Tales

from

Noveltober

TALES of Noveltober

Written by A.F. Bin

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1 – The Mannequin

Walking around the mall at night, Andy the night guard started his nightly patrols. Most people would be scared, walking around the mall at night when there is no one around but not Andy. Yes, it may be a bit spooky but someone had to do it. Andy didn't believe in all the spooky stories, plus the pay for the night shifts are oddly more than that of the day ones and he could use the extra cash.

The mall itself was pretty new. 10 floors of shopping and it's always crowded, well, only during the day. The strange thing is, is that the mall always closes at 6pm sharp. When it is an hour before closing time, the security guards would escort all the guests out of the building, including the employees and when that is done, the owner of the mall would lock the front and back doors. The ones that are left after would only be those who have the night shifts which starts at midnight.

The job required at least 2 guards to be there at all times. 1 to patrol the mall while the other stays in the monitor room and keep an eye out for intruders through the screens. The guards would then swap posts every hour. When the time reads 6am, the owner

would arrive to unlock the doors and the mall would be open again. Strangely enough, the previous guards who took the night shift suddenly quit the day after. Well, technically guard. No one knew what happened to the other guy but the guard never said anything and had a frightful look on his faces. He never showed up again, not even just to visit.

There was a sudden rustling noise and that made Andy jump but as he quickly turned around, he sighed as it was just a plastic bag on the floor. “Never thought the day would come where I'd see you scared just because of a simple plastic bag.” said a guard over the radio while snickering. “Yeah, yeah. But if you were in my position, Carl, I bet you'd be screaming your head off.” said Andy. “Hmm, fair, so how's it looking out there?”

“You tell me, see anything out of the ordinary?” There was a loud static noise that hurt Andy's ear so he had to turn it off for now. As he continued to walk, he saw something strange. There seemed to be something moving around. He took out his flashlight and shown it ahead but all he could see were the fake plants that were placed for the aesthetics and a mannequin from one of the stores.

Andy's radio suddenly turned on and there was more more static. But not just that, a whisper could be heard too. “Hello? Carl, is that you? Are you messing with me again?” But there was no answer. Andy looked at his watch and saw that it was approaching 1am so he decided to make his way back to the guard room. When he arrived, he couldn't see Carl anywhere but that was when he turned to see him carrying a cup of coffee. “Is it time to switch already?” Carl asked. “And I just got my coffee.” He sighed and placed it on the table.

Carl left the room but suddenly jumped and stumbled. Andy went to see what was wrong and saw that a mannequin was just outside the guardroom. “Very funny Andy. Ha ha.” Carl said sarcastically. Andy himself was confused but thought nothing of it and returned to sit down and watch the monitors. In front of him, there were 12 screens shuffling through the many cameras that are placed all around the mall. After about half an hour, he got up to stretch his legs and to make himself a cup of coffee. When he returned however, he saw that one of the screens was just static.

Andy pressed a button to reboot the camera but it wasn't

working. He tried switching to another camera but it also showed static and so did others in that area. He then tried to contact Carl. “Hey, you there?” asked Andy. “What's up?” asked Carl. “The cameras near area 5 are showing static. Could you go there and see what's wrong with them?” “Alright, on my way.”

On the screens, Andy could see Carl making his way. Carl was walking slowly and as he reached his destination, just right outside the area, he stopped. Andy looked as Carl was just standing there, staring at something. Andy radioed Carl again but couldn't get through. On the screen, Carl's expression was that of disbelief. Andy tried calling again but he wouldn't move. Carl's expression then turned to that of pure terror and he can be seen running away.

Andy had no idea what had happened. He was about to make his way out when he suddenly heard knocking from the door. He thought that it might've been Carl but even if he ran as fast as he could, he couldn't have come back that fast. He went back to the monitors and tried looking for the camera that was outside the room but when he looked, there was nothing.

He turned back and slowly approached the door. He was about to

reach for the handle when all of a sudden, Carl opened the door aggressively and ran inside the room. Carl kept running like his life dependent on it but he didn't see where he was going and he tripped and accidentally hit his head against the table, knocking himself out.

Andy just stood there, trying to figure out why Carl was acting like that. He helped him to the break room and laid him down on the couch. He then walked back to the monitors and rewound the footage to see if he had missed anything. Upon reviewing the footage, looking closely at it or trying to slow it down, he found nothing out of the ordinary. He then turned to the static ones and tried rewinding those instead. When it showed normal footage, he stopped and slowed it done as it played.

Nothing happened at first, but something suddenly appeared and it turned to static. Andy quickly rewound it again and slowed it down more. Just at the moment before static, he paused. It was too dark to see so he tried to brighten it up. Before looking at it however, there was another knock on the door. Andy started sweating. He ran to the break room to see if Carl was still there and he was.

He looked at the monitors and the camera outside was now also showing static. He quickly took out his phone, trying to make a call but there was no service. The knocking then continued but it was louder. Andy grew more worried when there was suddenly multiple knocks on the door, as if there was more than one person on the other side. He could then see the doorknob turning and he quickly locked the door. The knocking stopped and there was now silence.

Most people would open the door to see if it was clear but Andy was not doing that. Instead, he just sat down and did nothing. He puts his head on the table and tried to think of what was happening. Could it have been robbers who are looking to rob the mall? Or could it have been some teens doing an over the top prank? Or maybe it could be something else entirely? Andy didn't know.

He looked back at the monitor he had paused and brightened and he was confused as to what he was looking at. It was a white hand. It didn't seem like a real hand though, more like a mannequin's. He played the video frame by frame and it showed the hand blocking

the camera before going into static. Andy was now even more confused.

Andy took deep breathes, trying to calm down. He was so panicked before that he forgot that Carl was still in the break room. Andy walked in to check on him and he was still knocked out. As Andy turned around, he jumped back into a wall as he saw a mannequin placed just behind the door, looking at him. He tried to catch his breathe as he thought that this was a silly prank from the ones in the morning shift.

Andy then tried making more coffee to calm down. He paced back and forth near the monitors, checking them frequently to see if anything else was gonna happen. After about an hour, he thought that everything was done but the worse was yet to come. One by one, more screens started to show static at an alarming rate.

Andy panicked, not knowing what to do and started freaking out when the knocking came back. It was now more aggressive than ever so Andy quickly rushed into the break room and shut the door but since it didn't have a lock on it, he used one of the spare chairs

as a sort of barricade. There was a loud sound and Andy could here footsteps from the other side of the door. He tried to keep quiet, not making a sound but that was when Carl suddenly woke up, with a sweat, gasping for air and coughing loudly.

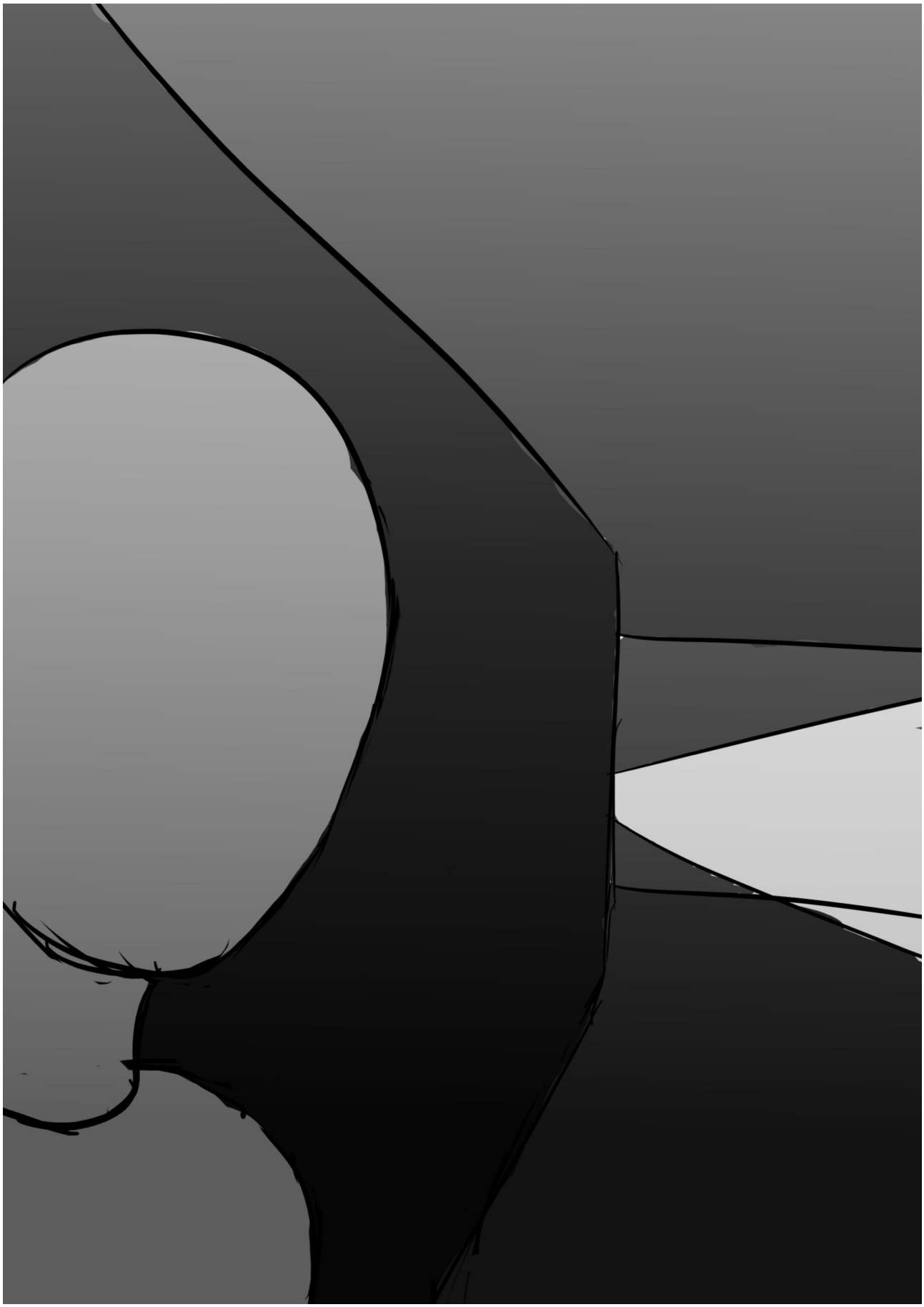
“W-w-where am I!” shouted Carl. Andy quickly covered his mouth and whispered to him. “There is someone outside the door.” Carl grew more panicked but not because of what Andy told him but because he saw the mannequin in the room. Andy tried keeping him quiet as his muffled screams could be heard. Carl then forced Andy's hand off his mouth and he quickly whispered what he saw before.

“W-w-when I was out there, I saw the mannequins covering the cameras.” Andy thought that Carl was going mad. “T-they noticed me and they turned t-their heads to l-look at me.” Everything was silent. And then a small sound could be heard. Andy slowly turned his head towards the direction of the sound and saw that it was coming from the mannequin. The mannequin that was facing away from them before, was turning it's head to face them.

It walked stiffly over to the barricaded door and removed the

chair. As the door burst open, dozens of mannequins could be seen outside. They walked slowly towards the two, surrounding them so that they could not escape.

Andy got up and with all his might, ran and tried to fight them off but the moment he touched them, his skin started to change. It turned white and became plastic, much like a mannequin's. As each of them grabbed him, he started to turn more and more till his entire body became a mannequin. Carl screamed in horror as they were now heading towards him. The last thing he saw, was a mannequin's face directly in front of his.



2 – Box of happiness

While walking along a river, Ben sees a box that was washed ashore. He walks closer to it and upon closer inspection, found that it was made out of wood and had strange markings all over it. It appeared to have some sort of seal on it but as soon as Ben touched it, it broke and the top of the box opened up.

Ben picked it up and looked inside to see, nothing. He was disappointed and decided to put it down but before he could, he saw something shining inside. He shook the box and when shown in the sunlight, he saw a gold coin. He reached in and pulled it out, holding it up against the sky. He couldn't believe it.

Ben smiled as he pocketed the coin. As he turned the box over and tapped the bottom, it seemed to be truly empty. He even shook it hard for safe measure, but as soon as he turned it back, more sounds could be heard. He looked in again and was in awe as he saw even more gold coins. He took them out and stuffed them in his pockets. Ben closed the box and decided to take it with him.

He ran to his bicycle that he parked nearby and rode all the way

back to his house. When he arrived, he quickly ran to his room and locked the door, placing the box on his bed and just staring at it. He started to pace back and forth in his room, wondering if he should tell anyone about it. It was, after all, a peculiar item but he felt rather strange. He wanted more and he wanted it only for himself. He held it in his hands again and was surprised at how heavy it was.

He placed it back on the bed and opened the top to find that it filled to the brim with gold coins. It seemed never ending as so much came out till the entire floor was covered. As it started rising, Ben got worried and reached for the box to try and close it.

He struggled at first but was ultimately able to close it and the coins stopped coming. He breathe a sigh of relief but started getting worried as when he looked down, he saw that he was knee high in coins. He reached for the door and opened it, letting the coins roll out of his room. He had no idea what to do with all of them. He wanted to know more about the box so he took some pictures of it and started to search it up online.

After a few hours, all results turned up negative. He found no information on the box or its origin. Even the markings on it didn't correspond to any sort of language or symbol. As night came, he started getting tired so he decided to turn in for the night and continue his research on it the next day.

As Ben slept, the box slowly opened up. It tipped itself over and the top was now facing him. In the pitch darkness of the box, an eye could be seen. It rolled around and was looking all over the place but it soon fixed its gaze on Ben. All night, it kept staring at him, not blinking once but as soon as morning came and Ben started to wake up, it tipped itself back and closed its top.

A sleepy Ben got up and looked at the box. He thought that everything that happened yesterday was a dream but he realized it wasn't when he stepped on a floor of silver coins. He went to his closet and grabbed a pillowcase to put some of the coins inside. When the bag was full, he put it off to a side but there were still lots of coins left so he decided to just leave them on the floor first.

When looking at the time, he realized he was going to be late for

work so he quickly gets ready and rushed out the door, not realizing he forgot to lock it. A suspicious person from around the corner saw what happened and sneakily made his way into Ben's house. He wore a mask and gloves as to not get caught and searched all the rooms for anything valuable.

Upon going into Ben's bedroom, He smiled as he saw all the gold coins. He takes out a bag and started stuffing it up. As he did that, he failed to notice the box glowing slightly. He kept taking the coins and that was when he heard something. He could hear a faint whisper. He backed away and looked all over the room as the whisper became louder.

He then sets his eyes on the box. What was originally made of wood, now had a strange substance oozing from the top and it was… beating, like a heart. The guy started getting scared and tried running but the door suddenly shuts close and it refused to open. The box glowed more and the surroundings became dark.

A giant hand then came out of the box and grabbed the guy. He screamed as he was being pulled inside and when he was

completely gone, everything returned back to how it was before. When night came, Ben returned to his room to continue his research on the box. Again, there were little results and as Ben held the box, it started to shake. It was subtle at first, but then it became furious.

It suddenly stopped and the top opened up, revealing more gold coins inside. Ben was excited as he poured the contents out on the table but his expression soon changed when what came out next, was blood. He placed the box down and saw that his table was now covered with blood and gold. He quickly grabbed a towel to wipe the table clean and he threw the blood soaked towel into the bin.

Ben backed away from the box but kept an eye on it at all times. He then tried reaching for his phone but stopped as for 1, people might think he is crazy or 2, if they arrive, how was he gonna explain all the valuables in the room. He wanted to move the box somewhere else but since it activates whenever he touches it, he grabbed his blanket and covered the box with it. He then grabbed hold of the bundle and luckily enough, nothing happened.

He threw it in the closet and locked it. He then went back to his computer and tried analyzing the markings on the box again. There were no results again but after 5 hours, 1 of the markings had a positive match. The marking on the top of the box translated to only 1 word. ‘Sacrifice’. Ben felt a chill down his spine as he stared at the locked closet.

Ben decided to never open the closet again and for safe measure, he taped the door shut and threw away the key. He even moved his computer and pillow outside on the couch and locked his bedroom door. He tried calming himself down by watching videos but he gets nervous every time he thinks about the box.

Ben got up to take a drink but that was when he noticed a faint glow coming from the bottom of his bedroom door. The glow then intensified as a loud thud could be heard. Ben wanted to get out of the house but the way out is directly next to his bedroom. He tried to sneak his way through but the door suddenly flew open and a giant monstrous arm appeared.

It started grabbing at the air, trying to reach for something. Ben could only assume that it was looking for him and now he can't go anywhere as the arm is now blocking the way out. Near him, Ben took an umbrella and was making his way slowly towards it. From a fair distance away, Ben swung the umbrella down and was able to hit it, but it hardly did anything.

The arm then went back into the room, the glow fading till it's gone and what came out of the room next, was the box itself. It just stayed on the floor, not doing anything and Ben just stood there, looking at it. What he didn't expect next however, was the box turning to face him. It glowed and opened its top, as if asking Ben to give it something.

Ben didn't dare to go near it. He just stood back and waited to see what happens next. The box then spat out a gold coin, offering it to Ben. He refused to accept it and the box started to shake. It was as if it was getting angry as the shaking became intense to the point where it started to fall apart. Bits and pieces of the wood were flying everywhere. Ben tried to go around the box to get to the front door but he stopped as it started to change.

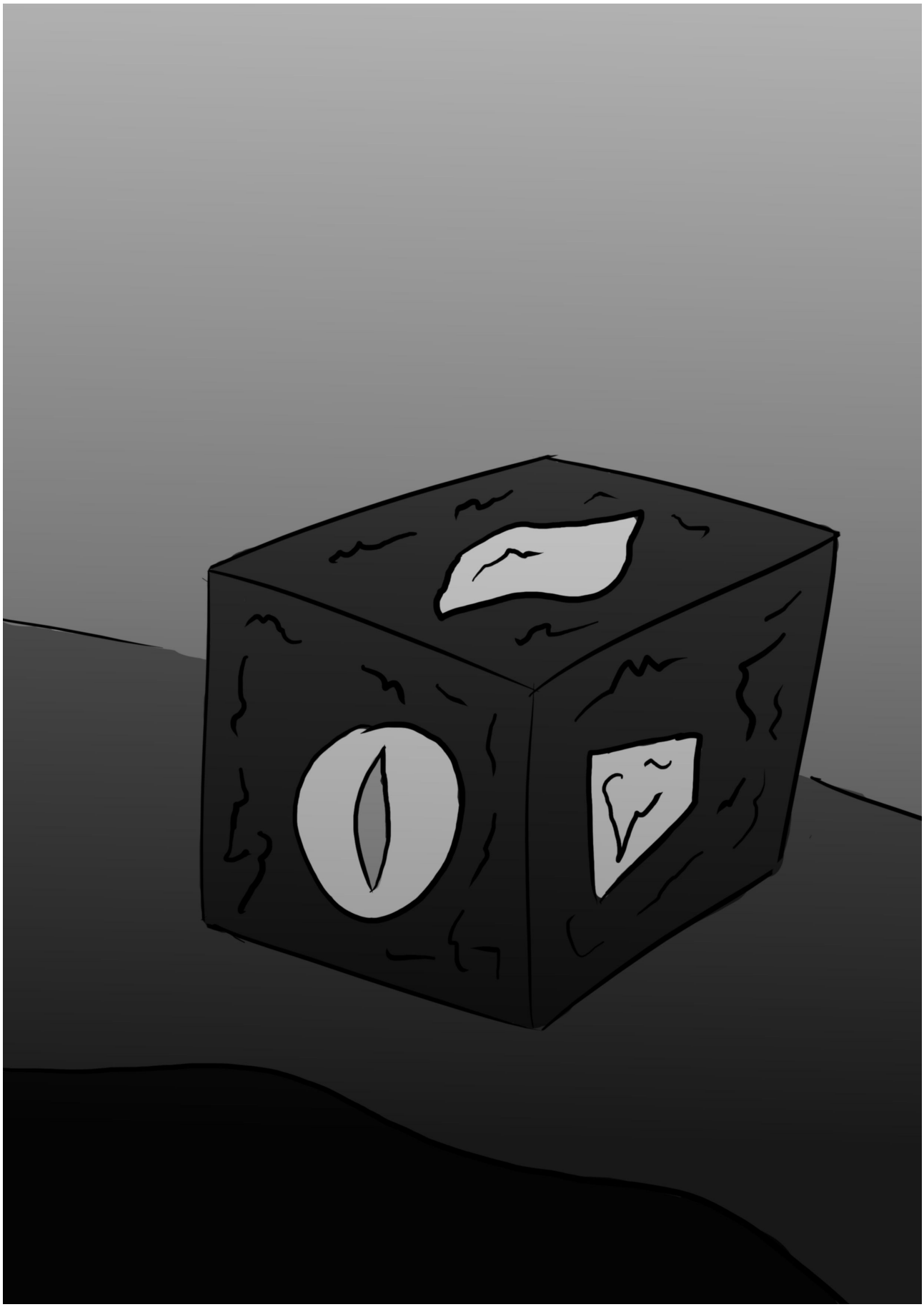
The box started growing in size, getting bigger and bigger with every second that passes. Ben panicked and tried to run for it but that was when the box grew faster and blocked Ben's path. There was now nothing else he could do and nowhere to go as he was now trapped on one side of the living room. In front of Ben, the box made a door and it opened to show him what was inside.

What Ben saw, was something unbelievable. It was a sort of space of its own, bigger than the outside and there were many monsters crawling around inside. They could be seen eating something and when Ben looked closer, he almost puked as it turned out to be humans. They were screaming in agony as they were being eaten alive and they didn't die no matter how much of their body was gone.

The monsters then stopped eating and all of them slowly turned their heads to face Ben. He just stared at them, his fear taking over, not letting him speak. Even his legs won't listen to him when he tried to force them to move. The hands of the monsters all reached out through the door. They grabbed hold of Ben and he

tried to resist but the sheer strength of the monsters were too much so there was nothing he could do.

They wasted no time and started to pull him in. Ben gave up and accepted his fate as he entered through the door. It closed and the box shrunk back down to it’s original size. The box opened its top one more time and spat out a single gold coin.



3 – Missing camera

In a certain alleyway, there is a camera shop that is quite well known among collectors. It is said that the shop sells high quality vintage cameras that go for quite a high price. Most people who visited the shop can't afford the cameras but they would often admire them from afar.

One in particular, would be Clara. She loves photography and found that the pictures taken with vintage cameras are the most beautiful. She herself used vintage cameras to do some of her own photography and develop the pictures herself. Browsing the shop, she recognized most of the cameras, except for one.

It was the only one in the shop that stands out and looks rather strange, like it didn't belong there. Clara however, found the camera unique. Below each of the them, there were photos taken with the cameras themselves and the ones below this one, looked either out of focus or too over exposed. Others who have looked at the photos, found them to be bad and awful, but not Clara.

Clara could see the beauty and admired them for what they are.

The shop owner noticed this and walked over to her. “I see you have an interest in this particular camera. You’re probably one of the few ones who does. It’s actually pretty old and was brought in a few months ago.” He was little creepy as he tried getting closer to Clara but was backed off as he noticed her looking strange at him. “Were those photos taken by you?” Clara asked. “No, they were taken by the previous owner.”

As she looked at the photos, she noticed that there were less of them displayed for this camera. “Um, why are there fewer photos for this camera?” she asked. “Because those were the only ones that were usable. Truth is, every other photos taken by that camera always came out blank. Even I tried to use that camera and the best I could do, was this.”

The shop owner reached into his pocket and took out a photo. “This was my best attempt at taking a photo of the sunset.” The photo was not entirely blank and the sun could still be seen, but there seems to be some sort of smudge on it too. Clara thought that something might’ve gotten on the lens but when she looked closer, it looked more like a figure.

