

Elektraphrog



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Cover Image
Detail from “Corona”
By Maria Spelleri

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Mental Health 2020 by Maria Spelleri



View from a Web by Maria Spelleri

The Five

By Marissa Briggs

She was gasping for air, her lungs burning, begging for a release. But she could not stop. She willed her legs to go faster to keep up with the rest of the group, pushing the burning sensation to the back of her mind.

“Quick, over here,” Persephone shouted as she darted into an abandoned house.

The rest of the group followed her step, quickly shutting the door behind them.

“Quick we need something to bolt the door,” Alan shouted.

“Use this,” Thalia shoved a metal chair against the door-knob, and she motioned for the rest of the group to shove other heavy objects against the door, barricading them inside. She hunched over to catch her breath, then stood up to assess their surroundings. The building they were in was not very old, but it was obvious it had not been cared for in a while. The house was spacious enough, with stairs leading up to a second floor, and a once beautiful kitchen and living room. There was a door on the side of the staircase that she assumed led to a basement or cellar of some sort. There was an unsettling feeling though, as she noticed the dining room was set perfectly for dinner, with a lasagna still placed in the middle, only one piece of the now cold meal cut and served. She shivered and returned to the rest of the group, who was still catching their breaths.

“I think we outran it, but we should probably hide here for now, in case it decides to come looking for us,” Takoda managed to say through his gasps of air.

“We should also probably look for weapons and supplies,” Arabelle added, standing up to brush herself off.

Thalia nodded her head in agreement and made her way towards the basement door. She jiggled the handle and sighed in frustration, turning back into the kitchen to find something she could use to bust open the locked door. She found a fire extinguisher that looked like it had not ever

been used. She brushed the dust off the extinguisher. "This will do," she muttered. She brought the fire extinguisher over her head and slammed it down onto the door handle with all the force she could muster. The door handle didn't budge, and she swung again and again, until finally it broke loose.

"Here, I found a flashlight. You might need it down there," Takoda said from behind her, startling Thalia slightly. She took the flashlight from him and flashed him a grateful smile as she started to make her way downstairs. The basement looked like it had been set up as a bunker of some sort, with a small bed pressed against the wall, and the other wall lined with shelves full of canned food and other necessary supplies. She grabbed a backpack sitting next to the bed and started to fill it with as much as it could carry. She made her way back upstairs with the now full backpack to find others had done the same.

"It looks like that thing never caught up to us," Persephone noted as she peered out from behind the curtains on the front window.

"Should we leave and try to get as far ahead as we can for tonight," Arabelle questioned nervously.

Thalia shook her head. "It'll be dark soon. This looks like as good a place as any to camp out for the night, we can leave and continue South in the morning." The rest murmured their agreements, too tired to argue.

She made her way upstairs and entered the first bedroom she came across. The door creaked open to reveal a pink pastel bedroom, the bed decorated in a floral pattern with a beautiful glass chandelier hanging from the ceiling. There was a small desk in one corner with a book lying face down, as though its owner had been reading it and set it down, planning on picking it back up to finish in a few minutes. Only they never did. She picked it up and glanced at the cover. *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix*. She smiled at the memory of reading these books when she was younger. To escape her parents.

“Boo,” Alan said, slightly pushing Thalia's shoulder, startling her causing the book to fall out of her hand.

She shook her head. “You know, given the situation we’re stuck in, it’s amazing you somehow manage to find the energy to taunt everyone.” She watched as Alan bent to pick up the book, smiling at her annoyance.

“Keeps me sane,” he shrugged.

She grabbed the book back from him and made her way towards the bed, sliding under the plush covers. She opened the book to the page it was opened to and started reading. She felt a weight on the edge of the bed and peeked over the top of the book to see Alan sitting there, staring at her with an expression on his face that suggested he was debating whether to say something. She turned back to her book.

“What about you,” he suddenly asked after a few minutes. “What keeps you sane?”

She looked up at him, shocked he was saying something that was not remotely rude or teasing. But she smiled, nonetheless.

“You guys do.”

Thalia woke up from her dream, wiping the sleep from her eyes. She has had these consistently since the group had been separated, never the same one twice. They were always so close to her, but just out of her reach. Just like they are now.

She stretched and rose from her makeshift bed and began to pack. There was still at least a three-day journey south, and the others would be arriving soon if they haven’t already.

