff, he's usually trying to figure out how to do more furry stuff. He loves to travel and see new places, and really enjoys furry conventions. Mog's had a few interesting experiences that lend to his writing, an Army veteran and former police officer with an adrenaline junkie mindset has led to more than one interesting adventure in his day. He's usually a friendly type of critter that enjoys hugs and loves talking to readers and fellow writers. Feel free to contact him and let him know what you think of his story, (or his terrible bio.)

BanWynn (Suta) Oakshadow is 54yo hermit, writer, husband, father and Cancer. His turn-ons include sushi, long walks in the woods, interesting people that he

can exploit as characters in his stories and tilting at philosophical windmills. His turn-offs are people who use bit-torrent rather than buying books, food that doesn't excite and fear of new experiences. He loves writing, but despises finding good homes for his work and is attempting to train his Border Collie to become his agent. He lives on a little 400yo farm in a forest in southern Sweden with his husband, dog and lots of mice who have set up a nightly NASCAR circuit in the ceiling over their bed.

James L. Steele is a writer in Ohio. He is often asked to sum up his life's story in a single paragraph. James is very depressed by how easy this is. Visit his site at [www.jameslsteel.com](http://www.jameslsteel.com), his blog at [DaydreamingInText.blogspot.com](http://DaydreamingInText.blogspot.com), and his Twitter @JLSteeleauthor

Thurston Howl is the editor-in-chief of Thurston Howl Publications. With a BA in English from Vanderbilt University and an MA from Middle Tennessee State University, Howl now pursues his PhD in English and Sociology with a concentration in Animal Studies at Michigan State University. He is the author of four novels, and his works have appeared in *Civilized Beasts*, *Purrfect Tails*, *Dogs of War*, and *Seven Deadly Sins*.

Carmen Welsh Jr., AKA CopperSphinx holds an MFA in Creative Writing, a BSc in Web Design, and an AA in Art Education. She's published short stories, illustrations, essays, and articles in fanzines, on e-zines, web journals, a genre anthology, and print journals. She's an official member of AWP (Association of Writers and Writing Programs) and The Furry Writers' Guild. Her latest short story was "Night Sounds" (Nov. 2015) published in the literary journal *Prick of the Spindle*. The story is based on her Master's thesis that grew into a historical novel manuscript with anthropomorphic canines living in the Great Depression. Her official website is <http://TabbertheRed.com>, named after her feline character, Tabber, from the world six of seven published stories are based in. Carmen is the webmaster. You can find a list of her published work on <http://TheAngryGoblin.wordpress.com>. Carmen's art portfolio can be found on

<http://CopperSphinx.deviantArt.com>