“How much is this camera? There’s no price tag on it.” said Clara, looking around the display for the tag. “This camera isn’t exactly for sale. It’s pretty rare so you can only loan it.” said the owner. “Okay, so how much is it to loan this camera?” “It’s a thousand a day.” Money wasn’t an issue for Clara but she was still surprised by the price. “Wow, uh, yeah, I’ll think about it. In the meantime, I need more film for my camera at home.” “Right this way, miss.” The shop owner then directed Clara to the counter where she bought her film and made her way out.

Clara was still curious about that camera and would try to research it at home. Walking back, Clara was able to observe a beautiful sunset. She wanted to preserve this moment but when she reached inside her bag for her camera, she suddenly felt another one. She looked inside and was in shock when the unique looking camera was suddenly inside her bag.

Clara freaked out, not knowing how it got there. She took it out of her bag and that was when it flashed and a photo came out. She was surprised as she didn’t know that this was a Polaroid camera.

She looked at it and found it odd that it was a very clear picture of the shop, but it looked burnt. She immediately ran back and tried to return the camera as soon as possible.

However, when she got to the shop, a fire had broken out and everything in the shop was destroyed. Luckily, the owner was safe as the paramedics were there. He had slight burns on his body and was unconscious but he was alive and well. Clara couldn't think of what to do, so she decided to head back home with the camera still in her bag.

As Clara got back, she took out the camera and placed it on her desk but that was when a flash went off and a photo came out. She took the photo and was surprised to see what was on it. It was slightly blurry but it showed Clara with bleeding hands. She placed the photo on the desk and was now getting worried.

She went down to the kitchen to get a drink and when she grabbed the wine bottle, it shattered and the broken glass had cut her hands, causing her to bleed. Clara now had a vague idea of what the camera does. She took the glass pieces out and threw

them away, washed her hands and quickly ran up to see that the camera had taken 3 more photos.

Clara looked at them but was unable to make out what they were as they were too out of focus. She was however, able to make out just one thing and that was the front of her house and the door was wide open. She ran to check but tripped on her carpet and fell on the floor. She got up slowly but upon hearing her doorknob turn, quickly ran as fast as she could.

Arriving at her front door, Clara noticed that it was still closed. She must've heard things and tried to calm down. But she was in for a shock when the door slowly opened by itself with no one on the other side. Clara walked slowly towards the door and tried to close it, but it wouldn't budge.

It was as if something was holding the door open. She then heard a familiar sound coming from her side and when she looked, jumped in horror as the camera was now sitting on her dining table with a photo out. Clara hesitantly grabbed the photo and looked at it. It was out of focus but she could see that it was of her looking

at the same picture with something strange in the background.

As she looked closer, she recognized it as the figure that was in the shop owner’s photo but the figure seemed much clearer in this one. It then turned it’s head which made Clara scream but when she looked again, it was back to the way it was. Clara then ripped the photo in half and she took the camera and smashed it against the floor.

She though that would be the end of it but she was wrong when the camera slowly started to put itself back together. Clara then took a frying pan and started smashing the camera over and over again. She stopped when the camera flashed again and something appeared in front of her in that brief moment. She stopped and stood still.

There was another brief flash and something could be seen again which caused Clara to try to run out of her house but she couldn’t do that as the front door suddenly shut. She tried her hardest but it refused to open. Clara looked back as there were now dozens of photos on the ground, all were blank.

The camera then stopped and all the lights in her house had turned off. Clara should still be able to see but for some reason, it was pitch black. Clara took out her phone, wanting to call for help but the screen had cracked to the point where it was now useless. Lucky for her, she knew the layout of her house and was able to navigate through the darkness but what she didn't know, was that she was not alone.

Clara was making her way to her room to try and hold herself inside. The strange figure stood in the dark and stared at her without her knowing. Clara continued to make her way but then, there was a flash and she saw the strange figure. She made a run for it and was successfully able to go into her room and lock her door. She tried flipping the switch back and forth but the power still wouldn't turn on.

Clara then climbed onto her bed and reached for a flashlight and shined it all around her room. She waved it around several times and was relieved when nothing was there. She was too scared to go anywhere and decided to wait out the night in hopes that

everything would be fine in the morning.

Laying down on her bed, she started getting sleepy. She was afraid of the figure showing up in her room but at the same time, she was exhausted and couldn't stay up any longer. The moment Clara closed her eyes, she slept and just after a few minutes, the door slowly opened and the figure walked in and stood at the side of her bed, watching her sleep.

It stood there for awhile but then it got closer. It was so close in fact that its face was about to touch hers. The next day, Clara woke up and was somehow feeling better. She got out of bed, showered, had a good breakfast and was thinking of visiting the shop owner. She walked over to the camera and simply puts in her bag and made her way out.

When she arrived at the hospital, Clara bought some flowers and entered the ward the shop owner was in. She placed the flowers by his bedside as he was just waking up. "Hey, how are you?" asked Clara. "I'm uh… I'm good. just a little tired. That's all." said the shop owner. "Good. That's really good." Clara then closed the

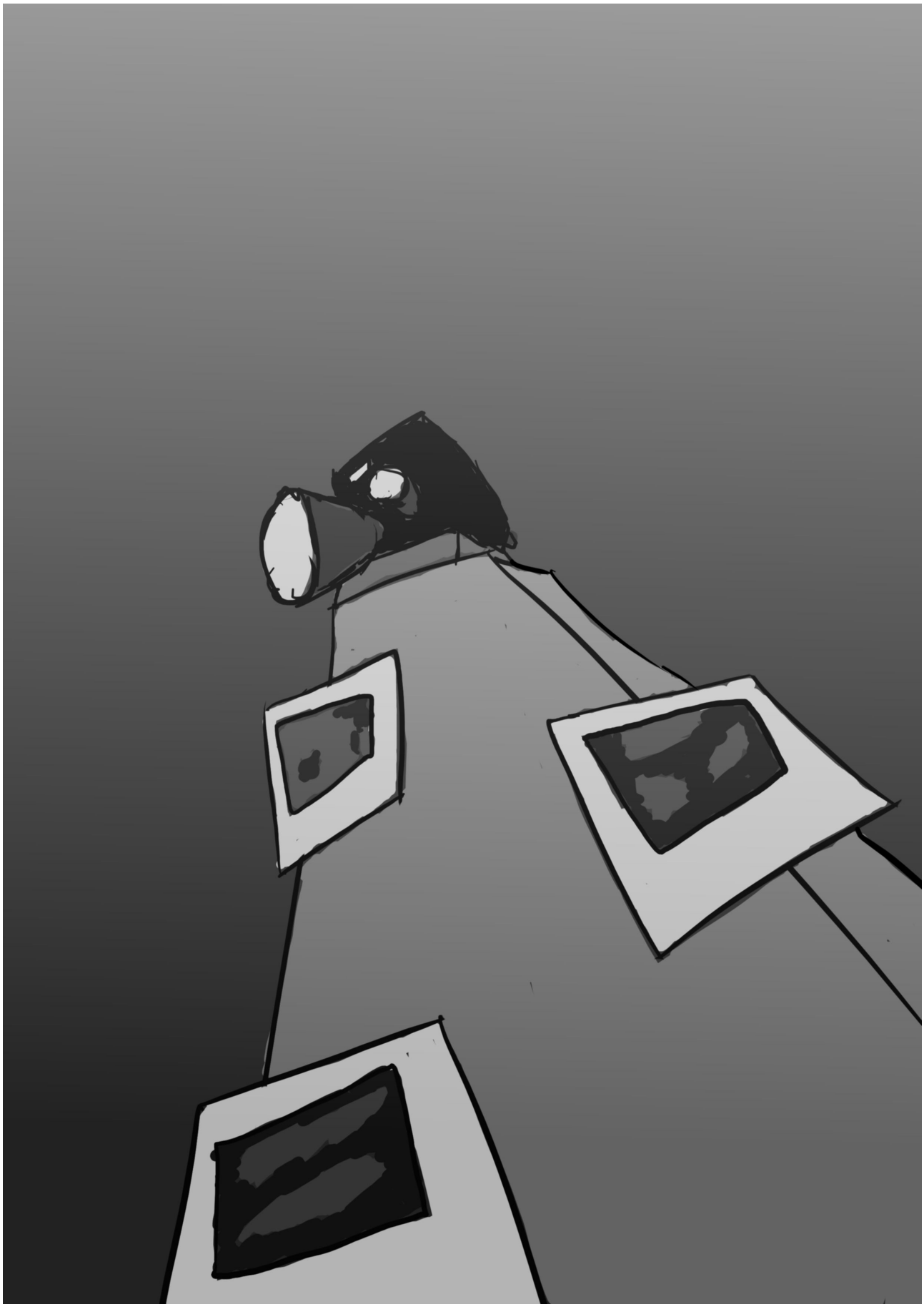
curtains.

“What are you doing?” the shop owner asked. “You know, I intended for you to die in that fire. Didn’t think you’d survive.” said Clara as she took the emergency call button from him. “Y-you started the fire? Why?” “Why? For revenge of course.” “But I don’t even know you.” “Oh, but you know this.” Clara then pulled out the camera from her bag.

It then transformed into an old Polaroid camera and initials appeared at the top which stunned the shop owner. He recognize them and the camera too. “Oh good, you remembered.” “Why do you have that camera and what does this have to do with you?” “It has everything to do with me. After all Henry, we promised to be together forever.”

Clara’s face then changed to that of the figure’s. The shop owner’s expression was now that of terror. “No. No. NO! PLEASE! ISABELLA ! DON’T!” Screams of agony and pain could be heard behind the closed curtains and it slowly fades into silence. Clara walks out of the ward with blood covered hands and

her expression showed that of pure insanity as she gave a menacing grin and started laughing as those around her just stared in horror.



4 – Painting of a chair

At the famous museum of the arts, there is a painting that stands out among the others. The title of this painting, is ‘Sit and watch’. It is a painting of a chair that is facing an angle. That’s about it. Surprisingly, it’s a very popular artwork and many have come to view and admire it. It is the centerpiece of the museum and it is protected by a thick layer of glass. “Seriously though, it’s just a chair.” said Dylan.

Dylan has just started his new job as a guard for the museum and out of all the paintings that he has seen, this one is probably the one that confuses him the most. “But many people love this painting. how could you not?” asked another guard. Dylan stared at the crowds of people. “Should’ve just gotten the job at the new mall. I heard that a few guards quit, so maybe I still have a chance to apply.”

“Why waste your time there when you could be here, admiring all of these artworks.” said the other guard. “You don’t get out much, do you?” “Nope, why do you ask?” Dylan rolled his eyes. He watched as people simply sat there, staring at the painting of a

chair.

"You know, I may be mistaken but they've been sitting there for a long awhile, am I right?" asked Dylan. "You're not wrong. By now, they've been there for over an hour." said the guard. "Over an hour?" "Well, yeah. There are times when people sat there for maybe 2 or 3 hours." Dylan couldn't believe it.

"You know what? Maybe I just don't get art." Dylan left and continued to patrol the rest of the gallery. As he was walking, he found that even the art piece that he himself found interesting, only had at most 3 to 4 people looking at them and for only a few minutes at a time. There was a sudden crashing noise and Dylan ran to where it was coming from, only to find a guest trying to break the glass of the painting of a chair.

The guard was there to pull the guest off but he was too strong and was about to break free, when Dylan rushed over to help. Together, they pinned the guest to the ground. "NO! NO! I NEED TO SEE IT! I NEED TO SEE IT AGAIN!" The guest was shouting at the top of his lungs and was acting crazy.

However, the moment the 2 guards pulled the guest away from the painting, he fell silent and had a crazed look in his eyes. He stopped moving and was mumbling something to himself. “Should… should we call the police?” asked Dylan. “It’s alright. They’re already here.” said the guard as a few policeman arrived quickly and arrested the guest. “You see, the moment the glass is broken, a sensor will be triggered and the police will arrive in a matter of minutes.”

“That’s convenient.” said Dylan as he looked over to the damage that was done. The glass that held the painting had a huge crack on it. “So, what do we do about this?” “We gotta get this fix quick.” said the guard as she took out her walkie to inform the manager. “Okay, so we gotta cordon off this area and one of us has to stay to look after the painting till the glass can be fixed which would only take a few minutes. Is it alright if I ask you to do that?”

“Sure, why not. I don’t mind.” “Awesome, so just wait here with the painting till the workers arrive to change the glass.” Both of them then kindly asked the surrounding guests to leave the area so

that they can replace the glass. Most of the guests were angry and groaned but they complied and as soon as the area was void of guests, a tarp was put over to keep guests from entering.

The guard left to patrol the other galleries while Dylan stayed to look after the painting. Dylan paced around, staring at the other paintings and reading their descriptions. The final one he then came upon, was the painting of a chair. The description is as read ‘Sit and watch - This particular painting was made by the artist Tom Graves. He painted this piece as a lasting memory of the love that he lost. The chair remained in his home, never to be touched. It is said that if you sat and look closely, you would be able to see the woman he loved and lost sitting in the chair, looking away.’

Dylan found the information interesting but odd at the same time. Since the workers still weren’t there, he decided to give it a shot and just sat and stare at the painting. After a few minutes, he grew a little tired and was about to doze off when he saw something that woke him, or at least, he thought he saw something.

Behind the chair, there seems to be a shadow that wasn’t there

before. Dylan rubbed his eyes to see if he was mistaken but he wasn't. He got closer to the painting to get a better look but then he saw something that made him jump. In the shadow, there were eyes staring at him.

Dylan backed off but that was when he bumped into the workers that just arrived, almost dropping the glass. "Oh. Sorry." said Dylan as he turned to helped them. Dylan then turned back and the shadow was now gone. He was relieved as he though that it might've just been his mind playing tricks on him. He then stood back and watched as the workers changed the glass which took only a few minutes.

After that was done, Dylan opened the area again and a crowd suddenly rushed in. But of course, they ignored the other paintings and just focused their attention on the chair painting. As the day went on, guests come and go and eventually it reached closing time. An announcement came on saying there were only 5 minutes left so all the guards started to inform the guests and most of them made their way out.

The only ones that were left however, were the ones still staring at the painting of a chair. When closing time was announced, the guests had to be dragged away and escorted to the exit. Dylan looked at them and they seemed to be in some sort of daze. When the last guest had left, the doors are locked and the lights are turned off one by one.

For the guards, only 1 is needed to patrol for the night hours everyday and the guard on patrol for this night, is Dylan. He said his goodbyes to the rest and they in turn, waved goodbye to him. Dylan locked the last door and was now by himself, armed with only a flashlight in hand. “All alone. Kinda creepy at night.” Dylan said to himself. He started walking around, flashing his flashlight everywhere.

After checking most areas, all he was left with, was checking on the chair painting. He shown his flashlight high and low and everything seemed fine. He then stood in front of the painting and just stared at it. He wanted to see if something might happen but after awhile, there was nothing.

Dylan got bored and as he was about to leave, lightning struck nearby and the flash lit up the room and in a split second, there was a shadow standing next to the chair in the painting and that caused Dylan to scream and fall on his butt. He quickly shown his light towards the painting and there was nothing there.

Dylan got up, his hand shaking from what he just saw. He slowly backed away and another bolt of lightning struck, this time showing someone sitting on the chair. The lady in the painting was beautiful and she was sitting at an angle, the same with the chair. Her eyes however, seemed to face the front.

Dylan stopped and shown the flashlight up towards her face. Her eyes that were looking straight, slowly moved and was now looking at Dylan. He thinks that this was just a coincidence but was in denial. As he started moving around the room, the eyes followed him. He started to get more and more scared. He wanted to leave and run but his legs were shaking too much.

Dylan could only take little steps so he tried to go behind the painting but it seems like that was impossible as the painting itself

also moved with him so that whichever angle he was looking from, he would always be facing the painting. Dylan then mustered enough courage to try and make a run for it, but when he stepped out of the gallery, he found himself back in.

The painting wouldn’t let him leave and when he looked at it, the lady’s features were changing. She now had a wide grin and her eyes were sunk in. Her skin was getting older by the second and blood ran down from her hair. But she still maintained eye contact with Dylan. He wanted to look away but for some reason, he couldn’t

The lady’s hand then moved. It continued until it came out of the painting. Her wrinkled hand moved all over the place but then her other hand came out, and then her legs and then her body. What was left was her head and when it finally came out of the painting, she started to scream. It was as if she was finally free from a cage that held her in. She then jumped, breaking the glass and landing on her feet. There was no blood and her body was limp and it made a cracking sound with every movement she made.

She then stood straight and her head turned to face Dylan who was so frightened that he didn't know what to do but stay still. She then got on her hands and knees and started crawling towards him. She placed her hand on his face and started to scratch it. Dylan then tried swinging his flashlight around but to no avail as it just passes through her.

He then force shut his eyes, trying not to look at her. From her screams, he could tell that she was angry and she also started scratching at his face, trying to make him open his eyes. When it didn't work, she started screaming again but then it faded into silence. Nothing happened for a few minutes and Dylan didn't know what to do.

He opened his eyes just a bit and saw that everything had returned to how it was before. The glass was no longer broken and the painting returned to that of a chair again. Dylan breathe a sigh of relief but that was when the lady suddenly grabbed his head and forced him to look into her eyes.

The next morning, when the guards returned, one of them

checked to see if everything was working fine but she stopped as she saw what looked like blood coming from one of the galleries. She walked in and screamed as she saw Dylan dead on the floor with his eyes gouged out, facing towards the painting of a chair.



5 – Daily instructions

Edith volunteered to look after a mansion that belonged to her friend's cousin. She will have to look after the manor for 1 week and will be paid after the week is up. She was excited because she always wanted to know what it felt like to be in a mansion. A letter of instructions was given to her by her friend and she was told to only open it when she arrived at the manor at the specified time.

When she arrived, she was amazed by the sheer size of it. It was bigger than her house by a lot and it was super clean. She then took out the letter and opened it. Inside, the letter reads :

'Dear Edith,

Thank you for taking the time to look after the mansion. Inside the letter, a key is provided for the gate and the front door. Be sure not to lose it as there are no copies. Food and beverages are provided and you can have as much as you want. Just don't cause too much of a mess. Now for the rules that you must follow. There are 10 of them and you must follow them to the letter.

Rule 1 - Keep things clean and tidy

Rule 2 - For disposables, throw them in the rubbish chute

Rule 3 - Rewind the grandfather's clock that is near the stairs

Rule 4 - Sleep only in the guest room that is provided

Rule 5 - No inviting anyone over

Rule 6 - Lights out at midnight

Rule 7 - Refill the water tank in the living room

Rule 8 - Make sure the window in the attic is always clean

Rule 9 - Do not go into the basement

Rule 10 - Turn the key that is located at the center of the mansion

Follow them daily and by the end of the week, I will come to open the doors for you. Good luck and thank you once again for volunteering.

Victor'

Edith found some of the instructions a bit odd but she did agree to look after the place so she picked up her things and made her way in. She tilted the letter forward and out came a key. The mansion was surrounded by a brick wall that was twice Edith's height. For the gate, she looked and was surprised that there was no keyhole. When she pushed on the gate however, it opened

easily and the moment she entered, it swung back and closed.

Edith found it strange but decided to ignore it and make her way to the front door. This one however, does require the key. She unlocks the door and for some reason, she could hear some strange noises. It wasn't anything mechanical though, it sounded more like grumbling? The noises then stopped as the door opened.

Edith walked in and was in awe of the place. It looked bigger on the inside and was cleaner then she thought. She explored the manor and some of the rooms. Most of them were locked and she thought that they may contain some valuables. She found the guest room, placed her things inside and settled in. She laid on the bed and it was the most comfortable bed she has ever laid in.

Edith laid there for what seemed like hours but it has only been a few minutes. She then got up and looked over the rules that she has to follow. She did her tasks which were faster then she thought it would take and all that leaves, is the last one. Edith didn't know weather she needed to use the same key for the manor or a different one but she puts it in her pocket just in case.

She walked over to the center and there in the spotlight, there was a podium with a key at the top of it. She looked and saw that there were instructions written on it. It reads ‘Turn the key 10 times daily to keep the manor at bay, so do not delay.’ Edith found it amusing but as she grabbed the key, she found that it wouldn’t turn.

Edith used all her strength and was able to move it, though only slightly. As she did one full turn, she was exhausted and decided to take a break. She then heard a noise and when she looked, she saw the key turn and resetting to it’s original position. Edith laughed and laid on the floor as she thought that this might’ve been some sort of prank.

Edith got up and tried to turn the key again but as expected, she would need to use a bit of strength again. She decided to give up on it and leave, still thinking it was a joke. But what she didn’t realize, was that on the side of the podium, there were more writing and it read ‘To end the suffering.’ over and over again.

Edith then went to the kitchen to eat some food and after that, she explored the manor some more. She just couldn’t believe that she has this whole place all to herself. Time flew by fast as night came without her realizing. Edith then ate dinner, took a quick shower and turn it in for the night. She tried to use her phone to talk to her friend but she couldn’t get a signal.

Edith was disappointed but at least she can live in luxury for the entire week. As she slept deeply in the night, strange noises occurred throughout the manor. Some were noises of gears turning while others were of grumbling and movement. There was a sudden scream which woke Edith but as she got up, all the noises stopped. Still tired and thinking nothing much of it, Edith laid back and continued to sleep.

As the morning came and sunlight peeked into her room, Edith woke up refreshed and ready for the day. After showering and eating breakfast, she decided to do her tasks. Again, all were completed with ease, except for the last one. She tried to turn the key again but like yesterday, a lot of strength is needed to turn just one round.

Edith gave up after doing 3 turns and as she stopped to catch her breathe, the key turned back 3 turns. Edith looked at it with anger, as if it was mocking her but she was able to compose herself and decided to try again later. After sitting around and doing nothing, Edith got bored and decided to go out to get some fresh air. But as Edith approached the front door, she found it to be locked. She tried turning the knob again and nothing happened.

Edith though that she might need the key but as she took it out, she found that on the inside of the door, there was no keyhole. There was nowhere to insert the key. Edith panicked a little and took out her phone to call her friend but again, she had no signal. Edith then went to a window and found that it wouldn’t open. None of the windows in the manor could open.

Edith searched high and low for a way out but there were none. She then took several breathes and thinks that everything was still some sick joke from her friend. Edith decided to calm down and just wait. She thought that maybe everything would be over if she just waited the week. She had plenty of food and it was a

comfortable place to live in.

Just then, there was a noise. A scream came from inside the walls of the mansion and that freaked Edith out. She moved away from the walls as the screaming continued. They were soft at first but then they became louder. The cries were that of help. Edith then grabbed the heaviest furniture she could carry and threw it against the window but it broke upon impact, leaving the window still intact.

Edith curled into a ball as the screaming continued. She then tried covering her ears but it was useless. But all of a sudden, the screaming stopped. Edith uncovered her ears and nothing happened after a few minutes but a loud roar suddenly rang throughout the mansion and that caused Edith to scream and run for her life.

She ran towards the door and started scratching it. It was so intense that her fingertips were covered in blood. She then stopped after she found that it wasn’t working and felt immense pain as she looked at her own bloodied hands. She fainted due to shock

and laid next to the front door. A few hours passed and it was already night when she finally woke.

Edith groaned in pain as she got up. She stumbled across the floor and into the kitchen to wash her hands. It stings a bit but then again, there was a lot of blood to wash off. Edith then found some bandages and wrapped her fingers. She walked along the hallway, feeling tired but she suddenly felt pain again.

She looked at her hand that touched the wall and saw that it was bleeding. She looked to the wall and found something oozing from it. It was a strange substance and it smelled awful and as Edith looked at her hand again, she was horrified as 2 of her fingers had melted off. She screamed in horror and tried to cover her hand but then she noticed that the floor too was covered in the same substance.

Edith looked to her feet and was mortified as she could see them melting. She tried to run but her legs gave out and she was now on her hands and knees. She screamed as she crawled along the floor, her body continuing to melt. Edith didn’t know where she was

going but as she looked up, she was at the center of the mansion as she sees the podium in front of her.