As she began the journey, careful to check on the compass clutched in her hand every few miles, she could not help but wonder where the others were. If they were still alive.

The morning after they came across the abandoned house, the air was eerily still. Then there was the ringing. It started out faint, nearly a whisper, until it was blaring, loud enough she swore her eardrums would burst into a thick pool of red. Everyone tumbled into the living clutching their heads, and Persephone ran to the kitchen sink, spilling

the remains of last night's dinner. Just as suddenly as the noise started, it stopped, and a sharp pain in Thalia's temple replaced it. That is when she heard the voice.

*You five have shown your strengths and weaknesses greatly these past few days. We have collected much knowledge of your responsiveness from the challenges we have faced you with. We have saved the final challenge for last, as it will take the most out of you all, so pay attention closely to the directions you are about to be given. Tomorrow morning you will wake up to find yourselves separated. You must all head south until you reach the sea, and you must do so alone. In exactly one week from tomorrow, you will see a bright golden light wear the land meets the sea. You must walk directly into it. Succeed and you will live the rest of your days showered in glory, wealth, and love. Fail to do so, and you will be stuck in this reality on your own. Good luck sav-
iors.*

After a few moments of silence, Thalia was sure the voice was gone. She only just realized the voice had been in her head. She glanced around at the others, and given their expressions, she was not the only one who heard the monotone death sentence.

“What the hell was that” Alan said, rubbing his temple.

“Wait, you all heard that too,” Arabelle whispered.

“The whole load of crap about being separated and walking through some magical beam of light? Yeah, I heard it,” Alan said. He looked around at the rest of the group, and his eyes locked momentarily with Thalia's, until she broke contact.

“Do you think it's true? I mean it sounds crazy, doesn't it,” Persephone said.

“Honestly, if you had told me a month ago that everyone was going to mysteriously disappear from the face of the planet and the only people left were us five, I'd think it was crazy. But now, who knows.” Thalia shrugged.

“We can't go to sleep tonight. Even if this is real, we will not be able to survive on our own. Whatever this is, whether a test or a joke, we cannot risk splitting up,”

Takoda said. Everyone nodded in agreement.

The group decided to rest for the day. If the warning the voice had given was true, they had a day's rest before they would need to make the trek south in a week's time. If the warning proved useless, then they earned a day's rest all the same. Thalia spent the day reading her book, and everyone was keeping to themselves. Persephone packed and repacked her bag repeatedly, complaining that it was not packed correctly ultimately to do it all over again.

Takoda found some spare paper and spent the day writing by the front window, stopping only now and then to take a glance at Arabelle, who was singing softly to herself while helping Persephone. Alan joined Thalia upstairs as he had the other night, simply watching her as he read. After the first twenty minutes of him staring at her in silence, she read the rest of the book to him, sometimes managing to glance up and catch his eyes quickly darting away from her.

That day seemed so long ago. Little did they know the warning was true. Thalia had no memory of ever falling asleep that night, nor any memory of how she ended up a few towns east. The last thing she could recall before the sudden empty darkness was seeing a glimpse of Alan's smile in the fading sunlight.

Food and supplies were not a problem. She had woken up to a bag full enough to last her an entire month alone. It was the loneliness that threatened to swallow her whole. She could feel her memories eating her from the inside out. Memories of her father coming home high and drunk, hitting her mother, and then her when she tried to intervene. Memories of her mother's drunken state, never wanting to be sober to face the realities of the harsh life that awaited her. Memories of spending countless nights attempting to put a meal together for herself, which usually consisted of two thin slices of half-molded bread and some peanut butter. The only sliver of happiness she could find in her day was the imaginary friends she had created to help her cope with

her traumas. Two boys and two girls. Together, their group was unstoppable.

It had not escaped Thalia's attention that when everyone went missing, the only people she was left with matched her friends exactly. Though she was not brought up religious, she could not help but feel her newfound friends were a gift from above, sent to her again to help deal with these new harsh times. Only this time, they were real. But just as soon as she had found them, she lost them. Just as quickly as she had felt herself fill with newfound warmth and love; the darkness threatened to take over again. This time, permanently.

No, Thalia scolded herself. This time, I have real people worth fighting for.

Starry Nights

By Joseph Truong

There is a knife in my chest. I do not know what I'm going to do. He just came up to me and put it there. I am not going to make it. The sidewalk his hard against my head. The air is colder than before. I never thought something like this would happen to me, yet here I am. I know it is cliché, but...

I am too young to die.

I had my whole life before me. I would meet someone who could take care of me, get married, have children... children... It hurts to breathe. I can feel my chest heave against the cold metal with each gasp of air.

My heart is split in two. I feel like I am drowning. Not in the deep despair of the ocean but in the warm, uninvited pool of blood forming in my lungs. The starry night pities me while I lay beneath her. She reaches out to fan me with her garments, dusting off the bits of earth from my shoulder, granting me a brief respite. The stars are fading.

For a moment I see myself as a child. Holding the hand of my father while he takes me out to watch for comets beneath a black sky in a prairie. I wonder what it would be like to be there again. Never would I have to worry. Never would I know that I would feel how I feel, here in this instant. I close my eyes.

I do not want to die, but I know it is coming. I wonder what I would look like, to a passerby—if there were any. I imagine what someone would do if they walked toward me. Would they stop? Would they call for help? Would they step around me like a stone in the street? Would they even wonder how I ended up this way?

I do not wonder why he did it, for there is not the time. I do not wonder why the man in the hat came up to me and plunged a cold dagger into my chest. I do not wonder. I felt the cold of the steel before the pain. It scared me. As if it were trying to tell me that it did not care what it did, it did not care where it would go, but it was going anyway. My body warmed it. The sharp edge that pierced me so coldly

was now being warmed by my still beating heart. Neither of us would be warm before long.

Soon, I will die. Soon, my soul will leave the body it has inhabited for the past twenty years. Never again will I feel this pain. Never again will I suffer. This world will no longer be my home. I will simply be no more. Freely will I wander, as I wandered all my life. Only this time, I will wander without reigns.

Eventually, they will find me. They will outline my body with chalk and cover my face. They will take pictures of me while I lie here, breathless. Motionless will I stay while they find spots of blood, splattered about the puddle beside me. It will ripple, like the ocean, while they step around. The stars will reflect in it and create a pretty picture on the alley wall.

They will lift me on a stretcher and take me away. I will not go to the morgue, nor will I be confined to a coffin. Perhaps I will take a walk along the sunset, or take a drive through the galaxy. Maybe, just tonight, I will go back to that prairie. As I lay there starry-eyed, I will dream of daisies. Never in my life, have I dreamed this way.

Witch

By Zackery McMurray

Beautiful, sea-green eyes stood in front of me. When she looked at me, it was as if her gentle gaze could see right into my very soul.

“Here’s another spoon of applesauce, Mr. Wing.”

Her soothing voice lulled my mouth open to accept the food she was offering. Her pale skin glowed like the moon and her bright red-hair, tied in a tight bun, shined like a burning fire.

I felt the cold, sweet applesauce in my mouth. Being spoon-fed from her was like being waited on by an angel. *Surly I must be in heaven*, I said to myself. Closing my eyes, I savored the sweet treat in my mouth, not believing the luck I had in my life.

Suddenly I remembered.

I froze, as panic formed a tight knot in my stomach. I felt cold. I could feel my heart pounding hard in my chest, almost as if it was trying to escape from my body. My eyes went from being lullingy shut, to tightly sealing them from opening. I could not open them. I could not look at her. I knew what she was about.

Urgently, I spat out the applesauce.

I heard a subtle sigh, “Mr. Wing, what would you do that?”

Her voice, her tone, her question all seemed reasonable. But that was the trick. That was the ploy. She wanted to seem reasonable to catch me in her trap again.

“I am not going to eat that!” I said firmly. Well, I meant it firmly, but it honestly probably came out as a shout. People shout when they are frightened, what can I say?

“You have to eat though!” She said as if I would starve if I did not eat the applesauce.

“I’m not hungry.” I responded, keeping my eyes shut.

“Look at me.” She said gently.

Look at me.

Those were the dangerous words she used. She knew she could have better control of me if I saw her. She could use the magic she has in her eyes to hypnotize me once more.

“No.” I said firmly, “And I am not going to eat the applesauce, so just leave.”

“But Mr. Wing, the applesauce has your medicine in it.”
My medicine.

She knows that I know that she drugs me with the applesauce. She then tries to lightly play it off, saying it is “medicine” to make it seem normal. If it was medicine, then I would be giving it to myself. She is trying to keep me in an altered mental state. That is how she managed to keep me prisoner all these months. Maybe years? My mind has grown foggy through all her tricks, drugging me, and magic.

Yes, I said magic.