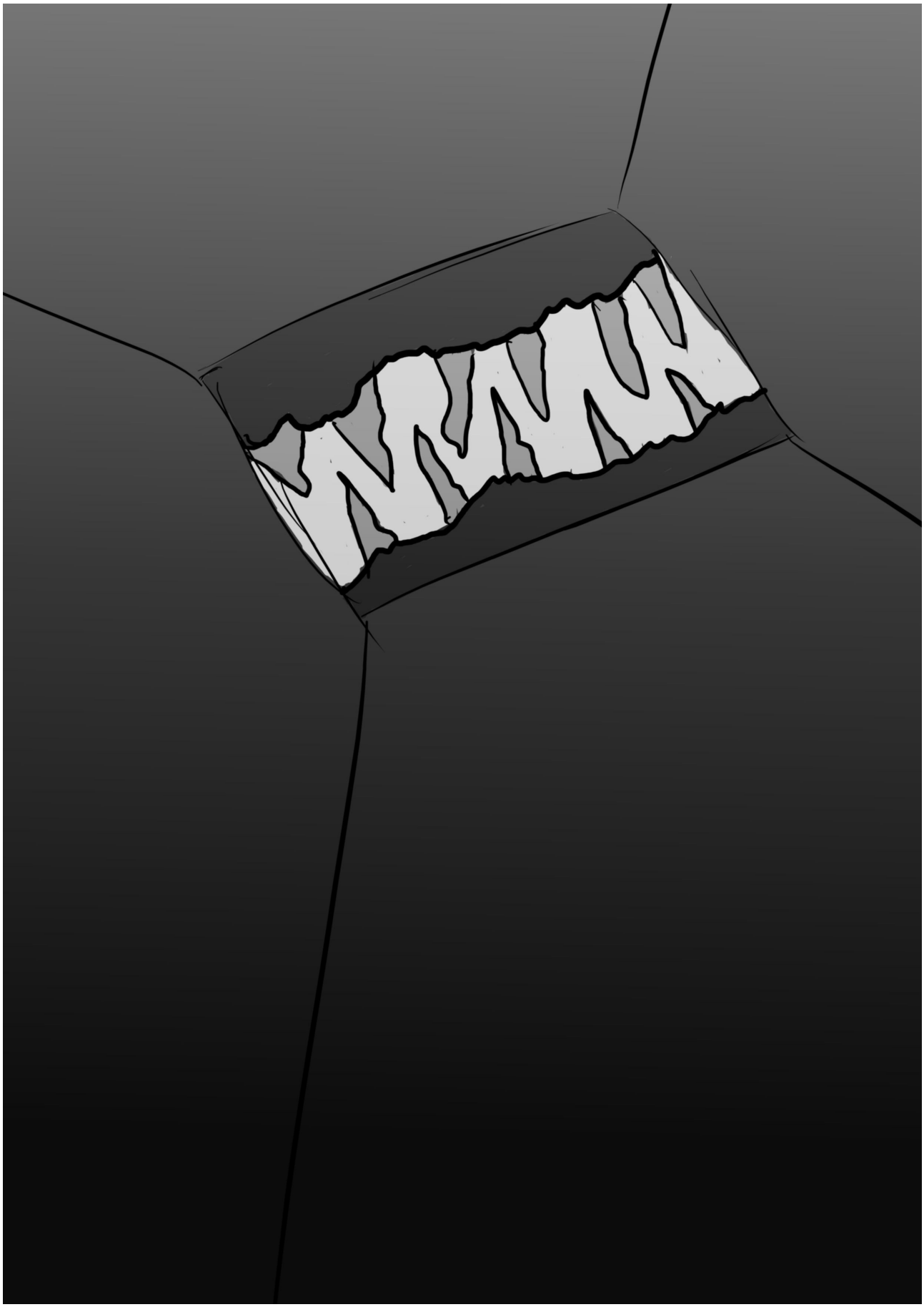
She then found the rest of the words on the side of the podium and she thinks that if she could turn the key 10 times then all of it would be over. She forced her way forward and grabbed onto the podium. She then reached for the key and started turning it. As she turned it, she could could feel more of her body melting.

Edith was suffering as most of her legs and one of her arms were gone but she continued to push through and with her final bit of strength, she was finally able to turn the key 10 times. Edith was relieved but that was when a trapdoor opened beneath her and she fell in.

Edith found herself in a small room that was filled with more of the substance and she screamed in agony as her body begun to melt faster. She tried to climb out by grabbing the walls but as she looked closer, it almost felt and looked like flesh.

She looked up and screamed as when the trapdoor closed, all she

could see, were teeth.



6 – Hidden in the basement

Frank recently bought and moved into a new home. He got it at a super great deal but the catch was that the previous owner left a bunch of stuff inside and that he would need to dispose of them. Some of the things that were left were also things that have never been opened yet.

Frank wanted to contact the previous owner but for some reason the seller told him that he went on a long vacation and that he had a choice to either keep the things or throw them away. He was low on cash so he couldn't hire anyone and his friends are all busy so he decided to try and clear everything himself.

First, he started with the living room. There wasn't much of a mess, just a few cardboard boxes. He gathered them together and threw all of it in the dumpster outside. There were some stains on the floor that were hard to get rid of so Frank decided to leave it for last and continued to throw some garbage that were laying around.

While cleaning, he noticed a note that was placed on the broken

TV. Frank picked it up and it read ‘Do not go into the basement’. He found the note odd and thought that it was some joke, so he crumpled it up and added it to the pile of trash.

After clearing the living room, along with the kitchen, he made his way up the stairs to the other rooms. There were only 2 doors. One for the bathroom and the other, for the bedroom. Frank checked on the bathroom first and upon opening the door, smelled a foul odor that caused him to almost puke on the floor.

He quickly covered his nose and took a peek inside. On the bathroom floor, there was a pile of garbage and some food that had rot over and was swarming with maggots. Frank sighed and had no choice but to go in armed with cleaning supplies and lots of garbage bags.

It took Frank an hour but it was worth it as the bathroom was now spotless. He was exhausted but decided to carry on as only the bedroom and basement were left. As he opened the bedroom door, he was met with piles of garbage all over the floor. Frank was too tired to clear all of it so he decided to turn in for the night

and deal with it the next day.

Since the bedroom was out of order, Frank decided to just lay on the couch. Frank was so tired that after only a few minutes, he fell asleep. Morning came and the first thing he did was to clear the bedroom which was a lot easier than he thought.

Now all that was left was the basement and then he could finally settle into his new home. Frank walked down the stairs into the living room and walked down again till he reached the basement door. Upon turning the knob, Frank found that it wouldn’t open. He tried pushing as hard as he can but nothing happened.

Frank gave up and was about to walk back up when suddenly, the basement door suddenly opened by itself. He was freaked out but was curious and wanted to know what was inside. From the outside, he couldn’t see much of anything as it was too dark so he slowly took a step in.

He felt the wall, trying to find the light switch and when he did, flipped it and when the lights came on, he found that the entire

basement, was empty. There was nothing in sight. Frank was glad that there wasn't a mess to clean but at the same time, he felt uneasy being there.

It felt too empty and it was strangely cold. Frank looked around one more time before returning upstairs. He turned off the lights and closed the door behind him. Unbeknownst to him, the lights turned back on and shadows of footprints could be seen. They paced around the basement and with each step, they started to turn red. More footsteps appeared and they were leaving lots of red footprints.

Up in the living room, it was nearing night when Frank brought in a big box of his things and placed it on the floor. He looked around and was pleased at how good the place looks now. Frank was about to unpack his things but stopped when he thought he heard a banging sound. It was slight and as he followed where it was coming from, it turned out to be from the basement.

Frank things it might be some rusty pipes so he decided to just ignore it. The sound stopped and what came next, made Frank froze. He heard something call his name. From a distance, Frank

tried to look at the basement door and he noticed when he looked at the bottom, that the lights were on and there were shadows moving around on the other side.

Frank immediately backed off and was about to call the authorities when he suddenly slipped on something and hit his head on the table, knocking himself out. The door to the basement opened and something came out. It was a shadowed figure and it grabbed hold of Frank's leg and dragged him down into the basement.

After a few minutes, Frank woke up. He was in pain and felt his head. He looked around and was surprised to find himself in the basement. He quickly got up and tried to open the door of the basement but it wouldn't budge.

Frank suddenly heard footsteps coming from behind him but he refused to turn around. He was panicking as he heard them getting closer and closer. He then froze as he felt a hand touch his shoulder. The hand started to pull and Frank took a few steps back.

He found himself at the center of the basement, underneath a lit light bulb. The hand lets go and Frank looked back to find that

nothing was there. He heard the footsteps again but he sees nothing when he looks around. Frank then looks down and saw footprints.

They appear and disappear repeatedly, as if some invisible person was walking around. They walked towards Frank and both feet stopped directly in front of him. He had no idea what was happening but when he looked at the footprints again, they started to turn red.

The footprints started to walk around and encircle around Frank, leaving behind a trail of bloody footprints. They seemed to want Frank to stay in that exact spot for a reason. He then looked forward and saw the shadowed figure.

It pointed to a corner of the basement and the footsteps headed in the same direction. Frank hesitated at first but realized that they wanted him to go there. He did as instructed and followed. When he stood at the corner, blood started to drip down from the walls.

The blood gathered together and formed a small ball. It rolled around Frank, wanting him to pick it up. As he did that, he felt a sharp pain and lets go of the ball. Frank looks at his hand and saw

that it was bleeding profusely. When the ball fell on the floor however, it rolled into the wall and disappeared.

The blood from his hand dripped down and seemed to sink into the floor. The floor then started to steam and cracks appeared. Frank backed off quickly and more cracks appeared in that one spot. The room started to shake and something suddenly popped up from the cracks.

It was an unknown black object. It rose up more as the room continued to shake and when it was fully out, it turned out to be a coffin. Frank's blood from before was absorbed into the coffin and there was a slight red glow. Frank wanted to move but something compelled him to stay and watch.

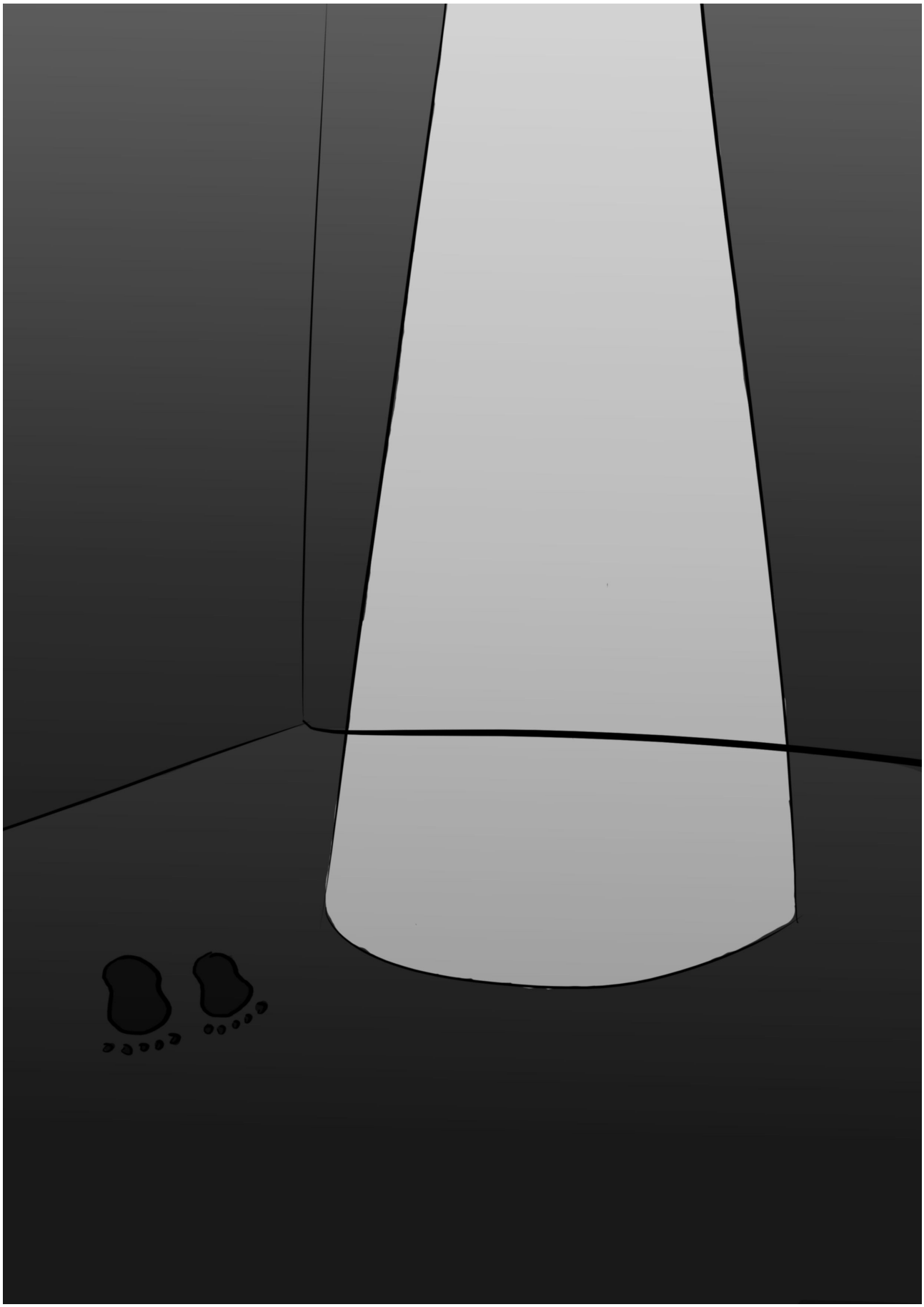
The front of the coffin slowly opened and a woman fell out and collapse onto the floor. Frank slowly approached, being cautious of her. The woman had white skin and white hair. As he got closer, her eyes slowly opened and Frank was mesmerized by her ruby red eyes.

She was mumbling something but Frank couldn't hear what she was saying. As he got even closer, She suddenly grabbed hold of

him and bit down on his neck. Frank felt immense pain as the woman started to suck out his blood. With what strength he could muster, he was able to pull her off and he quickly backed away.

The woman was convulsing and her body started to bend and contort. She then looked at him and she had hunger in her eyes. She flung herself towards him and she bit down on his neck again. She bit hard, this time making sure he couldn't pull her off.

She continued to suck on his blood and his body started to shrivel up. Frank had no strength left and ultimately, all of his blood had been drained form his body and he was now a dead corpse. The woman got up and she felt refreshed. She then walked up to the basement door, opened it. In the living room, she looked out the window and was filled with hunger as she saw the many humans walking around. She smiled as she now had a new hunting ground.



7 – Play the game

A new game came out that was all the rage. It was popular with people of all ages and it even won several awards. Greta enjoyed playing all kinds of games and was excited on getting her hands on this new one. When the game released at her local game shop, Greta was the first in line to buy it.

When she got home, she immediately turned on her console and inserted the game in. The game started and all Greta could see, was a blank screen. She waited for awhile but nothing happened. She pressed all the buttons on her controller and the same thing, nothing.

Greta got up and was about to restart the console when a graphic appeared on the screen. It was a small bouncy creature and it folded itself into a ball and rolled around the screen. There was a spotlight and the creature rolled towards it and unfolded itself. Underneath the light, the creature sat and stared directly at the screen.

Greta tried pressing buttons again and nothing happened. After

awhile, Greta was bored and got up to grab a drink but that was when she noticed the creature's head following her. She walked from one side of her room to another and the creature was indeed following her.

She found it cool but then she realized she was holding the controller in her hand so she assumed that the creature was following that instead. She placed the controller down and it was true, the creature was following the controller. She was disappointed but at the same time, impressed that the game company was able to program that in.

When Greta got back, she saw a text box appear below the creature. It read 'Do you want to play?'. Greta was excited that she was finally able to play the game. She selected 'Yes' and the screen faded to black and when it came on again, she was now a blank character. They gave her the options to customize her character and when she was done, her character gave her a thumbs up and he was now free to explore the world.

The game was a basic adventure type. Greta's character was able

to walk around, kill some monsters, collect materials and even complete quests for gold. It wasn't what she was expecting. It was fun for a short period of time but other than that, there was nothing special about it.

After a few quests, the creature from before appeared. Greta thinks that the creature might be some sort of guide for her character but that wasn't it. Apparently, she is given a choice to either spare or kill the creature. She found it odd that anyone would want to kill this little creature.

Greta hovered over 'Spare' but her cat suddenly pounced on her and she accidentally selected 'Kill'. Her character then proceeded to take out her weapon and brutally kills the creature. That amount of violence surprised her, seeing that people of all ages play this game. The dying creature looked at her character and then to the screen and said only one word. 'W... why?'

When the creature died, a game over screen appeared. There should've been the option to 'play again'. But it didn't appear and the screen did not change even after a few minutes had passed.

Greta walked over to the console and restarted it, thinking this was some sort of bug. When the game started, the first thing Greta noticed that was odd, was that the creature didn't appear.

There was the spotlight and the sound effects but no creature. The same text box appeared and Greta selected to play the game. This time however, the game skipped the character making phase and her character from before appeared and started to walk around.

Greta wasn't even touching any buttons yet her character was making the same decisions from the first play through. It was the exact same, that is, until the meeting with the creature. Greta expected the creature to appear again but it wasn't there, only an empty text box. The game started to glitch a bit and Greta tried restarting the game again but before she could do that, for a brief frame, the creature's face appeared.

Greta was startled and backed away a bit. It flashed again and she lets out a sigh as she thinks that this was part of the game. She thinks that this was actually some sort of horror game disguised as

a simple adventure one. The scenes of the game then changed to be more horror themed. Instead of being around a forest, her character was now standing in a red graveyard. The music also became more eerie and the glitches more apparent.

From playing lots of games similar to this one, Greta knew what to expect. The jump scares the whisper. It was all the classic trope. What she didn't expect however, was that each time the creature's head appeared, it morphed to be more hideous. She was able to move her character around though so that's good, but the constant frame flash of the creature made her feel a bit uncomfortable.

They continued the longer she played the game to the point where her eyes started hurting so she walked over to shut down the console but stopped as when she looked at the tv, the creature's head was stuck there. She looked closely and saw that the creature was now severely deformed from when it started and was staring directly at Greta.

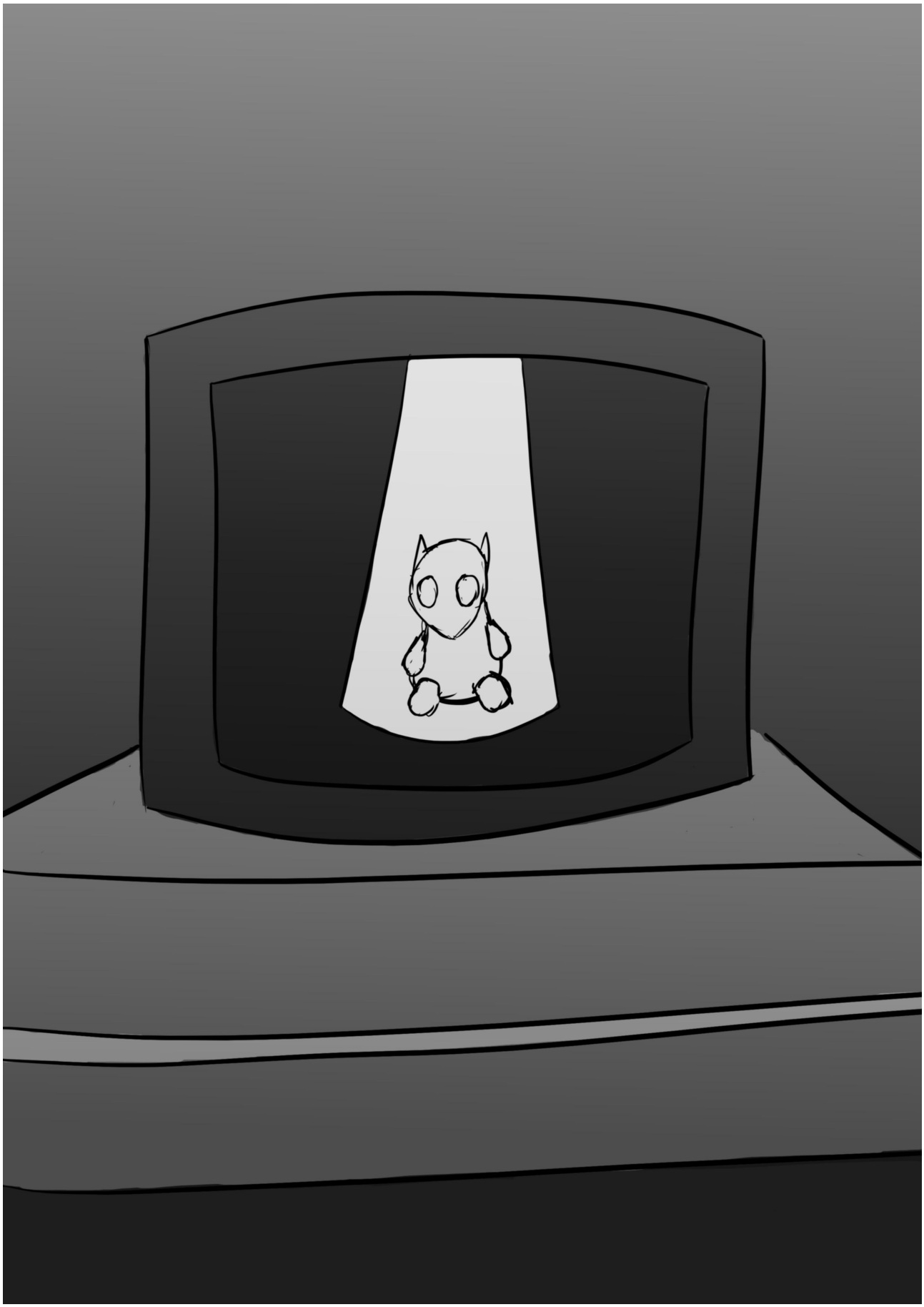
Greta was stunned as she realized that she left the controller on her bed, so how was the creature now staring at her? Greta backed

away and the head followed her. The creature continued to stare and it said only one word 'Greta'. This caused her to immediately shut down the console as she does not remember ever inputting her real name.

Greta started breathing slowly, trying to calm down. She took the game disc out of the console and inserted another game in. as she turned it on, she screamed as the creature's head was still there, staring at her. It started to smile with a hideously wide grin and it's laugh echoed through the stereo and into her room.

Greta was frightened as it became louder and louder so without thinking, she lifted her game console up and smashed it onto the floor, breaking it. The TV now showed only static. Greta tried thinking logically that maybe her game was corrupted and had a virus on it. That would explain most things.

As for the game saying her name, she tried not to think about that. When Greta turned off the TV, she saw something that made her numb with fear. In the reflection of the TV screen, right behind her, was the deformed creature sitting on her bed, staring at her.



8 – The convention

Part 1:

Henry enjoyed going to conventions. He usually stays at home and does nothing but conventions are a place where he feels free from the obligations of both work and life. Plus a few friends once invited him to go to a photography convention and he has been hooked ever since.

Taking photos wasn't a hobby of his, but the more he took, the more he enjoyed doing it. He mostly took pictures of sceneries but on occasion, he does go to those anime conventions to take pictures of cosplayers. He has fun with what he does but it changed when he met someone.

Her name is Isabella. Their meeting was a relativity normal one. While Henry was happily taking pictures of cosplayers, Isabella walked in front of him. “Oh, I'm sorry.” she said as she realized she disrupted his shot. “That's alright, I was actually about to move on.” said Henry as he picked up his things.

“Hey, your cosplaying as that character, right? From that one

show.” “Oh wow, I'm glad you noticed. It's such an obscure series that I thought no one would recognized it.” Both of them started to chat with one another. After what felt like an hour, Henry asked if she came with anyone and she replied 'no', so he invited her to walk around with him and she happily accepted.

Both of them soon talk about their interest and they realized that they have much more in common than they thought. When the day was nearing its end, Henry asked if he could see her again and she nods and both of them exchange phone number.