You see, she is a witch. Normally one thinks of witches as ugly, with swampy-green skin and warts on their noses. That is not the case with her. Witches can actually be beautiful creatures. They use their looks, charms, voices, and sex appeal to get their way with their victims. Think of the sirens in Greek Mythology, whom which lured sailors into the ocean with their soothing voices. Once the sailors went for a swim, they were devoured by beautiful monsters. Pretty voices can be deceiving.

“Ok Mr. Wing” the pretty, lethal voice started, “I am going to leave the room and come back in a little bit, okay?”

I said nothing. Heard her footsteps depart from the room. Slowly, I opened an eye to make sure I was alone before comfortably opening both eyes. I was sitting in a chair, with a table in front of me. On the table, there was chicken, mashed potatoes, and green beans. And the applesauce on the side. I picked up the applesauce and put it was far away as I could set it. It would be best not to accidentally eat it and drug myself all over again. This is the most solid of mind I have felt in a long time. I would hate to mess everything up and have to start again from square one. If I keep off her witches-potion-applesauce, perhaps I can formulate an escape plan.

But first, I must eat to gain strength – and not accidentally eat the applesauce!

I looked at my utensils. I had a fork, spoon, and butterknife. I scoffed at the idea of having to use a butterknife to cut meat. The chicken honestly did not even look at good, but I decided to give it a try. It was surprisingly easy to cut. As I raised the fork to my mouth, the fork started to tremble. Oh no, not this again. Determined to feed myself despite having a shaky hand, I quickly shove the chicken in my mouth.

My mouth became wet. It was more like I took a drink of something rather than a bite of something. The drink was not even good – it tasted metallic. There was a sharp pain in my tongue too. I then realized that the liquid was blood and my tongue hurt because I had accidentally stabbed myself while eating.

The witch walked by my room, “Everything going okay? How does everything taste?”

Oh no – she picked the worst timing! She could not know I stabbed myself with my fork. She already took away my car, saying I was unfit to drive. She used her charm spells on social workers to get her way. She has my pristine '66 Mustang which she no doubt keeps to herself.

I tried to play it off by smiling and nodding. I purposefully avoided eye contact with her. The eyes are the danger, for that is how The Witch casts her most powerful spells on me.

“Remember to shallow!” she urges me in a charming voice

I force down the food and continued to eat as if I was civilized person enjoying a dinner by myself. I had to ignore the fact I was being kept in a prison by a beautiful witch with poisons and spells. Acting normal somehow makes her happy. She walked away down the hall.

I couldn't stand this anymore. I had to end things. I had to end her. I would have to kill her with my butterknife. As crazy as that may seem, it might be my best shot. It may seem like I am overreacting, but after a timeless void of living under the thumb of a witch who drugs, manipulates, steals, and tricks you, something must be done. This is no

life worth living. I'd rather go down fighting than live a life as a prisoner to The Witch.

I hide the butterknife on my side. The next time she gets close, I'll stick it through her throat the best chance I get. I then will have to make a run for it. I may not run as well as I did in my younger days, but if I can get to my walker, then I stand a fighting chance to escape. Now it might seem ridiculous to escape my own house, but it is infested with other witches! The Witch brought all her friends. So not only has she been keeping me prisoner in my own house, but she brought other witches to live there, and worse, they brought their own prisoners to stay in my guest rooms! Most the other prisoners are absolutely nuts. Many scream and holler, day and night.

The Witch is the ringleader of this mayhem and must be taken down. She must be killed. As much as I would love to reclaim my home, my castle, that is honestly unrealistic. There are too many witches populated here now. It is better to cut my losses and escape with my life. I grip the butterknife firmly, trying to ease my nerves.

She appears at the door again.

"All done?" She asks with a sad smile, "You only ate half. You usually eat your whole meal. You're a good eater. What's wrong – are you not feeling well?"

That's another one of her tricks: guilt. She tries to get her way by guiltling me. It is as if I should feel bad for only eating half my meal. I have had it with her and her damn trickery!

"How about we try a little applesauce?" She sweetly asks, her smile revealing perfect white teeth.

An idea pops in my head: if I pretend to eat the poison, she'll want to feed it to me to get close enough to personally ensure I have ingested her potion – that's how The Witch always makes sure I take her potions. By getting closer, she will be in striking range. I can then kill her and escape – it's brilliant!