As Henry got back to his apartment, he laid on the bed and was about to take a quick nap when a text came on his phone. He read it and smiled as it was Isabella thanking him for spending the day with her. The next morning, Henry woke up to a new message on his phone.

He opened it and it was Isabella asking if he was busy. Henry smiled and asked if there was a place for them to meet. Isabella told him of a fast food place near his apartment that he usually eats at and that he can meet her there. Henry found it odd that she

knew he ate there but he thought nothing of it and told her that he will see her there in an hour.

Nearing the time specified, Henry left his apartment and headed out. On his way, he suddenly bumped into Isabella. He was really surprised to see her as he had only taken a few steps away from his apartment. Nevertheless, he greeted her and she in return gave him a sweet smile.

They decided to walk together and as they sat down at the restaurant, Henry only now noticed that Isabella was carrying a really big bag. He asked what was inside and she said that it was her cosplay costume. Apparently, it ripped when she got back so she needed to send it to her friend who knows how to fix it.

They talked more about their interest and hobbies and then Henry told Isabella that he worked a boring office job but when he asked her what her job was, she didn't answer at first but then said that she works as a tailor. She has some experience in making clothes but wasn't very good at it.

Both kept chatting till it was nearly night. Henry couldn't believe the time and realized that he has work tomorrow so he apologized to Isabella and said that he had top go soon. Isabella understood and as Henry got up to leave, he felt his pockets and found that he had lost his key card. He thought that he must've left them in his apartment and without it, he had no way of entering his place.

He asked Isabella if she had seen his key card and she said she hasn't. Henry started to panic but that was when Isabella offered to let him stay at her place if he wanted. Henry said that he wouldn't want to intrude but Isabella didn't mind as she said that she stayed alone and that she could use the company.

On their way, Isabella asked if he wanted anything to eat since she'll be offering to make dinner. Henry said to surprise him and she snickered. While walking Henry noticed something odd. They were heading the same direction as his apartment. He thought that it was strange but realized that she actually lives at the apartment complex across his. Somehow, he found that even stranger.

As they reached her floor and entered the apartment. Henry

found that it seemed familiar. Too familiar in fact. From the way the apartment looks, to the colors and to the layouts. The whole arrangement was a direct mirror to his apartment. Not only that but when he looked out the window, from across, he could see into his own apartment.

Henry started to get nervous and when he walked back, he stopped as he felt something sharp. He turned slowly to see Isabella with a weird look in her eyes, holding a knife in her hands. She stared at Henry and held the knife high, telling him that she'll prepare dinner soon.

Henry started to get worried but had no idea what to do. He sat at the kitchen table while Isabella prepared the food. He looked around and from Isabella's jacket pocket, he saw his card. While Isabella was busy cooking, Henry slowly made his way to her jacket and tried to grab his card. As he took them, he noticed that the sound of cooking stopped.

He heard footsteps headed straight for him and as he turned, he saw Isabella running towards him while raising her knife up.

Henry tried to grab the knife but that was a bad idea as she curved the direction of the knife and it had plunged into his arm. Henry screamed in pain and quickly pulled the knife out. Isabella saw the blood and the first thing she did was cry, but soon it turned to laughter.

She had a deranged laugh and had a crazed look in her eyes. Henry quickly grabbed his keys and ran out of the apartment. He arrived at his apartment and took out his first aid kit to fix his wound. He wanted to use his phone to call the police but the phone rang instead. He picked it up and a voice said, “Look out the window.”

Henry looked and across from him, he saw Isabella smiling widely at him and all over her window, written in blood, were the words 'I love you' written over and over again.



9 – Staring from afar

Part 2:

Isabella worked a normal job of a tailor. She helped fix all sorts of clothing and when a customer wanted something custom-made, she happily obliged. She also had an apartment all to herself. Though there was one thing she wanted more than anything and that is, 'LOVE'. She wanted to find someone she could spend the rest of her life with.

She had been on many dates before and all of them didn't turned out so well. It was hard for her to find that one person. That is until one day, when she was about to deliver a custom made clothing to her friend at a convention, she saw him. She had no idea who he was but she found herself drawn to him.

This feeling inside her was what she was missing. Throughout the day, Isabella kept watch from a distance. Her love for him grew as time passed. He had accidentally dropped his pass and that was when Isabella took the chance to learn his name. Henry. She kept the pass as a memento of their unofficial first meeting.

When Henry left the convention, Isabella followed him in secret. Along the way, she took multiple secret snapshots of him. She stopped when she sees what she thinks is where he lives. She wanted to go in but a key card is needed so she backed off. Luckily, she was able to write down the name of his building and went back home with a smile on her face.

At her home, she printed out the pictures she took of him. She stared and admired them for what seemed like hours. She has never been happier. She researched his place and tried to find a vacant apartment but none was available but there were several available on the opposite building.

The next day, she explored the building floor by floor and tried to see if she could see him. She waited for hours till she was finally able to spot him. She took note of the floor he was on and the next day, she bought the apartment that was across his.

As days turned into weeks, she kept spying on him through the open windows, studying his daily routine to the time he sleeps or wakes up and even to what shows he enjoys and even his interests and hobbies.

The day finally came when Isabella was finally able to meet him face to face. There was an anime convention coming up and she made a costume from a show he specifically likes. Her plan is to casually bump into him in hopes that everything will go smoothly from there.

The next day, she set her plan into motion and it went really well. She casually bumps and chatted with him. She was also trying hard to really hold herself back, not wanting to freak him out. As the day ended, she headed home and jumped directly on her bed in excitement. She looked at her hand and remembered that it shook his so she started to lick it.

In her pocket, there were a few strands of his clothing and hair and she carefully places them near her bed. Her love for him became more obsessive, to the point where she made many small doll of him and placed them all over her bed. Isabella looked around and she felt distraught. She can't be satisfied with just some small trinkets anymore and wanted all of him.

After spending more time with him, she was able to invite him back to her place, though she did had to secretly take his key card.

She was happy to start to cook dinner but then she noticed that he saw the key card in her jacket and tried to take it. She wanted to grab it but she accidentally plunged the knife into his arm.

As he pulled it off, she fell to the floor, shocked as to what she had done. She was frightened at first but then it changed to a smile and then to a crazed laughter. She was losing it and didn't notice that he had ran away.

When she calmed down a bit, she grabbed the knife and started to lick the blood off. She then took some of the blood and started writing a message for him all over her window. She wrote the words 'I love you' over and over again. As she looked across the window, she saw him looking at her.

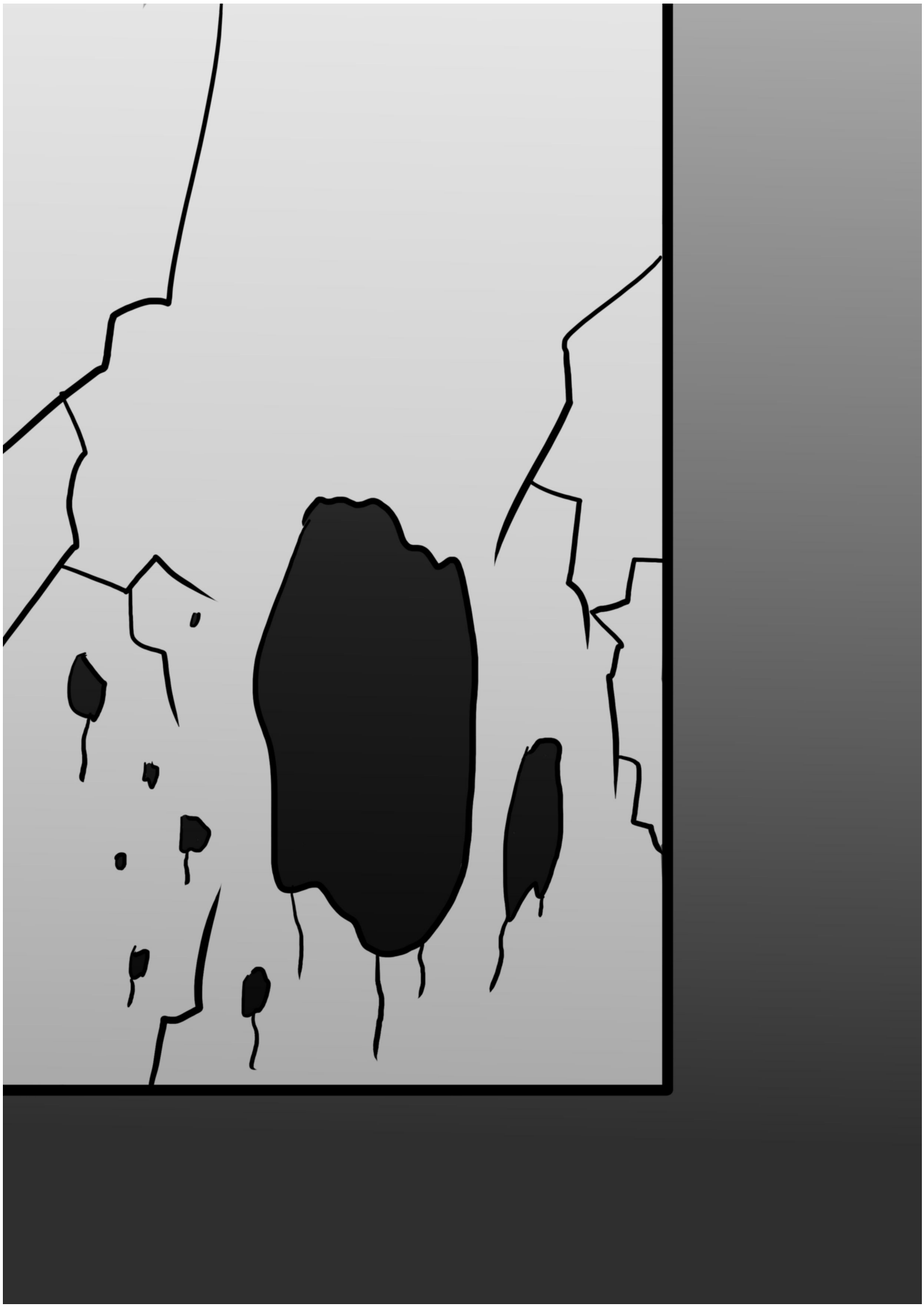
She wanted more. She wanted to possess all of him, alive or dead. She grabbed her kitchen knife and stuffed in her bag and made her way out. She hid and waited outside his apartment building for him to come out.

For the first day, there was nothing. The same with the second and third. But then a week had passed and he still didn't come out. She thinks that he knew she might be waiting and was about to

leave, when she finally spotted him. Her excitement grew as it had been awhile since she had last seen him.

When he was close enough, she jumped out and pointed her knife towards him. He panicked and wanted to run away but she had cornered him. As she was about to stab him, a few people stopped her when they saw what she was about to do. As she was pinned, she screamed, wanting to be near him. She looked up and saw the disgusted look on not only everyone's faces but on his as well.

She was about to give up but the moment she could move her hands again, she grabbed the knife and stabbed herself in the throat. Blood came out and a few did try to save her but it was no use. She had lost too much blood. As she laid there, dying, she looked one more time at him and mouthed the words 'We'll be together forever.'



10 – Everlasting dessert

There is a sweet shop that is fairly popular among the residents who live near it. All the sweets were handmade by the owner and his employees. Everyday, many people would stuff their faces with all the delicious treats and it's not just popular with kids but with adults too.

Outside the store, a chalkboard is placed for the owner to write down the new special candy he is making for the day. Everyone is excited when this happens as the owner always has crazy ideas for new sweets and even though sometimes they aren't that good, most times, they are just delectable.

June was one of the employees who was recently hired at the shop. She enjoyed making the sweets and seeing the happy faces of those who enjoyed eating them. She made friends with her fellow employees and many people who visit the shop. There are times where she struggles when the crowds come in but by the end of the day, she was happy as long as others are happy.

During one particular closing time, as June was taking out the trash, she noticed the owner writing something down on the

chalkboard. She walked up to him and asked what he had wrote. He smiled and showed it to her. What was written down was as follows 'New candy that will last forever – only 1 per customer. Enjoy the Everlasting Dessert.'

June found it odd but was excited at the same time and couldn't wait to taste the candy. She asked the owner if she could see what it looks like and the owner obliged. He took her to the kitchen and brought out a piece of candy in a glass container. Its color was gold and resembled a gumball.

June asked if she could have a taste but the owner refused, saying that she'll have to wait like everyone else. June was saddened but understood and decided to wait till the next day. Upon arriving for work the next day, June was surprised to see the long line of people gathered outside the shop.

Apparently, the owner announced it online earlier and the wave of likes and comments instantly rolled in. When June walked in through the back door, she noticed that everyone was just standing around, not doing anything. She asked one of her colleagues and she told her that the owner told them to do nothing.

A few minutes later, just before opening time, the owner wheeled in a big plate of the Everlasting dessert and placed it at the center of all the candies. He then officially opened the shop and all the customers came rushing in, all wanting a piece of the new candy. As each of them grabbed one and ate it, they suddenly stopped.

June was worried, thinking they hated it when they started crying but as she looked closely at their faces, she saw that all of them had tears of joy. She was relieved and was about to make more candy when the owner stopped her. The owner told her that she doesn't need to do anything today and just walk around and interact with everyone.

June was confused till she noticed that no customer was buying any of the other sweets. However, they left a ton of money on the Everlasting dessert's plate. More than what they were priced at. She told them that they didn't need to give so much but they didn't mind and were happily chewing on the candy.

After a few minutes had passed, June found something odd. Everyone was walking around looking at the other sweets but they were still chewing on the same one. She thought that it was a

simple chew and swallow candy and that they would've finished awhile ago but, no. She then thinks it might've been something like gum and that's why they kept chewing on it.

June walked over to some customers and asked how they felt about the candy and they simply loved it. She watched closely as the customer bit down on the candy, breaking it apart with their teeth but after a few bites, the candy was back in one piece again. She was truly surprised and wanted to try one for herself but there were none left.

She walked over to the owner and asked if he had anymore and low and behold, he wheeled in another full plate of it. She wanted to try one but the owner told her that they are only for customers and that no employee is allowed to try them. The moment he placed them out, more customers got hold of one and left a big pile of money on the empty plate.

All the customers soon leave and June saw that no one had purchased any other sweets aside from the new one. Throughout the rest of the day, no other customers had entered the shop. Eventually, the owner came out and told everyone that they get to

go home for the day. June was surprised but everyone else cheered in excitement. The owner closed the front door and immediately went back to his office.

June joined the rest of them and was about to head home but was stopped by one of her colleague who had two of the Everlasting dessert with her and decided to share one with June. She was happy and accepted it. As both of them placed the candy in their mouths, they suddenly felt a strange sensation.

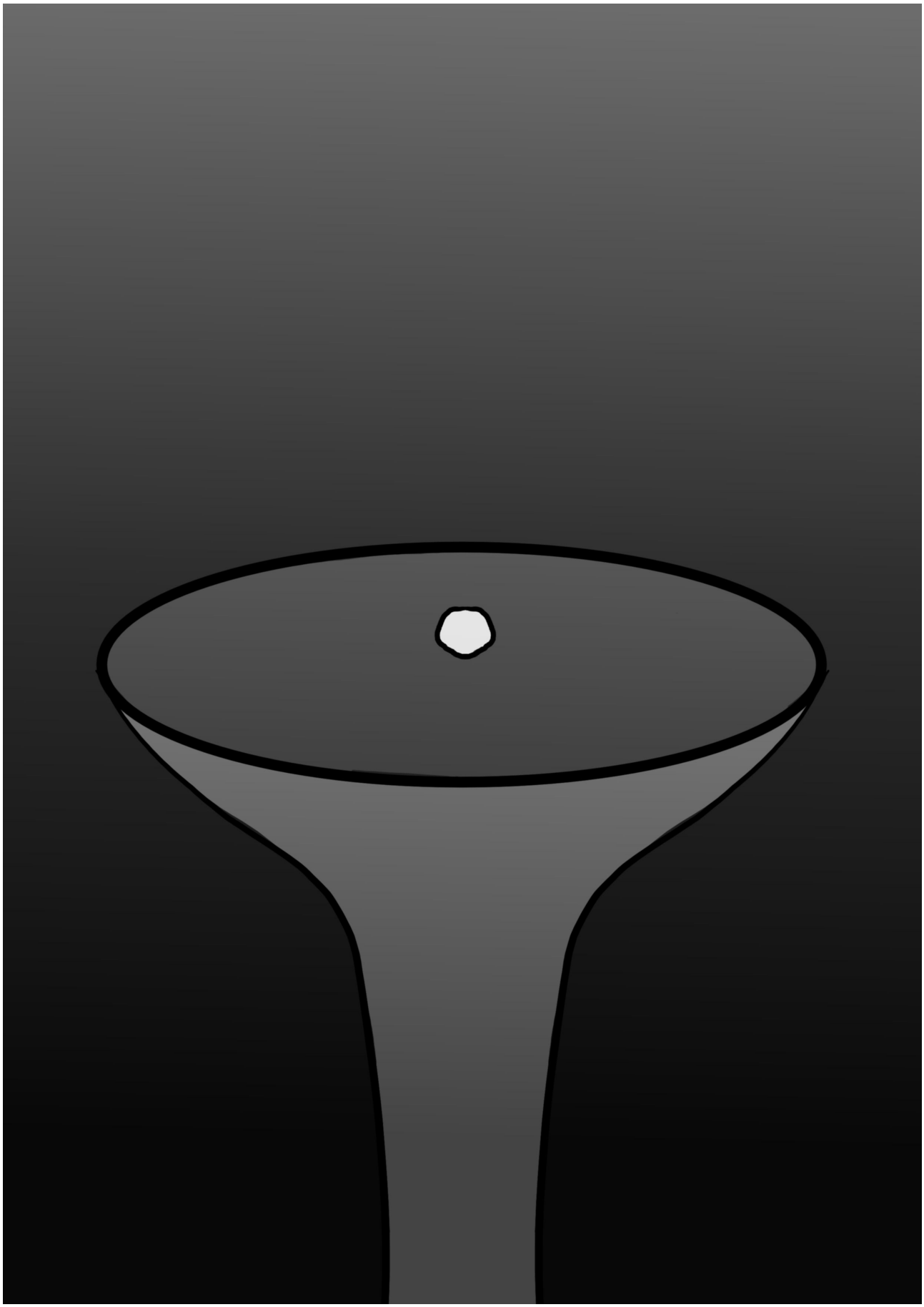
Both of them didn't know how to explain the taste but for some reason, they felt extremely happy as they started chewing on it. They kept chewing and chewing and found that no matter what, the candy seemed to form back into a ball. June took the candy out of her mouth and found that it was still in the shape of a ball.

June suddenly felt odd. She started to get dizzy and her mouth was dry. She sat down, trying to catch her breathe and found herself drawn to the candy. She placed it back in her mouth and she suddenly felt fine. She wanted to take the candy out again but she stopped herself. The owner then appeared beside the both of them.

He was disappointed but there was nothing more he could do for them. Behind the owner, the customers from before that bought and ate the candy were slowly walking towards him with a blank look on their faces, as if they were in a trance. They made their way into the shop through the back entrance.

The two of them found the whole thing odd and wanted to leave but suddenly, they found that they couldn't move. They were drawn to something unknown. They then made their way into the shop and the owner followed, locking the door behind him. The next thing that could be heard, were horrified screams before there was nothing but silence.

The next day, the owner replaced all the candy in the store with the Everlasting dessert and smiled as he welcomed the new customers.



11 – There was one left

People sell lots of things online and many people buy those things. There was a mystery seller that sold mystery items. Particularly, mystery boxes. Those who've bought them, said that what's inside was something unbelievable and they couldn't find the words to describe what they were seeing. Though to be honest, no one has ever showed what was in the box so everyone was a bit skeptical.

The seller had sold many of his boxes until ultimately, there was only one left. All the other boxes only sold for $10 but for the last one, it's price had skyrocketed and it's still going up as time passed. Many buyers wanted to know what was inside so they'll spend what they can on it. Karl was one of these buyers. He knows the popularity of these boxes and wants to buy it so that he could resell it at a future date for a whole lot more.

This is what Karl does for a living. He buys items that are hard to find and if there are people who are interested in the items again, he would sell them for a higher price. He once bought an item for $200 and later, resold it for 10 times the amount.

All he wanted was to get money out of this transaction. He could care less for some mystery box. But he did underestimate other buyer's upping the price to absurd standards. Right now, the price had went up to about $15,000 and it was still going. Karl wanted to wait till the last moment to place a bid on it and catch everyone by surprise but there was still a week left and he's worried that the price will still go up.

In the end, he decided to just wait it out. On the first day, the price went up by only $100. Not too bad but it was still a lot. nothing happened on the second or third day which was good but on the fourth, the price went up by $1000. This worried Karl a little. On the fifth, the price didn’t change but on the sixth, the price went up by another $1000.

The last day for the bidding and the price went up to about $18,000. Karl was in a bit of a pickle as there were only a few minutes left. Should he just search for something else to buy or should he just go all in on it. It was a lot of money and he doesn’t want to risk it. 1 minute remaining.

Karl was sweating bullets at this point as his mouse hovered over the ‘bid’ button. 30 seconds remain. His hand started to shake as his finger inch closer to clicking it. 20 seconds remain. He still had other things he could sell to make up the money so why not just risk it. 10 seconds remain. Karl finally broke and bid on the item. Time was up.

Karl had won the item with his bid of $18,001. He was surprised that no one else bid in the last few seconds but he was excited when he saw he won the mystery box. After a day or 2, the mystery box arrived on Karl’s door step and he brought it in. He carefully inspects it to make sure there were no damages. Made sure it was still sealed and made sure it was from the right seller.

Once all that was done, Karl sits back in his chair and breathed a sigh of relief. He decided to wait about a month or 2 before reselling the item. After about a week, the mystery seller’s page started selling more mystery boxes. This made Karl both confused and furious. Apparently, the seller was so touched that people liked his boxes so much that he decided to make more and sell

them. This time however, each one sold for $1000 and people were actually buying them.

Now Karl couldn’t sell the one he had. He calmed down and decided to just wait it out, thinking that the mystery seller must run out of the boxes eventually and when the time comes, he’ll be able to sell his.

Karl waited a month. Then 2 then 3 and so time went on and the mystery seller was still selling the mystery boxes. Even after a year had passed, the boxes were still being sold. Karl felt duped that he spend so much on his and that now he has an expensive paperweight.

Actually, Karl still had no idea what was in the box. Every video or image he tried to look up on the box all never showed what was in it. The pictures were just of the box itself and even videos just showed the buyer’s reaction to what was inside and not the contents themselves.

Karl wanted to know but if he were to open it, he won’t be able

to sell it. Karl just gave up and started to open the box. He already spent so much on it and he doubt that the seller would run out of them. As he opened it, he was shocked to find that there was nothing inside. Karl was confused. He checked back on the videos and the reviews to see if anyone had anything similar to him but, no.

Everyone only expressed their excitement and awe of what was inside. Could Karl's have been the only one to contain nothing? He looked into the box again and finds that it is still empty. He was about to contact the seller when he thought he could hear a whisper coming from the box.

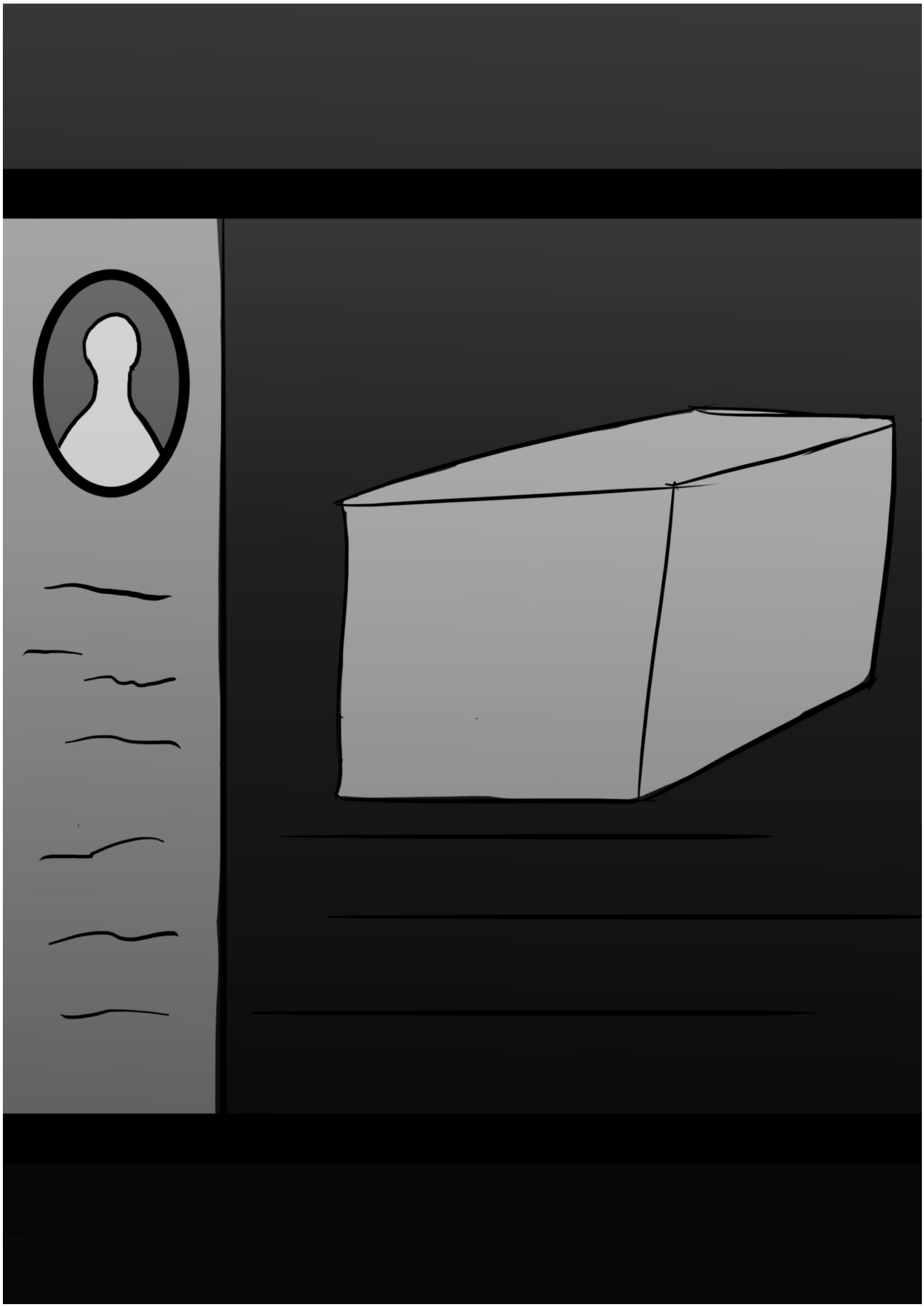
Karl got closer and he could hear it more clearly. A soft whisper came out of the box. He couldn't make out what it was saying, as if it was mumbling but he could make out just one word, 'Closer'. Karl did just that and the moment he did, something seemed to grab and pull him into the box.

Karl woke up, looked around and had no idea where he was. It was an empty room with pitch black walls and there was only a

single light bulb lighting the whole place. As Karl looked up, he saw the ceiling of his room, but it was bigger. He was then shocked as he saw himself. He was smiling and started to talk about something.

He was talking about the box and saying what was inside was something unbelievable and that he couldn’t believe what he was eeing. Karl knew those words. The same exact words that the other buyers were saying. Karl wanted to scream and say something but his voice wouldn’t come out. He tried his hardest but nothing happened.

The person that looked like him then took the lid of the box and with a devious smile closed it. The light bulb that was the only source of light in the box suddenly turned off and now Karl was trapped in a room of eternal darkness.



12 – I saw the strings being pulled

There was once a popular puppet theater that was the talk of the town but as time went on, people grew bored of it and eventually, the placed had to be shut down. It was maintained for awhile by the previous owner but as soon as he passed, the place soon became decrepit and abandoned.

It now became a place for teens to hang out and do whatever they want, though some rumors have spread by witnesses that said that they sometimes see the strings of some puppets being pulled.

Lila and 5 of her friends were out partying one night and they got so drunk that they wonder off and stumbled across the abandoned theater. They had no idea what the place was and decided to go in and explore.

They laughed and made jokes about the state of the place and even fooled around with a few puppets that were lying on the floor. One of Lila's friends walked into a private room and sat down, passed out. The others eventually wanted to leave and they did so, not realizing that one of their friends was still inside.

The next day, on her couch, Lila woke up with a big headache. Her phone rang and she picked it up. “Hello.” she answered with a weak voice. “Hey Lila, have you seen Hanna? Or has she contacted you?” her friend asked. “Uh… no, Why? What happened?”

“I can’t seem to get in touch with her and I’m getting a little worried.” she said. “Look, maybe she got lost again. Give it a few hours and maybe she’ll eventually turn up somewhere. I mean she still has her phone so she’ll call one of us if she needs help.” said a confident Lila. “I hope you’re right” Her friend then hung up and so did Lila.

She slowly slid off the couch and stumbled into her room and laid flat on the bed. She was about to fall asleep again when her alarm bell rang, saying that she has to get ready for work. Lila groaned as she lazily grabs whatever clothes she could find and went into the shower to get ready for the day.

The day went by slowly for her but eventually she finished up

and headed straight home and laid on her bed. As Lila was getting ready to go to sleep, her phone rang. She wanted to ignore it but when she saw that it was her friend calling again, she answered. “Yup?” “Hey... so has Hanna called?” she asked. “She's not back yet?... Tell you what, let's retrace what we did the other night and see if we can find her then.”

Lila hung up her phone and immediately made her way out to join her friend. They met at the bar they visited and then both of them made their way while following the photos that they took that night. Scrolling through the photos, they went to every place they could find and there was still no sign of their friend.

Lila then came across an odd photo. It was of all of them posing in front of the abandoned puppet theater. “Hey, do you anything about this place?” Lila asked her friend. “No. To be honest, I can't remember a single thing from that night but I do recall seeing a creepy castle, so that might be it.” she said. “Well, why don't we split up then. We can cover more ground that way and if either of us find her, we'll just call each other.”

Lila's friend agreed and they both split up. But unknown to her friend, Lila decided to go to the abandoned theater first. When she arrived, she found the place was even creepier up close. She walked in and tried calling out to her friend but there was no answer. After a few minutes of trying to searching everywhere, she decided to go out but she suddenly heard movement in the distance.

She looked up and saw a shadow moved and decided to follow it. She walked into the room where the shadow had entered and saw that it was empty. The only thing in there, was a puppet laying on the floor. Lila was about to walk out, when a small sound could be heard. She looked everywhere and couldn't see anything but that was when she looked down to the puppet.

It's mouth was open and she could here whispers coming out of it. Lila immediately dropped the puppet and tried to run away. When she reached the door and tried to open it, she found that it was locked. She also felt a sharp pain and when she looked at her hand, it was bleeding.

She then looked at the door's handle and found that it was being

held together with string. Lila, thinking that there might be another way out, started searching all around the theater. Upon checking all the possible exits, all were the same. They were either locked of barricaded.

Lila took out her phone, trying to call for help, but there was no signal. She then heard noises coming from the back of the big stage. They sounded like footsteps and there was also a soft cry for help. Lila looked and could see 2 shadows running away, screaming. There was a sudden thud and the cry became louder.

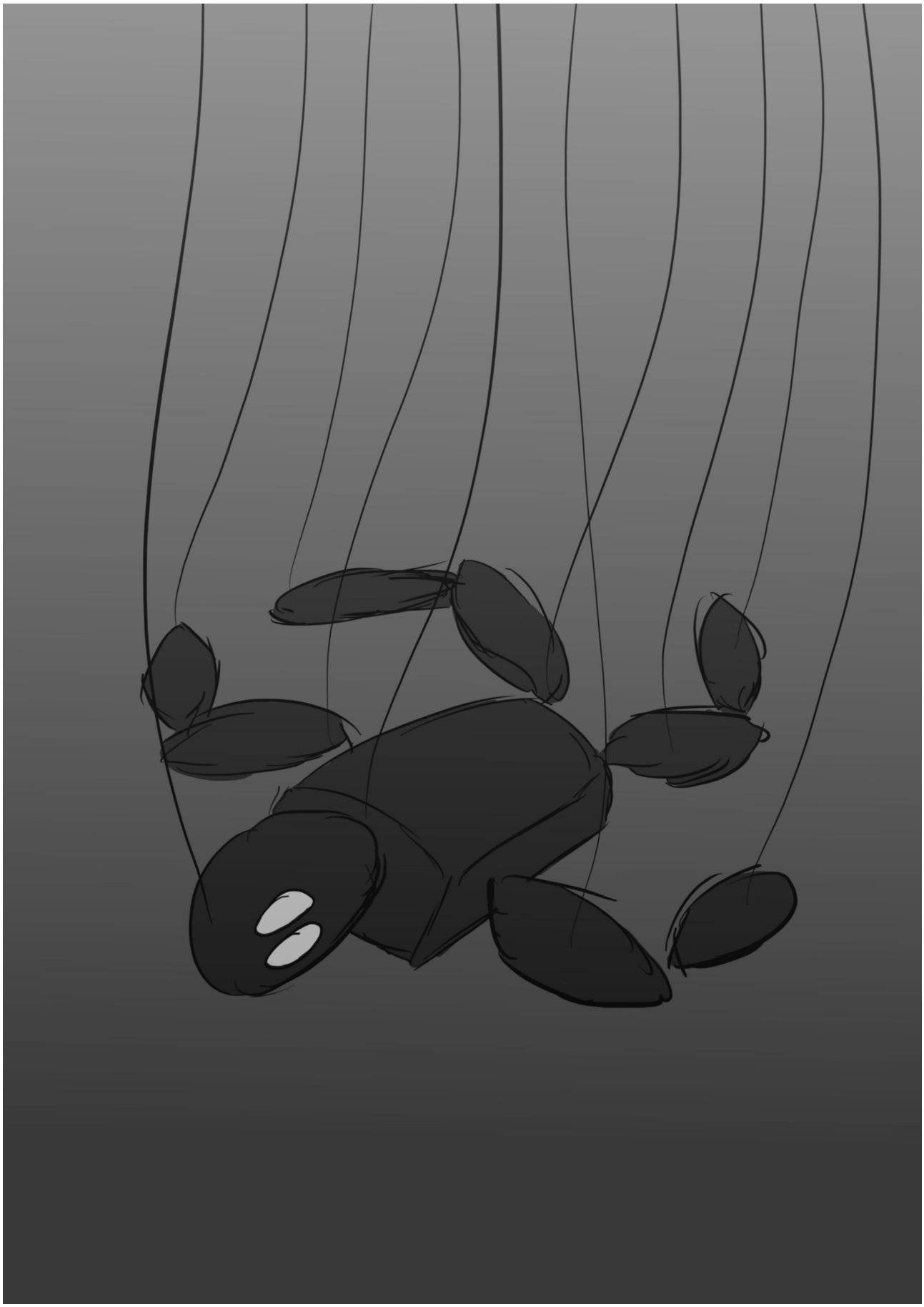
Lila was scared and worried and decided to go and help. When she went behind the stage, the sounds stop and she was surprised to see only 2 motionless puppets on the floor. Lila walked towards them and noticed the strings that held them were high in the air. She looked up but couldn't see anything because of the spotlights that suddenly turned on.

“Hello, is someone there?” Lila asked. There was no answer. The puppets then started to move. Lila found the whole thing creepy and wanted to leave but that was when she got a closer look at one of the puppets. It resembled her friend Hanna. From head to toe,

the puppet looked and dressed exactly like her. It opened it's mouth and a scream could be heard. In Hanna's voice, it started calling out to Lila for help.

“Lila. Please, help me.” The puppet then tried to move but was unable to. Lila wanted to run but found that she could no longer move. She felt a sting on her arm and when she looked, she saw a string digging into her arm. Several strings then appeared and started to dig into several of her body parts. She tried to scream but there was nothing but silence.

Her body then went limp and she fell to the floor, her body slowly changing into wood. At the front door of the theater, Lila and Hanna's friend was knocking at the door. “Hey! Are you 2 in there! Is anyone in there?” she asked. There was no answer but that was when the door opened and she could hear Lila calling for her inside. As she entered, the door shut behind her and a scream could be heard before fading into silence.



13 – Someone still lives there

In a certain neighborhood, there was nothing but happiness. Everyone lived out their lives full of joy with their clean homes and happy families but there was one house that everyone knows to stay away from. This house was old and decrepit. It is the only house of it's kind in the area and there was only a single person that lives there.

The 2 houses beside it stayed empty as no one wanted them, that is of course until today. Miles recently bought one of them as it was affordable. When he arrived, the neighborhood was surprised when they saw him drive into one of the houses beside that house. As he got out, he looked at the house next.

The seller did mention to him about the house next door but seeing it for himself, he felt a bit concerned. He looked out towards his other neighbors and when he greeted them, they greeted back with a smile. One of them approached him to introduce himself. “Hello there, new neighbor. I'm Gerald, head of the neighborhood watch. Very nice to meet you.” he said as he shook Miles's hand.

“Hello, I'm Miles. Nice to meet you too.” said Miles as he kept looking at the house. “Is something the matter?” asked Gerald. “Well, it's just that... the seller did mention about an old worn down house but I didn't expect it to look like that.” “Ah, well, don't worry about that house. Like you, we were concerned of the look and state of it but over time, we chose to just live with it.”

While both of them were talking, a delivery guy appeared in front of the house and slowly walked up and puts the food on the front door and immediately ran back to his motorbike and sped off. The door slowly creaked open and a hand grabbed the food to pull it in and the door immediately shuts. “W-wait. What? Who was that?” Miles asked.

“Oh, did the seller forgot to tell you? Yeah, someone actually lives there.” said Gerald. Miles was so confused. “So then, who lives there?” “None of us really know to be honest. Even when I moved here 10 years ago, no one knew.” “You never tried to ask?” “Oh, I did try. I knocked on the door, tried looking into the windows and even tried inviting whoever is inside to a

neighborhood party but there was no answer. So I just chose to live with it like everyone else.”

Both Gerald and Miles soon part ways and Miles slowly brought his things in box by box. As he was doing that, he thought he saw a shadow standing at the window but when he looked again, there was nothing there. After bringing in the last of his things, he laid on the couch, exhausted and decided to take a quick nap.

As Miles woke up, he looked at the time and was shocked as it was already night. He lazily got off the couch and started to unpack his things. When it was midnight, he was able to unpack about half of his things. He was even more tired and decided to just sleep on the couch for now.

The next morning, Miles woke up when there was a sudden knock on the door. He opened the door and there was no one there. However, when he looked down, he saw a black box on his porch. He looked around trying to see who sent it but no one was there. He picked up the box and opened it to find a card that read 'Welcome'.

Picking up the card, on the inside of the box, there was a single black rose. Gerald then walked up with his wife and they were happy to see Miles. “Good morning neighbor. I see you've received the gift.” said Gerald. “Is this from the both of you?” Miles asked. “Oh no, this is from the house next to yours. We've all received the exact same gift when we arrived.” Miles then looked to the old house.

“Well then, once again, welcome to the neighborhood.” said Gerald. “And this is for you.” said Gerald's wife as she passed him a fresh pie. Miles thanked the both of them and they left afterwards. Miles closed the door and immediately puts the black rose in a vase in his house. As he did that, there was a slight tremor but it lasted for only a few seconds.

At the corner of his eye, Miles thought he saw something walked past his window. He looked out and there was nothing there. However, there was a black hand print that was on the side of his house. Miles thought nothing of it but as he left, the print started to glow.

That night, all the neighbors walked over to Miles's house to hold a welcome party for him. Everyone brought their own food and drinks and they even made Miles give a short speech about himself. He mingled among the guests and was getting to know everyone but then there was a person that stood out.

This person wore a black cloak and was covering his face with a big hood. Miles wanted to approach the person but when someone stopped to chat with him, he looked back and the person was gone. He thought that he might've imagined it and continued to enjoy the party. When it was over, everyone said their farewells as they left and Miles was left alone.

As he was cleaning the last few dishes, there were footsteps behind him. He turned around and saw the cloaked figure standing in front of the vase containing the black rose. “Um, hello? Can I help you?” Miles asked but there was no answer. He was about to say something else but that was when the cloaked figure spoke.

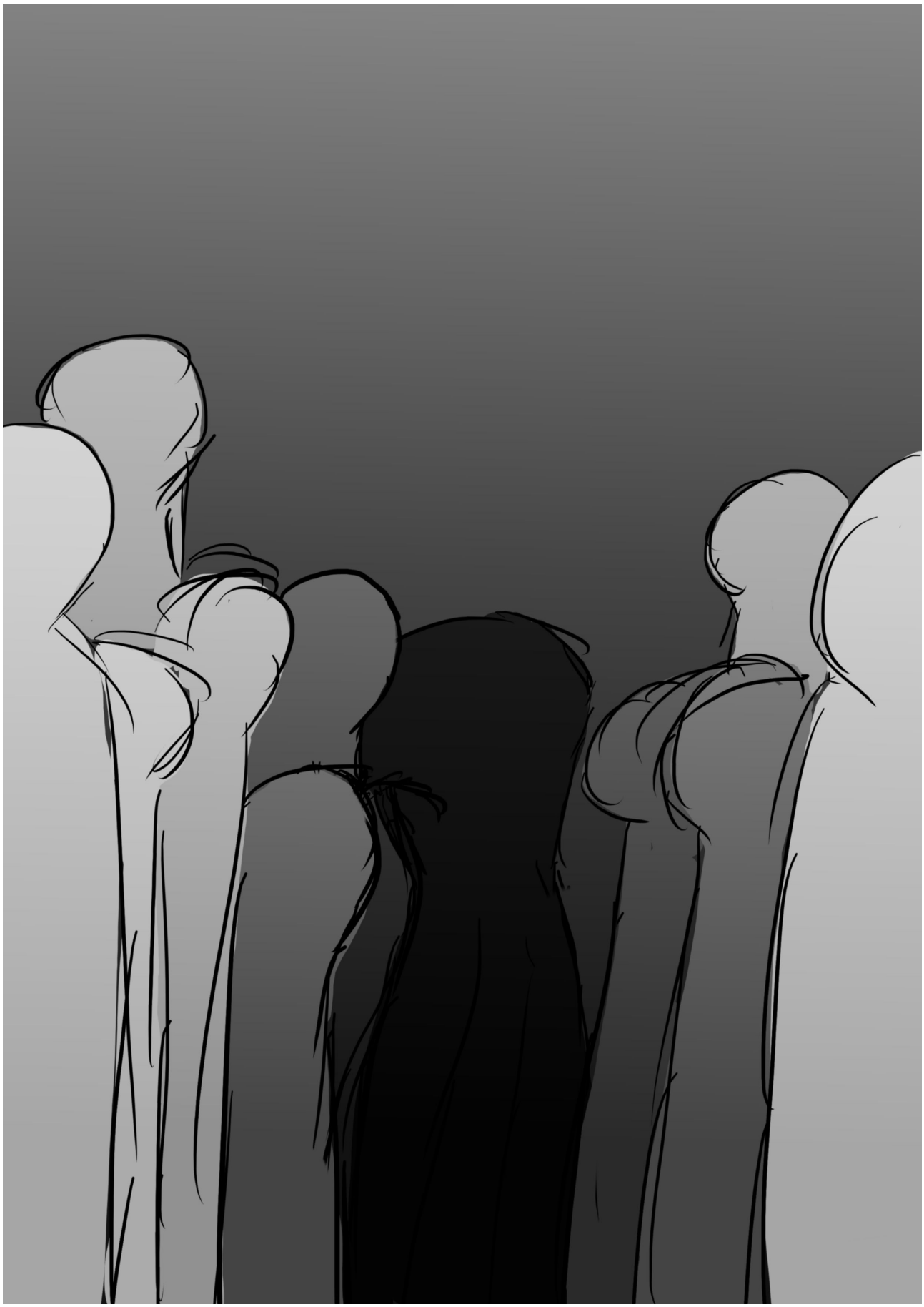
“Did you enjoy the party? Did you get to know everyone well?”

he asked in a raspy voice. Miles simply nodded. “That's good.” He continued to stare at the black rose. “Well then, enjoy your time here.” He then disappeared and Miles suddenly forgot who he was talking to. He then went back to clean the dishes.

Miles spent his time in complete bliss. Days went by, and soon months and then a few years went by. Miles felt like he lived the perfect life. Soon however, a new neighbor appeared. It was a young woman and she drove towards the other house that was next to the old house. With her, she has a ton of boxes. As she was carrying the boxes into her new home, Miles walked over to introduce himself.

“Hello new neighbor.” Miles said as he greeted her. “Hello.” she replied. “Nice to see a new face around here. Guessing you got it knowing of that old house huh?” “What old house?” she asked. Miles was confused and as he looked over, the old house was gone. All that was there was the only road that lead in and out of the neighborhood. “Ar-are you okay?” “Uh, yeah, I uh...what was I talking about? Oh right, welcome to the neighborhood. Oh and here comes Gerald, head of the neighborhood watch.”

“Hello there and welcome. Glad to see that the last house is finally vacant. Now our neighborhood is finally completed.” Gerald said as he looked over to all the similar looking houses. “Well then. Enjoy your stay and looking forward to getting to know you soon.” said Miles as he waved goodbye and walked back to his house. On the empty road the cloaked figure appeared and took out a list. He then crossed out a name and started walking into the unknown.



14 – It was alone for so long

On the outskirts of a village there was a cave that was said to contain an unknown monster. Most caves contain many monsters but this particular cave only had one. Anyone who goes into the cave, wanting to get the monster, never return. Nolan was an adventurer that was considered to be one of the strongest. Thus, he decided to take on the task of defeating this unknown monster to prove his worth as an adventurer.

As he entered the cave, he found that it was quiet. Maybe a little too quiet. As he continued on, the quiet grew into an uncomfortable silence. It was getting a little dark so Nolan lit up a torch. The strange thing is, the fire burning the torch would have made at least a bit of sound but there was nothing. Nolan himself even tried to say something but again, there was nothing, even when he tried to shout too.

He continued walking and after awhile, there seems to be some lights in the distance. As he walked towards it, he found that it was a large garden and the lights were glowing crystals that were stuck on the ceiling of the cave. Nolan looked around and there was no

sign of the unknown monster.

Walking around, he looked and was confused as to why there were no dead bodies or skeletal remains since no one has returned from going after the monster. He then spots something in the distance. It looked like another adventurer. When Nolan reached her, he tapped on her shoulder and she suddenly falls to the ground, motionless.

He realized she was dead and he immediately took out his weapon. He was cautious and was wary of his surroundings. He then saw someone walking around. Nolan ran over to save him but as the person turned around, his face showed that he was dead and he tried to go after Nolan

Nolan took out his sword and sliced the person in half. His insides spilled out and he smelled like a rotting corpse. Nolan backed off when he saw the corpse forming back together. He then saw tons of movements all around him. They were the corpses of the many adventurers who tried to go in the cave and they have been turned into zombie like creatures.

Everyone that comes close to Nolan were all sliced into pieces but in just a few seconds, they form back again and continued their pursuit. He was getting tired at this point since there were no end to them. His movements started to slow and with an opening, each of the zombies grabbed hold of Nolan's limbs, stopping him from moving.

He was held down and a few more zombies gathered in front of him. Nolan could do nothing but stare as the zombies started to morph and fuse together. They formed into a huge fleshy ball and floated directly above him. A big eye then appeared and stared directly into Nolan's eyes.

A string of flesh then came out and as the zombies held Nolan's mouth open, the flesh entered into his mouth and to any other open orifices. They let go and Nolan's body started to convulse and shake erratically. When he stopped, he got up and was acting like the rest of the zombies.