She puts on deep-blue gloves, and then grabs the spoon and brings it to my mouth. I open my mouth, urging her to get closer. I forgot about the blood though. A pool of blood

had collected in my mouth from my cut tongue. It immediately gushes out all over my bedside table.

The Witch gasps and jumps back. Being startled, her true form must have been forced to emerge. Her once red hair that looked like flames burst into literal flames! Her pale white skin that seemed to glow, actually started glowing. The sea-green eyes that were once soft and charming darkened into green slits of eyes, like a reptile. She hissed, revealing a forked tongue.

Believing now was my chance before getting devoured, I clumsily stood up, pushing the bedside table at her with one hand intending to bash it in her stomach. With the other hand, I held the butterknife up high, intending to stab her with a killing strike in the neck.

Despite her petite form, the monstrous witch has surprising strength. She overpowered me with ease, holding the bedside table in place with one hand and grabbing the arm I intended to stab her with her other hand. Suddenly other witches were behind me and manhandled me down on my bed. Where the other witches came from, I have not ideas. The Witch must have summoned them using magic.

I fought with all my might. I managed to punch one in the face, causing that witch to back away. I yelled, swore, kicked, hit, and brawled with all my might.

“Get the Haldol.” One witch said to the others. Haldol is one of the potions they use to control me.

The witches were no longer using the sweet, charming tricks. When things got bad like this, the witches’ true forms are revealed. One looked very much like the “classic witch” look – she had a wart on her nose! As the struggle continued, that witch’s skin even started growing tinges of green gradually. Another witch had pointed teeth. One even had claws!

Everything around the struggle got hot. It must have been from the fire surrounding us. There was a ring of flames surrounding us! I tried to yell and warn them that we must all escape or we will *all* die, but when I realized that they did not see the flames, I then understood that it must have been an illusion from a spell one had casted on

me. Having this many witches together is dangerous. I stood no chance of winning, but I was going to be damned if I was going to give in now. It was life or death. Live or die.

I suddenly felt something sharp go into my buttock.

“You got it in?” One nurse asked another.

“Yes,” the ringleader replied, “he will calm down any minute now.”

I looked up and everything started to move in slow motion. Weakness filled my body and I slumped down, unable to fight anymore. Slowly, the sinister faces faded into human-looking faces of lovely, hard-working women in scrubs. They were nurses meant to take care of me. Or was this another spell? No wait, this was the potion they put in me to control me – the Haldol.

My green-eyed nurse looked in my eyes, “It okay Mr. Wing, you’re safe.” She assured me.

Not sure if this was the truth or another spell or trick or the Haldol, but I decided to accept it as the truth as my eyes grew heavy and everything went black.

The Pursuit of Freedom

By Davian McKinon

Dillon was finally free. It hadn't been easy, but he had done it. Amidst the tears and anger, his girlfriend of nine years realized things were over. He had tried to let her down easy, but these kinds of situations never go as planned. What started out as a discussion turned into an argument, which then finally led to the revelation. Their time had come and gone, and no amount of therapy was going to fix the problem.

The break-up for Dillon had been a long time coming. For at least a year, he had dreamed about calling it quits with Shandra, but when push came to shove, he always chickened out. Shandra wasn't a mean person, and he hoped they could regain some kind of friendship at some point. Therefore, it had been difficult to muster up enough courage to tell her he had to leave. But he had finally done it...and he was damn happy he had.

Dillon had planned precisely what he would do should this day ever come. A man of simple means, he had few possessions. In fact, he was pretty sure he could fit everything into his 2002 Jeep Cherokee. If not, he had a couple of friends who could probably hold things for him until he returned. For the next three months, Dillon was going on an adventure. He had always wanted to explore the northwest, and now was his chance.

Dillon waited for Shandra to leave for work the next morning before he began gathering his belongings together. They had agreed that he would leave the apartment for her, since it only had three months left on the lease. It made Dillon feel better doing so. By noon, he was all packed and ready to hit the road. He needed to make a quick trip to Walmart for a few camping items, but otherwise he was set. It was really happening.

"Yo, Bruce," Dillon said answering his cellphone. "What up?"

“Nothing, bra. I got your text. You really heading to the Great Outdoors?” Bruce replied.

“Damn right! Finally, I get to be free and all alone. It’s a dream come true.”

“I wish I could just pick up and go camping,” Bruce added.

“Don’t you worry. I’ll be working plenty. Every McDonalds has Wi-Fi I hear.”