The ball of flesh then reverted back to the horde of zombies and

they continued their menial task of taking care of the garden in the cave. To this day, no other adventurers dared to enter those caves.



15 – What lurks in the night

During the day, everyone is happy and free but when night comes, everyone is afraid and stays indoors as to not run in to the thing that stalks the night. When the clock strikes midnight, a black mist sweeps through the city. It is impossible to see anything when it comes. On the first night, when a few people were outside, they saw the mist and when they entered it, they vanish completely.

No one knows how it happened and are afraid to find out when more and more people disappear so they decided to just stay inside where it was safe. Olivia studied the mist when it first appeared and found the phenomenon intriguing. She had sent a remote drone in one night but there was a strong wind that blew with the mist and the drone had hit a metal pole and broke.

She then set a camera on a tripod with a cable that extended from the street to her apartment. As the mist past it, she saw nothing but darkness. When morning came, Olivia suddenly woke up and didn't realize that she had fallen asleep. She quickly scrubbed through the footage to see if she could find anything, but alas, there was nothing.

There was still about 3 minutes left in the footage and as she was about to turn it off, something suddenly bumped into her camera and it fell to the ground. She quickly rewound the footage and when played at a slower speed, she saw a person being dragged by the mist and the hand had hit the camera, causing it to fall. The person looked frightened and was screaming for help.

Olivia wanted to know more so that night, she was willing to go into the mist herself to find out what it truly is. She puts on protective gear and tied a rope from her apartment to herself. When it was close to midnight, Olivia stepped outside and waited for the mist to come.

When it was nearing, Olivia prepared for the worst and when it hit her, she was fine. She couldn't see much of anything as it was too dark but then it suddenly became pitch black. Olivia could see nothing, not even the ground beneath her feet. It was like she was in an empty void.

It was almost too silent. She tried following the rope to get out of the darkness but when she reached what she thought was the edge, she was suddenly stopped by an invisible wall. It was an odd

feeling that even though it was just mist, it was like touching a solid wall. Something then flew by her head and she was lucky to avoid it in time.

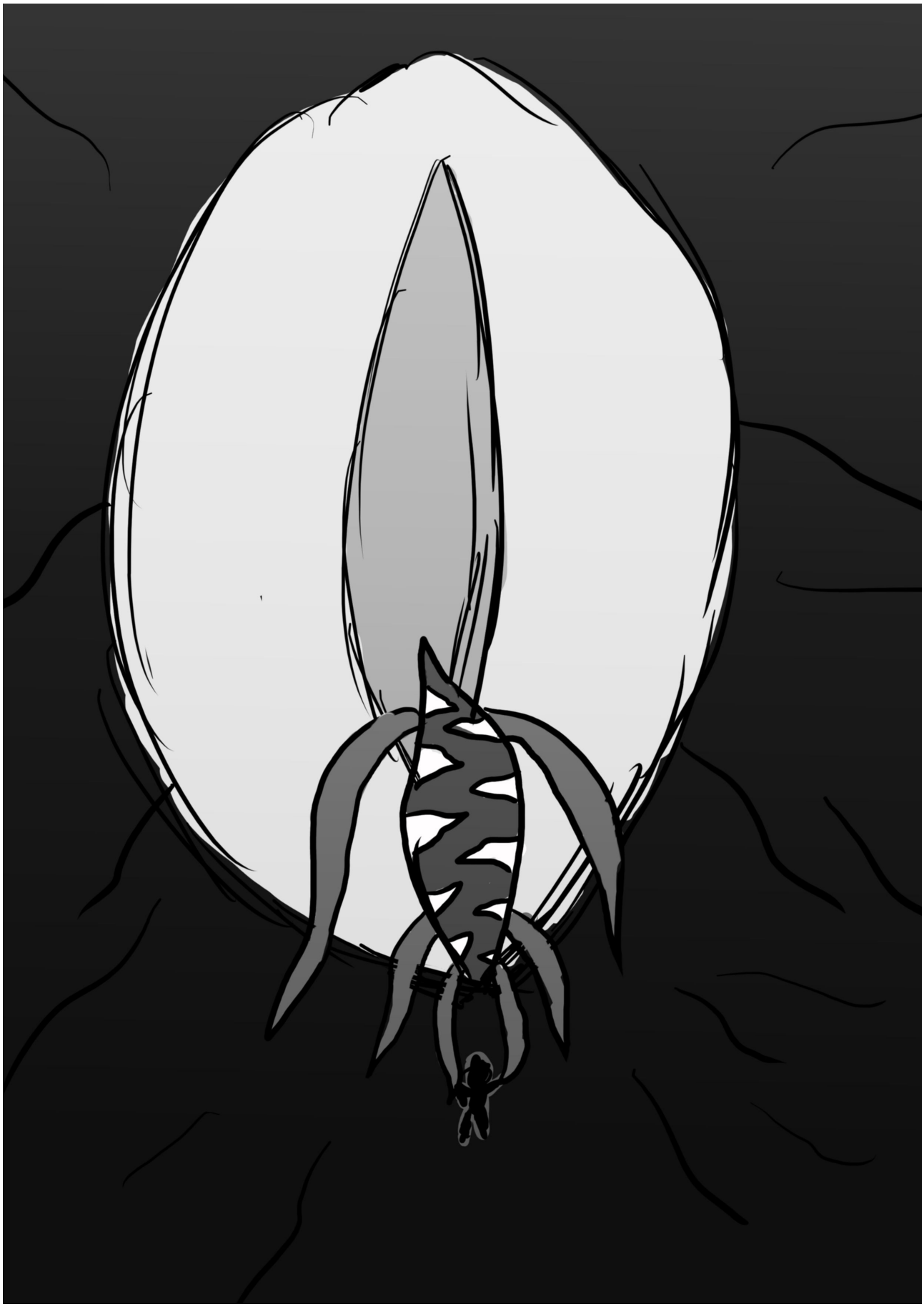
Another thing flew by and this time, Olivia could take a closer look at it. It turned out to be a spike and she couldn't avoid this one in time and it plunged into her back and started dragging her forward, cutting off the rope. She tried to move and take it out but the force of being pushed forward was too much.

Olivia found herself being hurled into an unknown darkness that seemed to stretch on forever. She has no idea how long had passed. It could've been a few minutes, a few hours or even a few days. In the distance, a small light could be seen. She was relieved as she thinks it might've been some sort of exit but as she got closer to it, it didn't look like the outside at all.

It looked like a glowing eye and it got bigger and bigger the more she got closer. She stopped and was now directly in front of it. It was way bigger than she thought it was and was almost as tall as a 10 storey building.

It looked down and stared at Olivia. She was stunned but she

then started to scream as the eye split open in the middle and on the inside, a mouth could be seen. She struggled to get out but it was no use. She was dragged in and the mouth closed. In the far distance in the pitch darkness, many screams could be heard headed straight for the glowing eye.



16 – My only friend

'Piper had a friend that played with her ever since she was little. However, no one could see her as she was imaginary. Whenever Piper asked or wanted something, her friend would get it for her. Though most people assumed that it was just her parents getting her the things.

As Piper grew older, her parents became concerned as she still played with her imaginary friend and not with any other kids. She was considered an outcast among everyone and they were all afraid of her, even the adults.

When Piper was 12, there were on occasion, some classmates would bully her but by the next day, they would leave her alone and would be covered in bruises. They said that they don't remember what happened but they only know to leave Piper alone.

Time went by and Piper lead a lonely life, but she didn't mind it since she still had her friend with her. But Piper soon grew bored of her friend. After all this time, she wanted to make new ones. She didn't want to be alone. **She wanted to breathe the air**

again. She wanted to eat normal food again. She wanted the chain around her neck to gone. She wanted to get out. She wanted to be fre-.'

Knock knock

“Pam, are you still awake?” asked a woman opening a door.

“I was just about to go to sleep.” said Pam.

“What's that you got there, looked like the note on my table.”

“Oh this is a little story Piper wrote but it wasn't quite finished so I took it back.”

“You and your silly imagination. Well, get to bed soon, you've got school tomorrow.”

“Okay mom. Goodnight.”

When Pam's mother closed the door. Her cheery expression

changed to a serious one. She walked towards a hidden door in her room and unlocked it to reveal a girl chained up in a soundproof room filled with toys and snacks. The only light source was a flashlight that the girl was holding on to tightly. Pam brought out the note and the girl became frightened and whimpered.

“Oh Piper, I'm not mad. I already knew since I'm always watching.” Pam then burned the note and took the flashlight from Piper. She then closed the door, leaving her in complete darkness. “After all, I'm your one and only friend.”



17 – The video that does not end

There is a video that exist simply titled 'Queue'. It is rather strange as it isn't a live video but one that simply just goes on and on. The video only exist on a website that shows only said video and nothing more. Many have viewed it and said that nothing really happens.

The video was of an empty room with no sound, that's about it. That is what everyone sees. When someone tried to search the true length of the video, it was 24 hours. When scrubbing through the video, nothing ever happens. The only thing that changes was the time of day as it starts with sunrise to sunset and then to sunrise again.

However, those who have sat down to watch the entire 24 hour video, said that when they watch the video again, they actually see something different. This time, there was a door and it opened at the middle of the video and by the end, it slams shut. Others were not able to see the door and didn't have the patients to sit and waste their time watching a silly video.

The few who kept watching the video multiple times, kept seeing more things added. There were chairs, a bed, a television and there was one time when someone could hear sound coming from the video, though it was quite faint. The objects in the video do move by themselves and the viewers think that it might be a person and that he or she will only appear when you watch the video a certain number of times.

Several bloggers have posted many different things about the video that never ends. The strange thing is that what they see can't be recorded on video or pictures so they had to describe what they see in full detail in every post the make. There was a guy who had watched the video 20 times by now and he does claim to see a person walking into the room and interacting with all the objects.

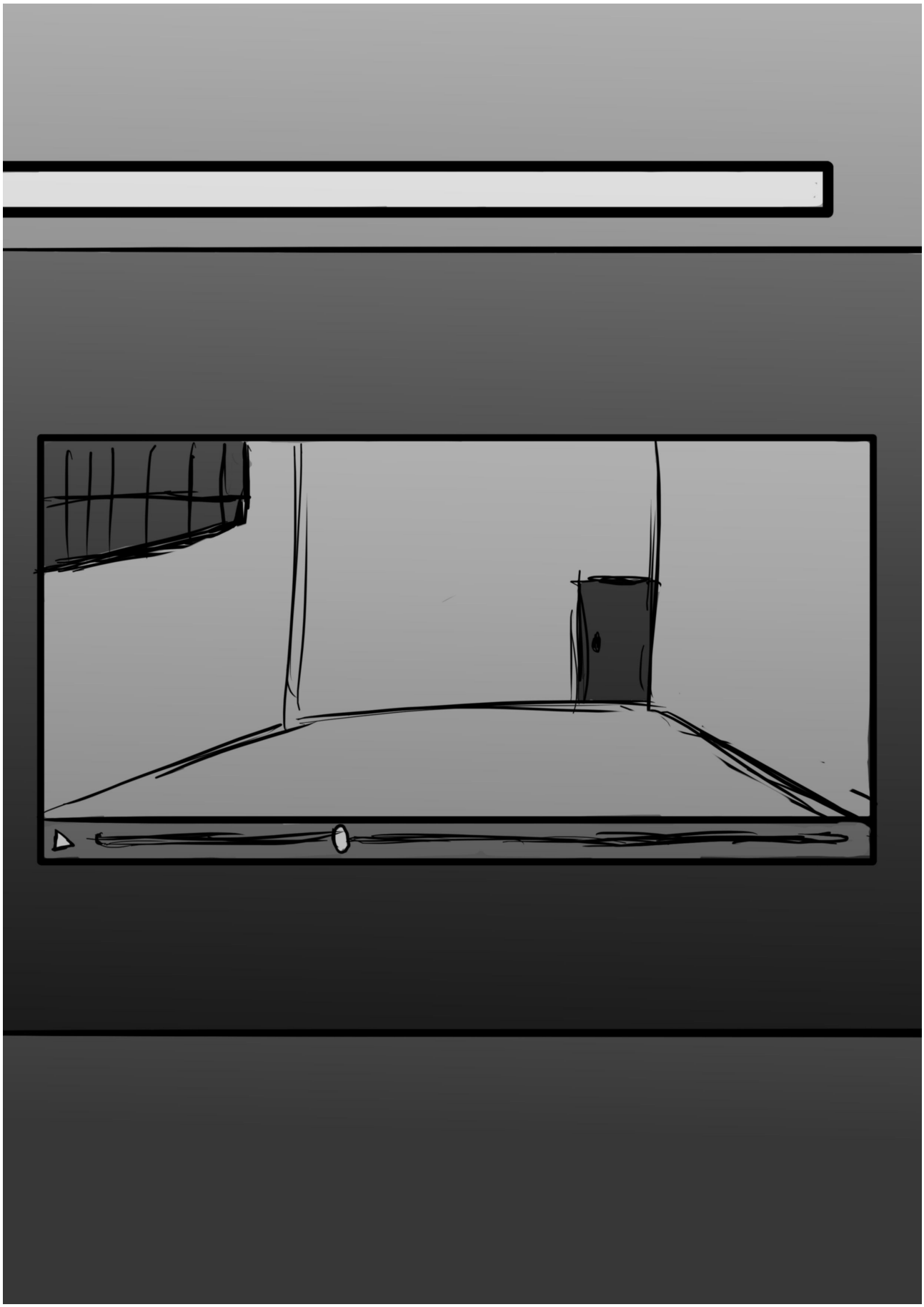
However, the person seems to be agitated, being in that room. The person came in at the 2 hour mark and stayed and sat on the chair for the rest of the timeline. In fact, during the last hour, the person just fell back on the chair and seemed to fall asleep and that is when the video ends.

When the watcher watched the video for the 23rd time, he now understood what actually happened. The video didn't show 1 but 2 people entering the room and they seemed to be talking with one another and just sitting around throughout the entire day and during the last hour, one of them pulled out a gun and shot the other and then that person fell onto the chair and the other person just leaves.

It was a bit hard to watch but then something happened after the 24th view of the video. The entire video was different. It showed the person who held the gun, take a chair and sitting in the middle of the room, staring at the screen. The person then took out a small whiteboard and started to write something down.

The watcher was then stunned and frightened as what was written on the whiteboard, was the watcher's real name and address. He immediately turned the video off and posted everything that happened on his blog. Those that have watched the video for the 24th time experienced the same thing. As people read it, they grew concern and decided to also stop watching the video.

It was soon revealed that the website's video changed only with the 24th viewing and that the whole thing was an experiment to see if anyone would be curious enough to view the video for a long period of time. It was made to just waste people's time. However, it didn't explain how the person in the video knew the people's names and addresses. A week later, the entire website was taken down and no known footage of the video exist anywhere.



18 – She keeps pointing at me

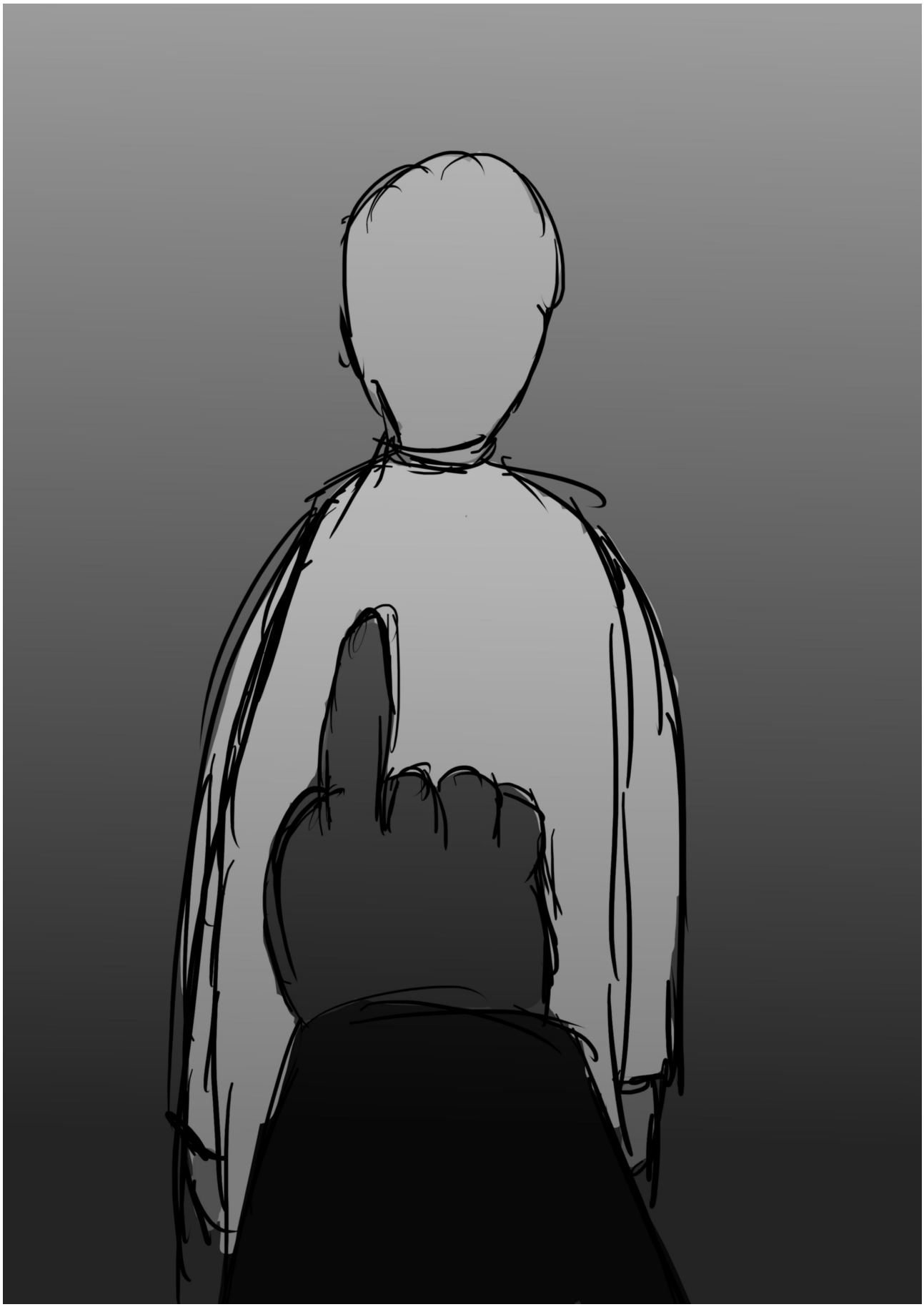
Reid walked over to the store to get a few groceries since he was running low on food and drinks and when he was standing at the checkout line, in front of him, there was a little girl who was pointing at him.

He smiled and waved to her, thinking she might just be shy but that wasn't it. She had a serious and frightened look on her face as she kept pointing at him. Her parent noticed this and apologized to Reid and he didn't mind. Her parent asked her to stop and so she did but every few seconds, she would turn give him a serious look.

When Reid got out of the store with his things, he saw the little girl still looking at him. He was now getting a bit concerned by it but as he walked over to his car, another one suddenly came crashing into him, killing him.

Apparently, the driver was drunk and lost control of the car. He was promptly arrested and Reid was pronounced dead at the scene. The little girl was unfazed by it but it was because she was looking at something else.

Beside Reid's body, stood a strange creature. The little girl watched as Reid's soul screamed in horror as the creature grabbed his soul and devoured it. When it was done, it looked at the little girl and gave the gesture to keep quiet about it's existence. It then started to follow another person, waiting for it's next meal.



19 – He sees something

Across from his apartment, Sebastian enjoyed the view of the night sky. He recently moved in and specifically picked this apartment because of the great view. However, there was a bit of a downside. Just beside the amazing view, there was a nightclub which plays loud music all night.

Above the nightclub, there was an apartment complex with windows so big that anyone could see what was going inside and the few that lived there hardly put up curtains so they are in full view of everybody. Sebastian didn't mind it though, since he still gets to enjoy his view.

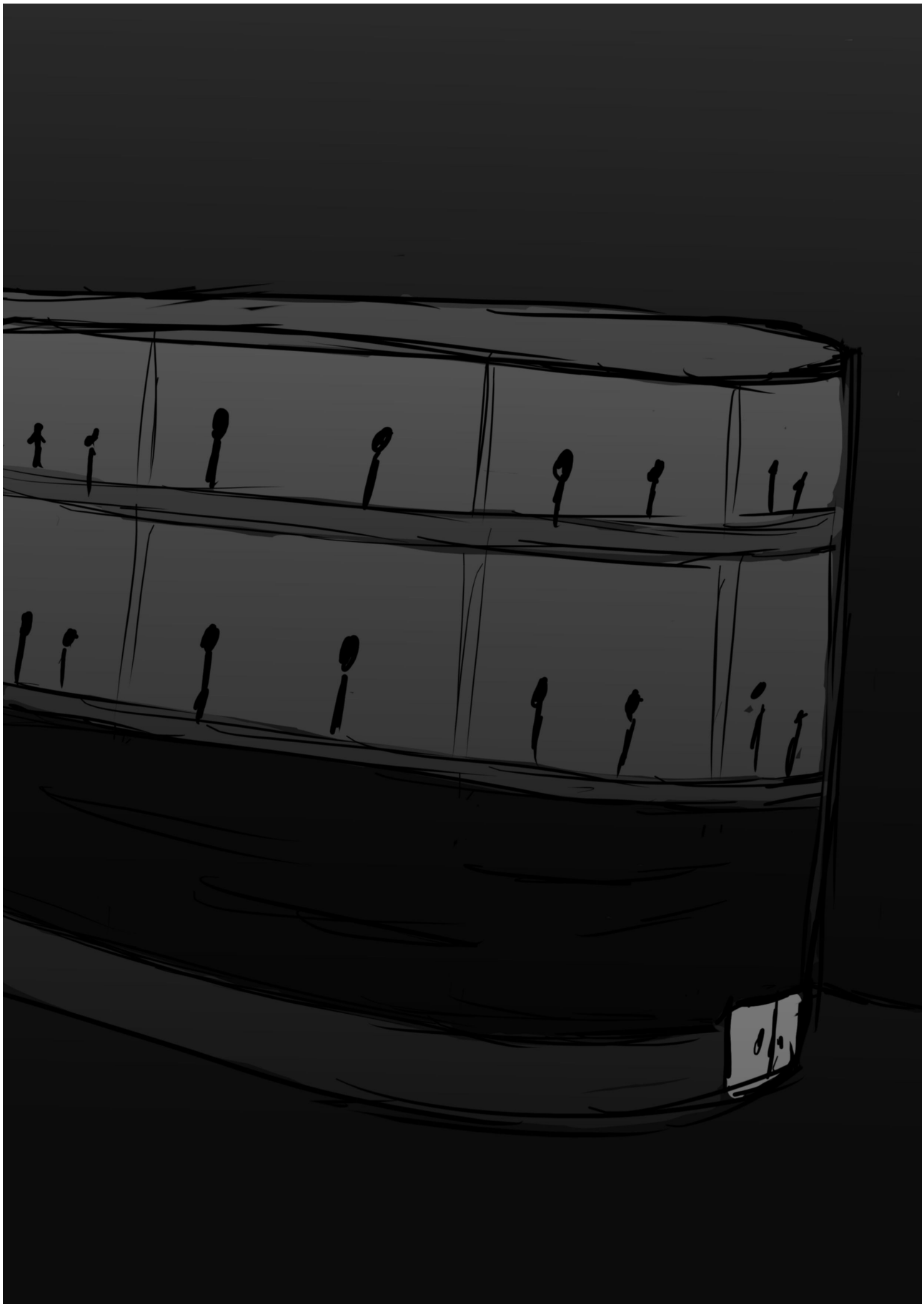
One night, while he was enjoying his tea, he looked and saw a couple fighting in one of the rooms above the nightclub. There was no sound but he could see that they were really going at it with each other. Their argument started to become more violent when they started to hit each other. Sebastian was worried but that was when each of them took a knife in their hands.

Sebastian quickly took out his phone to call the police as the couple started cutting and attacking each other. After he hung up,

there was nothing more he could do but watch as in the midst of their argument, the woman had stabbed the man and he started to bleed out. He then fell to the floor, dead, just when the police cars arrive.

They rushed up towards the room and bust the door down. Sebastian was then surprised as the police walked right past the couple and all over the room. They were then confused and just left the room. Sebastian was confused but he then received a call from the police and they told him that the room that they entered was abandoned and empty.

Sebastian then dropped the phone as he saw the bloodied man stand back up and not only the couple but everyone in all the rooms walked towards their windows and stared directly at him with smiles on their faces.



20 – It came from behind

Everyday, when Tara walked down the street, people would stare at her. They don't know why they stare but they just can't seem to look away. However, they weren't exactly staring at her. They were staring at her back. It was as if there was something there but at the same time, there was nothing.

Tara herself of course, knew what was there. She knew exactly what it was. A week ago, she had stumbled across a couple of people taking part in a ritual. They had planned to summon a creature to do their bidding but when it came forth, it started killing everyone there.

When it was done, all that was left was a bloody mess. The dead bodies were eaten by the creature. It then sensed something and it looked towards where Tara was. As she was about to run, the creature jumped and grabbed hold of her. It then turned invisible and stayed on her back. She didn't know what to do and was scared out of her wits.

She could feel the creature there but it didn't do anything. Now

when people walk past or near her, they could feel a strange presence and just stare at her. After a month went by, the creature remained still. It does not move or interact with Tara and she has no idea what it wants. She soon grew to accept the creature being there but she was always in a constant state of panic.

One night, on her way home, she was stopped by a thief wanting to rob her. She had nothing to give as he pressed his knife towards her. He was about to attack when the creature suddenly appeared and devoured the robber whole. Tara could only watch in silent horror.

Tara then stiffly made her way home as the creature stuck itself back on her back. When she was home, the creature got off and on her table, the creature left dozens of gold coins. Tara didn't know what expression to make but she knew one thing. That the creature will be stuck with her for a very long time.



21 – The toy had a secret

There was a popular toy being sold simply called 'U'. It was an electronic humanoid toy that was meant to mimic and interact with anyone. All the advertisements showed that the toy could do amazing things and that caught the eyes of everyone so the first day it came out, it sold out in seconds.

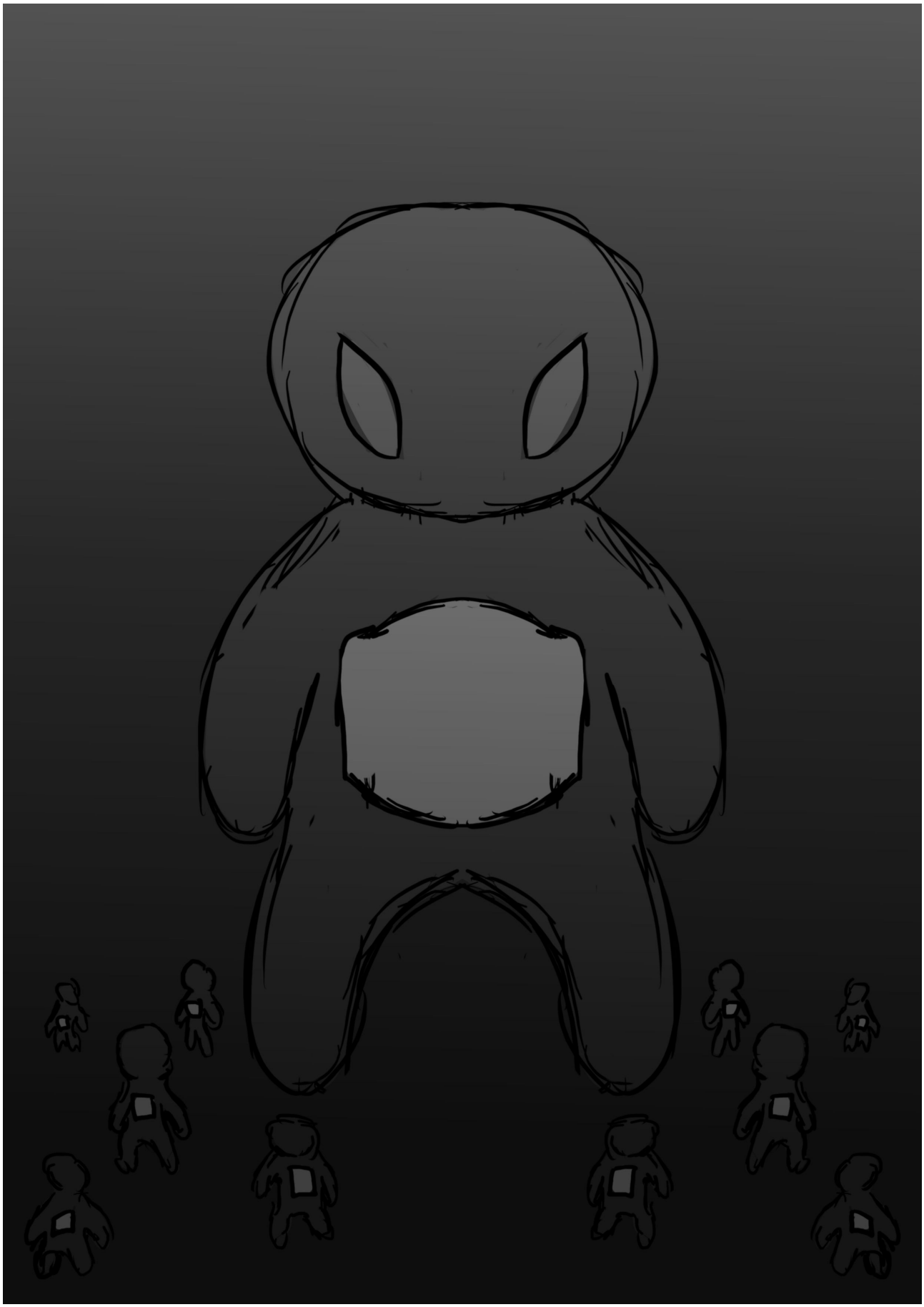
Of course many were frustrated and complained that they couldn't get one but as a few months past, more were ready to be sold. Very soon, every household had one. 'U' was the most popular toy to ever come about.

However, as days past, some people have noticed something about it. The screen on it's body seemed to flicker and show static. Most thought that it was a glitch, but then symbols started to flash on it. They were slow at first but then they became faster. Those that have seen the symbols could not look away from them. It was as if they were in some sort of trance.

Words then appeared, instructing the watchers to go somewhere. With the toys in their hands, they headed straight for the toy store.

They then gathered around a giant version of 'U' that was in the middle of the store. What everyone thought was just a statue, started moving on it's own and as the screen turned on, everyone's 'U' crawled up onto their heads and dug their arms in, essentially controlling their minds.

As they exit the store, from the giant 'U' the screen on it's body opened up to reveal more 'U' toys and they started to fly out into the world to control more people, turning everyone into a slave to do their bidding.



22 – The gallery of unusual art

Victor was an odd artist that made very unusual art. Only those in the underground network knew of his artworks. They are considered to be very popular and are worth quite a lot. A few of his well known ones are the 'Living house' and 'The devouring mist'.

A few weeks ago, he announced that he will be opening a one day event art gallery featuring the best of his works and at the end, he would be introducing his final masterpiece and it will be made live for all to see. The location of said gallery will be shown only to those that are truly devoted to his artworks.

On opening day, there were a few hundred people who have gathered, excited to view Victor's artworks. After waiting for an hour, the man himself appeared out of nowhere in a puff of smoke. Everyone was in awe of his presence. He greeted all those who were able to attend the event and opened the doors for all to enter.

Everyone entered and were amazed by Victor's works. They were strange but grotesque. Unusual yet mortifying. And they filled

everyone with a sick sense of wonder. They range in all sorts of mediums like simple paint on canvas, clay sculptures but then there were once that were made of let's say unique materials like human remains, live humans in unusual poses and some were even made form strange creatures not of this world.

Victor's artworks were truly one of a kind. As the day goes on, more people start to gather and soon, the main event was about to begin. Victor announced over the speakers for everyone to gather at the center of the gallery. When everyone was present, they started to whisper to one another, wondering what this final artwork was going to look like.

Victor raised his hand and everyone was silent. He then unveiled his final artwork which was a strange tree that was alive but it wasn't finish. It needed one last touch. Victor walked over to the tree and with a snap of his fingers, the tree's branches slowly grabbed him and they start to dig into his body, ripping his insides slowly.

Even though he was in agonizing pain, Victor looked over to the

crowd, smiled and thanked them for all their devotion and support over the years and closed it with a bow and with that, he laid beneath the tree, dead, as it slowly sucked out his life. When it was over, everyone applauded and cheered at the wonderful performance and many had tears in their eyes.

When the event was about to come to a close, everyone looked over and admired the final artwork dubbed 'Victor's piece' one last time before leaving.



23 – What keeps you awake at night

There are many things that keeps one awake at night. For one individual, Will, what keeps him awake is what lies in the shadows of his apartment. He has a stay at home job but there are strict deadlines to complete certain assignments.

As he was typing away one night on his computer, his room door slowly opened up. He didn't notice this at first but then something walked by that caught his attention. Will was worried as he is the only one who lives in that apartment.

He took his phone with him as he walked slowly towards the dark living room. As he tried to reach for the light switch, he was spooked as he thought he saw a figure standing in the shadows. He quickly turned on his phone's flashlight and shown it forward to find that there was nothing there.

He was relieved but then he saw a shadow walked past again and this time, it headed straight into the kitchen. Will turned on the living room lights and he could see only the front part of the kitchen but not the back.

He walked towards the kitchen light switch and when he flipped it on, again, there was nothing. Will things that maybe he might've been seeing things since he has been working late nights for awhile. He turned off the lights and walked towards his room, not knowing that a figure was standing directly behind him.

Will continued to walk to his room and decided to turn in for the night. He walked into his room and the figure followed in and suddenly shuts the door. The light that was peeking from beneath the door turned off and there was now nothing but darkness.



24 – It started to spread

There was a virus spreading around that causes one's skin to rot and harden, ultimately ending one's life as a rotting statue. The spread of the virus was slow but the person infected can feel every part of their body turn and that causes excruciating pain. No one knows the origin of the virus. All they know is that it showed up one day.

It is only spread through contact so every time someone wants to go somewhere, they would need to avoid touching the 'Stills'. That's what people call them.

Some areas had very little 'Stills' while most had a large number of them that make it hard to travel from one place to another. Moving them are impossible too as they also weigh a ton. The only thing that can be done is to just accept that they are gone and move on.

As time goes by, people have found a safe way to walk around them as they simply covered them with a material that can't be torn easily, thus making contact with them impossible. This

worked for awhile until one day, the 'Stills' started to slowly fall apart and disintegrate. As the remains get carried by the wind, those that did not wear a safety suit, as soon as whatever pieces touch their skin, they were instantly infected and will soon turn onto 'Stills' too.

That was the era of people wearing safety suits as a mandatory for going outside. Even in homes, everyone had to cover every opening in case any particles flew in. But of course, this also made food and drinks less available as the particles could infect those as well.

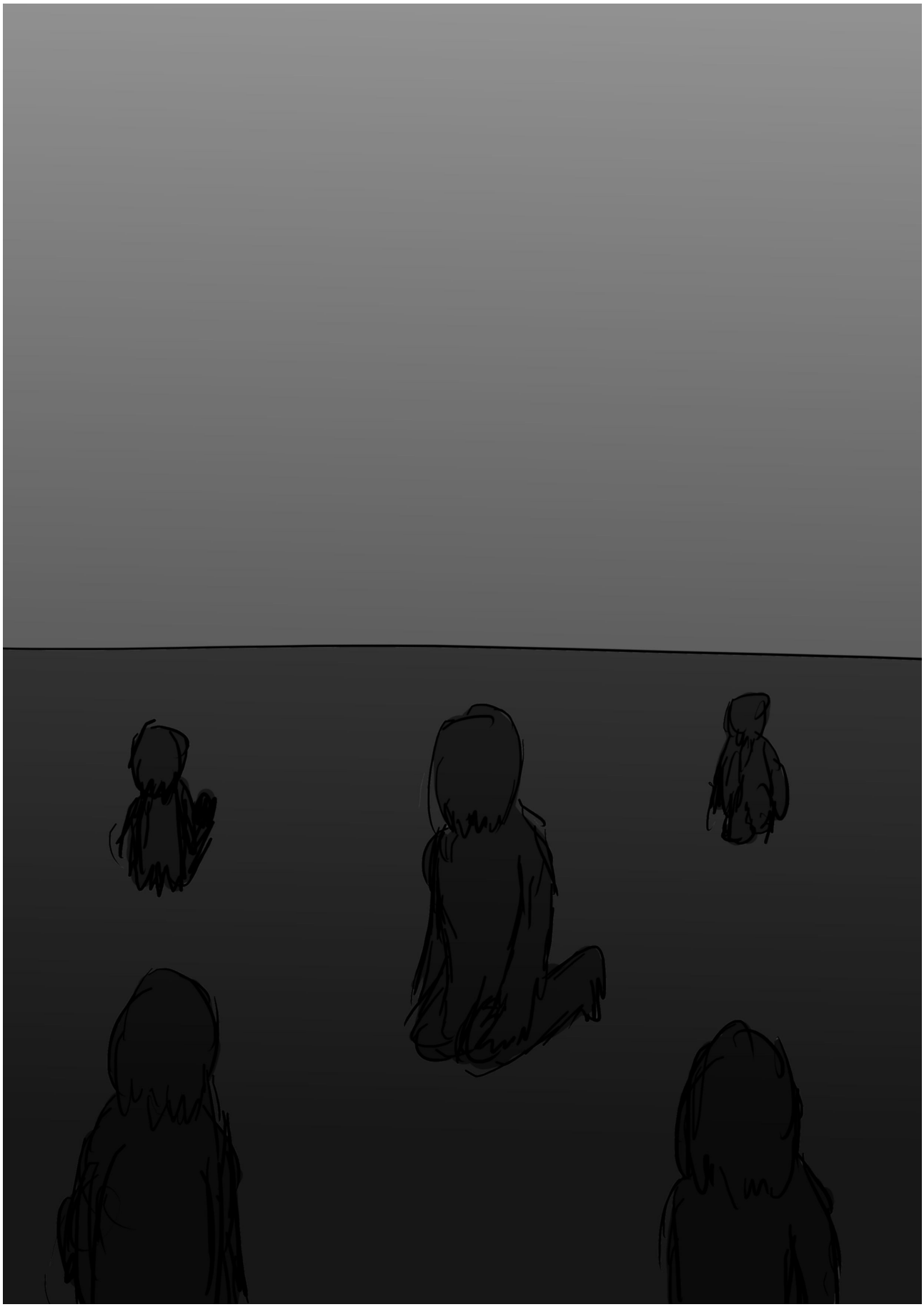
Special food and drinks are now only available via a secured delivery van that will provide everything for people to have what they need to survive. This delivery comes only once a week so people have to ration what they get.

One day however, the vans stop coming as on the news, they reported that the virus particles have entered and infected the factory where the food and drinks are made and a few households have also been infected, so productions have stopped and there

was nothing more anyone could do as they do not want to risk infection.

As time went on, a few people have started to give up due to lack of food and water and chose to accept their fate and go into the infected outdoors.

A year passed and all life has been extinguished by the virus and that was left, was a dead world.



25 – Arcade madness

A new arcade machine has recently been brought to an arcade center and put at the back corner of the room. Those that were there have played and found it to be quite addictive. They said that it was the most interesting and complicated game they have ever seen. They couldn't even describe what they were playing.

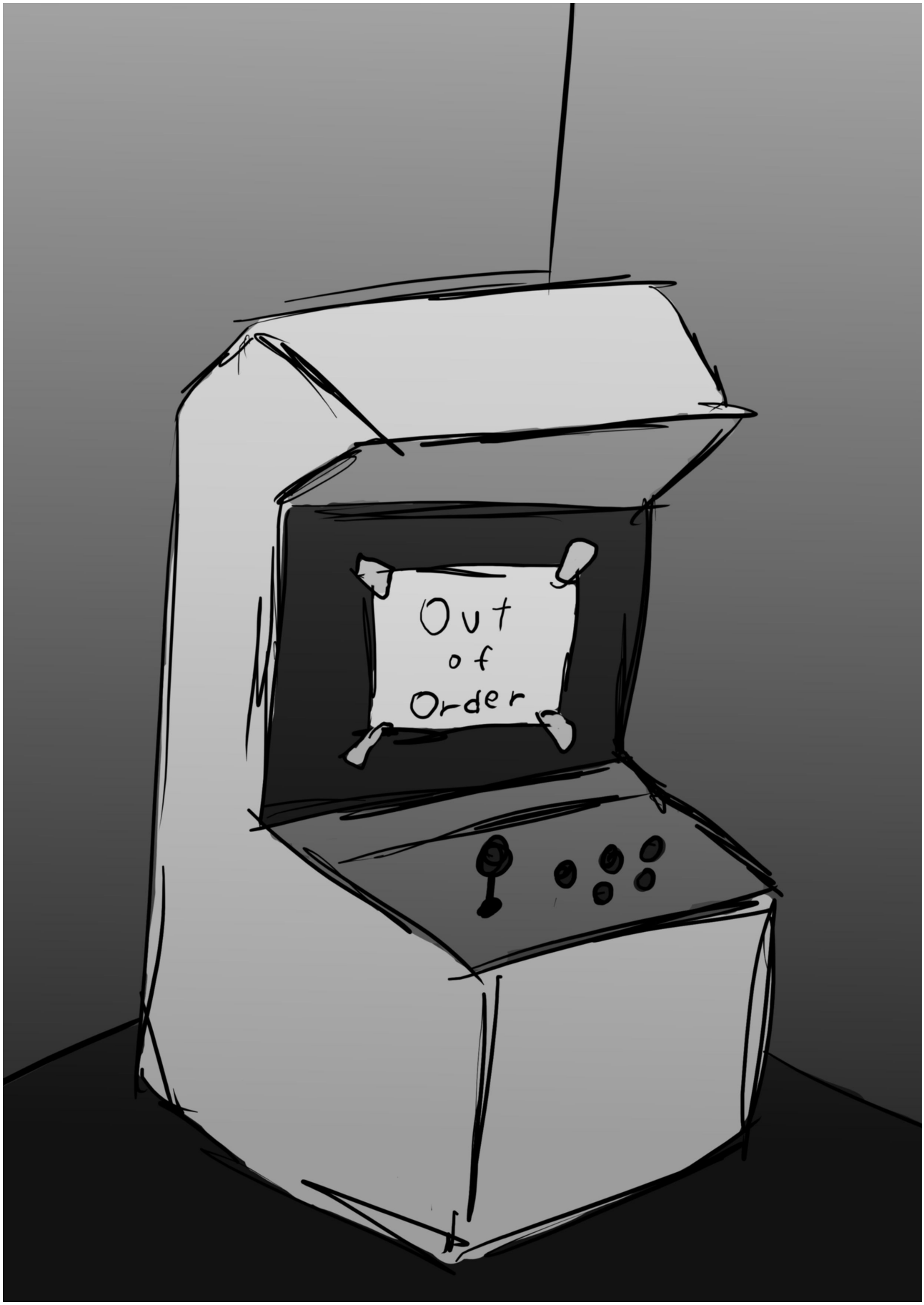
Of course since it was popular, many kids and teens have fought over whose turn it is to play the game. Many times, the machine has almost been stolen by those obsessed with wanting it for only themselves but were stopped by others before they could do it.

However, one day, a big fight had broken out over said machine. It came to a point where the police were called and the arcade owner himself came out and had to see what was happening. When the fighting stopped and everyone was calm, the owner asked what everyone was fighting about and they told him about the arcade machine.

The owner walked over and inspected the machine and was confused. He asked again if that particular machine was the one

that they were fighting over and all of them agreed. The owner then told everyone that the machine had been broken for awhile. He had placed it at the corner since he had no room at the back to put it.

Everyone was shocked but as they looked at the machine again, they all saw that on the screen itself, there was a paper taped on it that read 'OUT OF ORDER'.


Out
of
Order

26 – The party never ends

There was a party that was being held at a certain house and everyone was invited. No one knew who owned the house of who was hosting the party but everyone wanted to go since there were free food, drinks and entertainment.

When everyone arrived, they were surprised when they saw that the party was being held at a mansion. Inside, the party started up with everyone having the time of their life. They go on and on without a single break.

One teen partied so hard that he passed out on the couch only after the second hour. Everyone laughed but then they noticed that the food ran out but that wasn't a problem as more food came out of nowhere and placed on a huge table.

The food was so good that everyone devoured everything on the spot. Everyone was so full and couldn't eat another bite but then was when more food was brought out. It' as if it was never ending. Other party goers drank till they were stumbling across all the rooms of the mansion, either passing out somewhere or vomiting

in some of them, leaving a mess.

There were some people who were simply chatting among each other and they were wondering who was the one who planned the entire thing but that was when the lights shut off and a light is shown on a curtain covered stage at the center of the mansion.

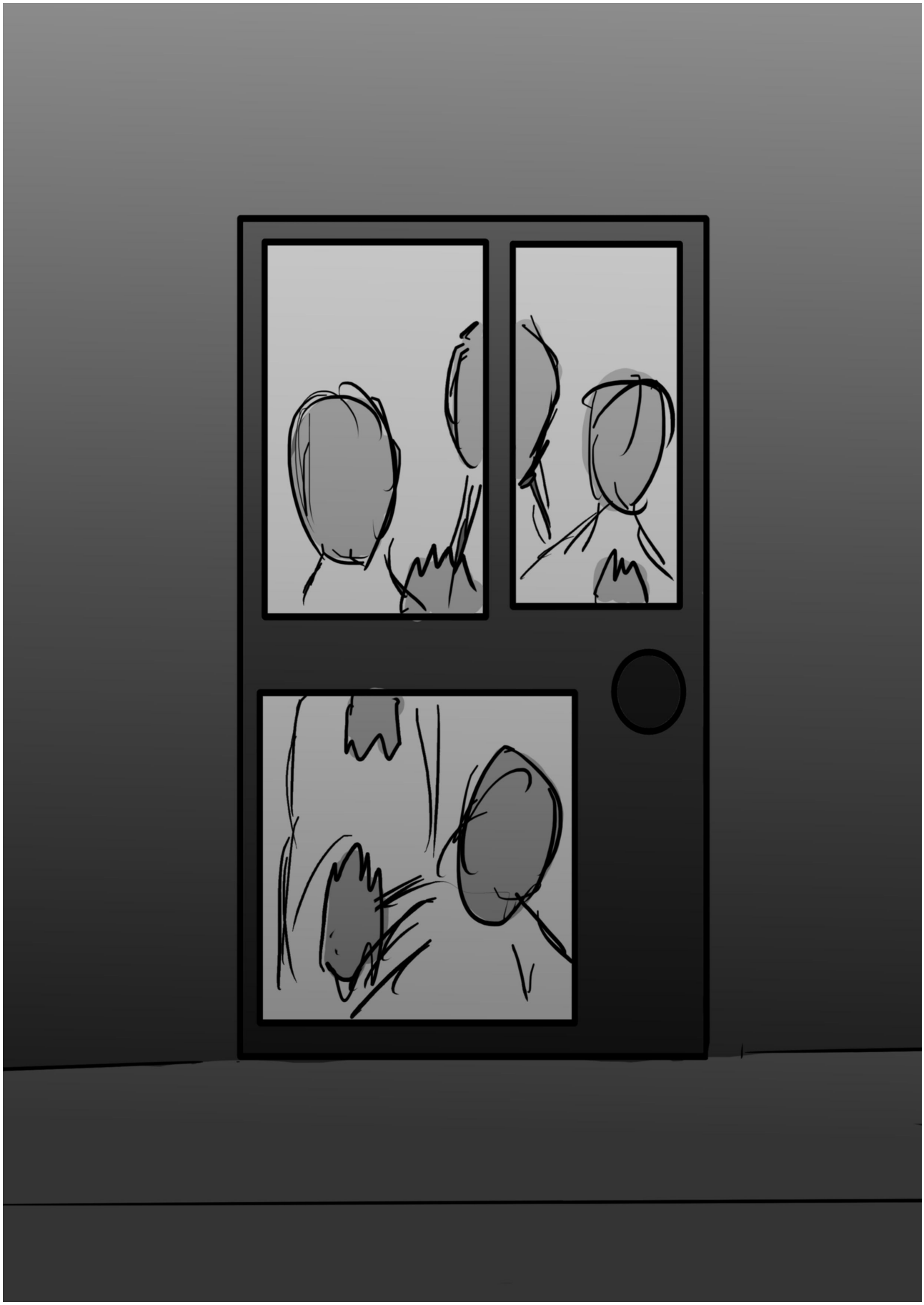
The curtains then parted and there was a pedestal with a sign on it that read 'Party to your heart's content'. Soon, all the lights came back on and the party continued but this time, the music was louder and more food and drinks were being provided.

Some were overjoyed with it all while others thought that it might've been too much. They tried to cover their ears but the noise kept getting louder. One of them tried to reach for the door but it wouldn't open. A few tried to find exits but there were none. The front door was the only way in or out.

Try as they might, it was useless and with the continued mix of bright lights and loud music, everyone soon started to get sick and pass out one by one.

The next morning, the owner of the mansion arrived and was devastated to find his home in a horrible state and was full dozens of people. When he entered, he thought that a bunch of drunk people had broken in and passed out on the floor but as he looked closer, it turns out that everyone was dead.

All around, he could see corpses and there was a strange smell in the air, aside from the stench of the dead. In the kitchen, there was an extremely strong smell of gas. He quickly turned it off and opened the windows and doors to let the gas out. Apparently, that was the cause of death according to the emergency team. So the remaining question was, if the owner of the mansion was on vacation for the entire week, who invited and hosted the party for the ones who now laid there dead.



27 – It waited

There was a creature that sat in a dungeon, waiting for adventurers to come in so that it could do battle with them. But one thing about the dungeon that this creature resides in is that it's the most dangerous and toughest dungeon of all, essentially it's almost like a last boss dungeon. There are 10 rooms before the final creature's room and it is impossible to reach.

Whenever adventurers enter it's dungeon, the creature cans sense them and it always awaits their arrival, though most only make it to the second or third room. Rarely do adventurers make it halfway through before dying due to exhaustion or being confronted by too many enemies.

In time, the creature grew bored of waiting and was about to go out itself but one day, an adventurer did make it to it's room. The adventurer was beat up and was on the verge of collapsing but the creature told the adventurer that he can rest and gain his strength as it wants to have a fair fight.

The adventurer was confused as he has never met a creature like this before but he eventually took the creature up on it's offer. He

sat down and focused on recovering his energy. After a few minutes, he got up and was now ready to face it.

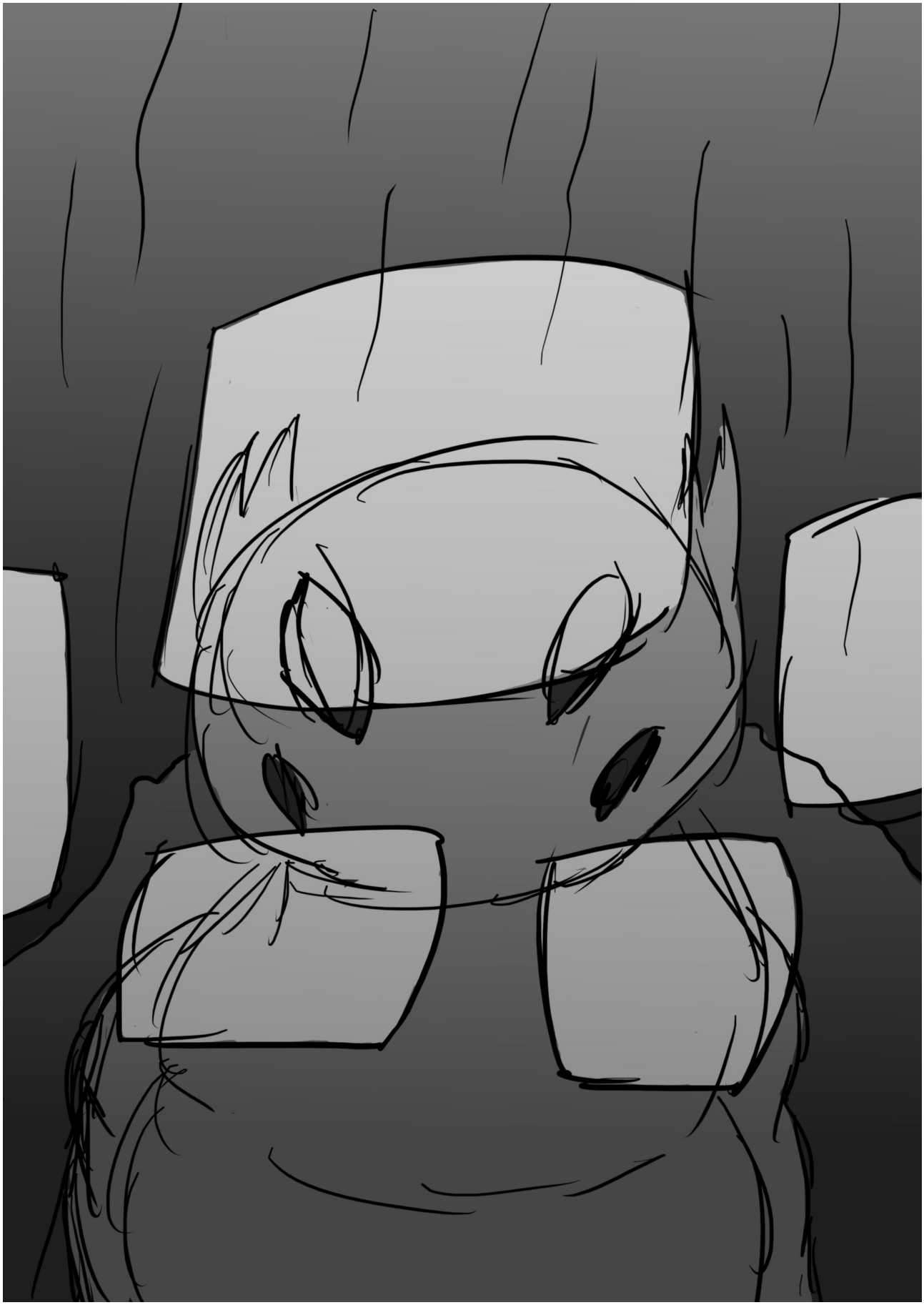
The adventurer got into a battle pose and the creature did the same. He rushed forward and with a swing of his sword he aimed to end the creature's life by cutting off it's head. He was surprised as the monster just stood there and did nothing. As the sword made contact with it's neck, it went all the way through and the creature's head had been cut off.

The adventurer was in shock as he did not expect to creature to die so easily. As it's head was on the floor, it was barely alive enough to look at the adventurer and say only 2 words. “Thank you.”. And with that the creature was dead. The adventurer found it suspicious as when he looked around, there wasn't any relic or treasures anywhere to be found. It was just an empty room.

The adventurer found that the whole thing was a waste of time but when he tried to leave, he found that he couldn't. There seems to be a barrier keeping him in. He then started to feel pain as his body started to break and morph. As the creature's body disintegrates, the adventurer's body slowly turned into that of the

creature.

He only now realizes that the only way to get out is to wait for an adventurer to come and kill him so that he can be free. So for now, he sits and waits.



28 – Just a sample

There is a new grocery store that opened up across the old one. It's full of new food and drinks that people have never heard of. On the first day it opened, there were no customers. People were just too unsure about what was inside the new store. The second day however, people started coming in, curious to see what it has to offer.

There were aisles of strange food and drinks and other necessities. They were kept behind glass doors and outside, there was a tray of free samples of the food. What's odd about the store is that there were no employees. It was completely unmanned but there are security cameras that move and watch everything.

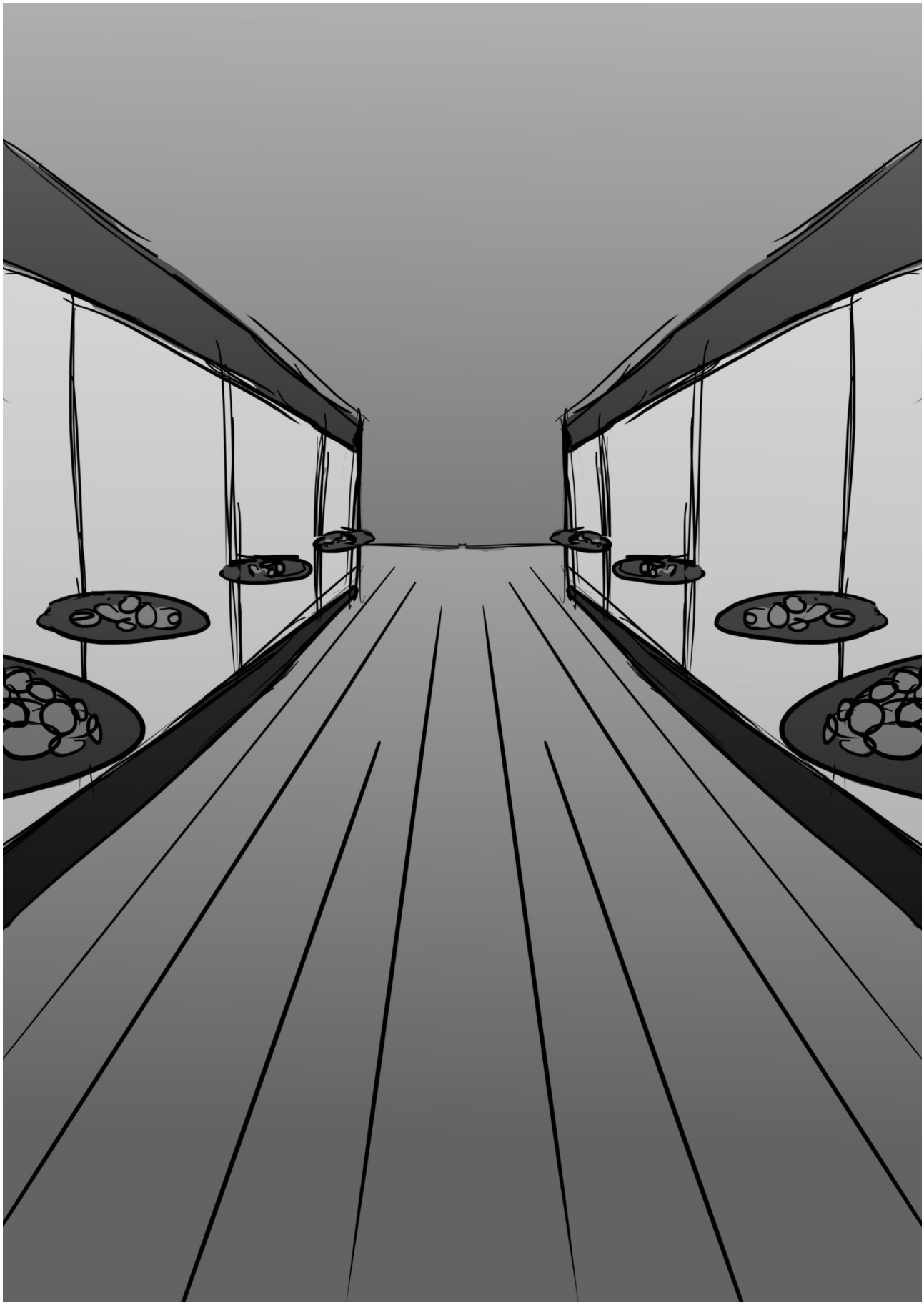
Basically, when a person walks into the store, they choose whatever groceries they need and they do a self-checkout and that's about it. If anyone tries to steal form the store, the front doors lock automatically till the item is returned back.

After trying a few free samples, people found the taste unique and intriguing. In fact, they wanted more and more as they tasted

each samples. After about a week, everything in the store was sold out. People still visit the store, expecting the shelves to be restocked but that didn't happen.

Those who regularly buy their groceries from the store eventually ran out and finds normal groceries disgusting and terrible. Day by day, they go to the store, waiting for new stock to come in but they never do. The store's front doors were then locked and everyone was stuck outside, clawing away, trying to get inside.

As months go by, their physical appearance had changed. They were thin and malnourished and for some reason, they couldn't take in any ordinary food. Their bodies seemed to just reject it and soon, what laid in front of the store, were dead rotting bodies. The next day, all the bodies were gone and the store's doors opened up for new customers.



29 – The mysterious gift

In a new gated community with a population of 100, a package was one day left on each and every person's front doors. They were identical and similar in every way. It was a box the size of a soccer ball.

One thing about the box was that it was stuck to the ground and could not be opened up. Everyone simply went on with their days, not minding the box until one late night, during a full moon, it opened up without anyone noticing.

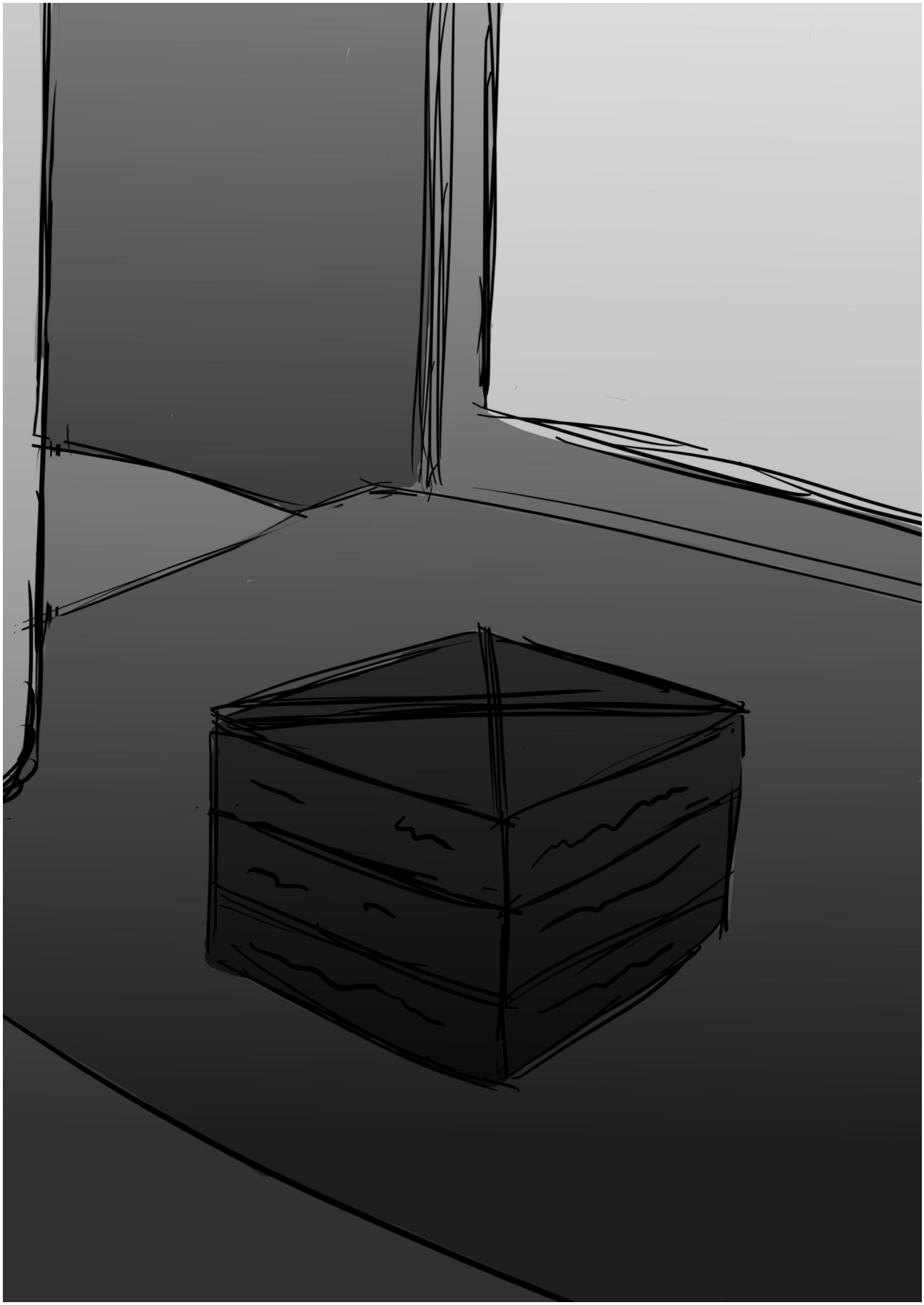
The next day, everyone was surprised when they noticed this. When they opened to see what was inside, they were surprised as it contained nothing. A few weeks go by with nothing interesting happening but concern and worry grew as a few people have gone missing. Everyone searched everywhere but could not find them.

This continued on and on until 50 people were left. The community grew scared and they dare not leave their homes as they fear they might be the next to go missing. As time went on, more people disappear and now only 5 were left. They have tried

to run away from the community but they do go missing either way so it was pointless.

They soon accepted their fate and the 5 spent the night having the time of their life as if it were their last day on earth. When morning came, they too were gone and the boxes all closed and they vanish without trace. The next day, new people came in and were excited to spend the rest of their lives in their new community.

After a few years had gone by and there were now 100 people in the community, one day, all of them were surprised as there was a package that was left on all of their front doors.



30 – No stars in the night sky

A crew was sent on a new space station that was orbiting the Earth. This was a great triumph for humanity and another leap forward into space travel as the station itself is also capable of long distance travel too. As the crew were nearing the station, they marveled at the sight of it. Everything was going smoothly and when their ship docked, the crew of 10 were finally able to set foot on their new living quarters in space.

They each settled in pretty quickly but before they could travel out, they would need to wait for more fuel to be sent so that they wouldn't be stranded in space. As a few of them looked out the window, they see the last ship on it's way to them, sending the last of the fuel.

There was suddenly a distress signal coming from the oncoming ship and when video communication was brought on, the crew on the ship all stared in silence towards their cameras. They were mouthing something and when the crew on the station asked what they were saying, the screen went to static.

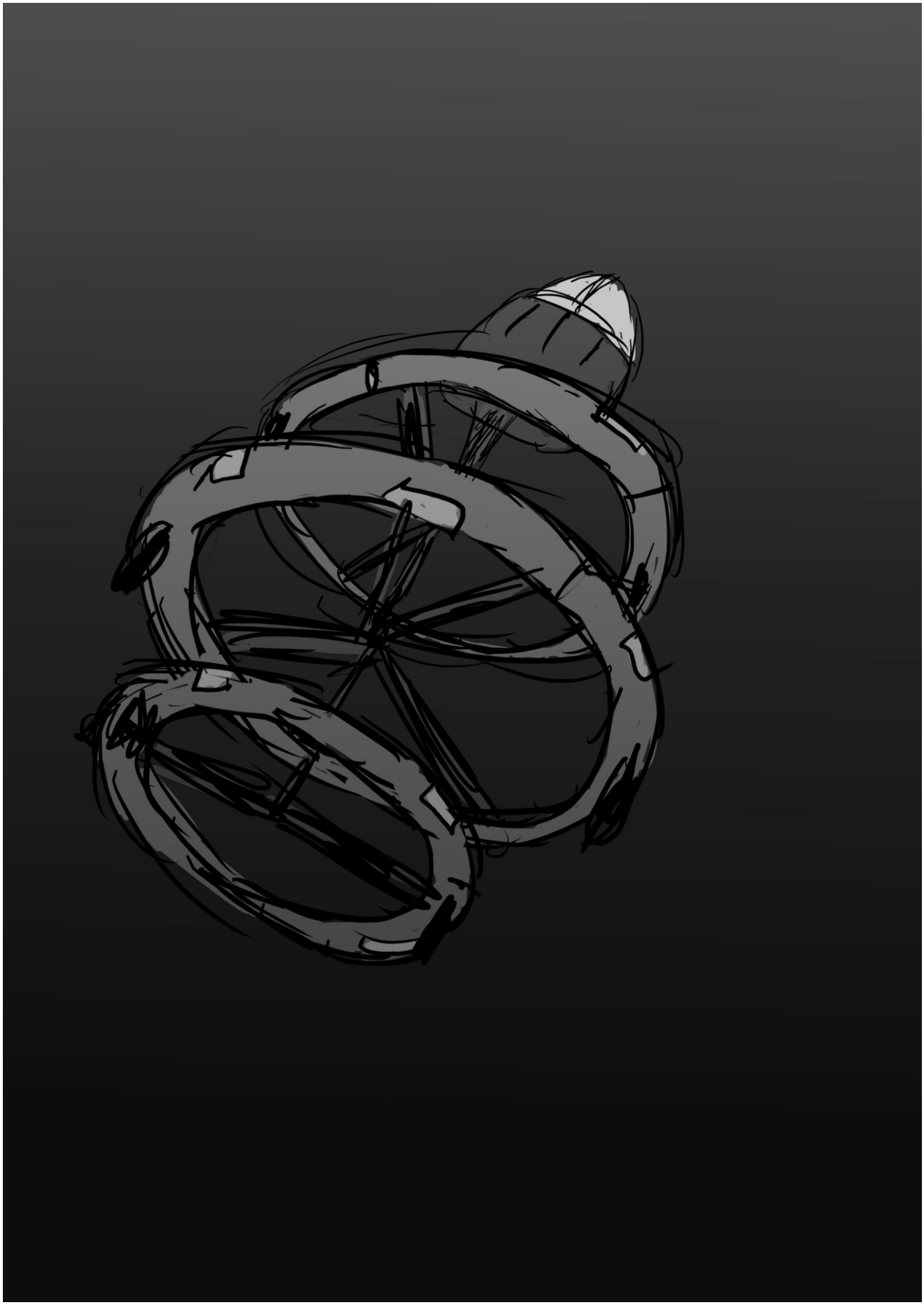
They quickly looked out the window again and were in shock when the ship was no longer there. The screen then turned to black and words popped up that read 'There is only the Darkness' before turning off. The crew started to get worried and tried to contact Earth but there was no signal.

One crew member then looked in horror as the stars started to disappear one by one and not just that. There was also a giant shadow that started to cover the entire Earth. On all the station's screens, an emergency broadcast was being played and the head of the space division appear to warn the crew about something.

He tried to tell them something but the signal was glitching out too much and barely anything could be seen or heard. The giant shadow then seem to devour the Earth and the signal was lost. The crew had lost all communication. Try as they might, nothing worked.

They looked on as even the sun was gone. All that remained were the stars but they too, as time went on, fade and disappear without a trace. The last of humanity were now stranded in a space station

that was floating through an empty void. They were the only things that were left. They had air and they had food and water but there was a limit to how much they can ration and if it were to eventually run out, what would they do next?



31 – Book of dark tales

In the back door of a library, there is a locked book that contained stories of creatures that comes from nightmares. It is said that if the book were to ever be opened, said creatures would run amok and cause death and destruction to all.

A guardian has been tasked to make sure no one steals the book and to keep the key safe but on Halloween night, the guardian was distracted by a noise coming from outside. He looked and saw nothing but as he turned back, his throat was slit by an unknown assailant.

As he laid on the floor bleeding out, he looked up one last time to see the attacker taking the key and smiling at him with a crazed look in her eyes. The attacker walked in and stole the book and then made her way to a populated area full of people in costumes.

She then took the key and unlocked the book, unleashing the horde of monsters onto innocent people, laughing as blood and guts splatter everywhere. In the middle of all the chaos, she looked towards you, the reader.

She stares straight at you and with a smile on her face she said

“Happy Halloween”