“Yeah, but it might be 200 miles between McDonalds.”

“Maybe, but I’ll make it work,” Dillon said with confidence.

“How about I meet you in Oregon in a couple of weeks?” Bruce asked.

Dillon paused a brief moment.

“No offense, bud, but I think I need this one by myself.”

By sunset, Dillon had left the city lights of Orlando and was headed west along the Turnpike. The glimmer of the early evening lights in his rearview mirror triggered no sense of regret. It was no match for the warm summer wind whipping around inside the jeep. Even his Mountain Dew tasted better than he had ever remembered.

By the time Dillon reached Pensacola, his eyes were already feeling heavy. The glory of liberation that launched him on his journey was not nearly as strong. He didn’t mind driving at night, but he knew he wouldn’t be able to pull an all-nighter. At some point, he would have to stop and get a hotel. He wasn’t about to camp in 80-degree temperatures outside, and the jeep was packed. Perhaps, he could make it at least another two or three hours before looking for a motel.

Suddenly, a loud thud came from the engine, and within seconds, everything stopped.

“You’ve got to be kidding me,” Dillon grumbled.

He pulled over to the side of the interstate and could see smoke billowing from the engine even in the darkness. Dillon popped the hood hoping it might be something obvious, like a radiator cap that had come unscrewed. But no such luck. As a software programmer, he was pretty technical in

some ways, but he knew nothing about cars. And at 2AM in the boonies, the chance of getting a tow truck nearby was slim.

After searching his cellphone any local towns or garages, Dillon finally gave up and fell asleep with his hazard lights blinking. Maybe he could at least wait until sunrise when tow rates wouldn't be so expensive. But just as he was about to doze, a loud banging startled him back awake.

"Hey, you in there. Let's see some I.D. and registration."

An Alabama state trooper had spotted Dillon's hazards. Even though he had done nothing wrong, the sheer presence of a police officer made Dillon nervous. It felt as if it was genetically imprinted on his DNA. Dillon slowly lowered his window making sure his hands were clearly visible.

"License and registration," the officer repeated.

Dillon handed the officer his driver's license and then went to search the glovebox. Gum, band-aids, a tire gauge...but no registration. Had he put it in his jeep? He couldn't remember.

"I'm sorry, sir. I can't find the registration," Dillon said.

"Step out of the car, son."

Dillon obliged as his heart began to race.

"What seems to be the problem?" the officer asked.

"I don't know. The engine made a loud noise and then it started smoking."

"Uh-huh. And what's all that loaded in your vehicle?"

"That's my stuff."

"Your stuff? You sure? What's in all those boxes?"

"Just my clothes, kitchen stuff, things like that," Dillon replied nervously.

"You don't mind if I have a look, do you?" the officer continued.

"Why? I haven't done anything wrong."

"Well then, you won't mind if I take a peek then, will you?"

"I guess not," Dillon answered.

He immediately regretted the words as soon as they came out of his mouth. He knew the officer had no right to search

his car, but he also didn't want to look like he was resisting. He was in the middle of nowhere, and ultimately, it would be his word against the officers. If the officer had a body camera, Dillon sure didn't see it. And he doubted it was on if he did.

The officer began poking around in Dillon's belongings while shining his flashlight all around. He then went to the other side of the car and opened the passenger side door. The officer seemed unimpressed until he decided to reach under the seat. He then raised up holding a half-smoked joint that Dillon had never seen in his life.

"What do we have here?" the officer announced in an almost satisfied tone.

"I don't know, sir."

"Looks like a marijuana cigarette to me. What might a marijuana cigarette be doing in your car, Mr. Dillon Sanders?"

"It's not mine, sir. I swear, I have never seen that, and I don't smoke," Dillon replied almost pleadingly.

"Well, if that's so, then perhaps this really ain't your car after all. I'm gonna have to take you down to the station and sort this out."

Dillon had never been read his rights before, but honestly, he didn't hear a word the officer said. Sitting in the back of the patrol car, Dillon sat in disbelief. He hadn't done anything wrong, but somehow, he was being arrested. How had the joint gotten there? Shandra didn't smoke. Bruce did, but Dillon couldn't remember the last time Bruce had been in the jeep. Nothing made sense. All he knew was that any feelings of independence and freedom had suddenly vanished into thin air through no fault of his own.

The officer was a large man, probably 6-foot-2, and had to weight at least 200 pounds. Standing next to Dillon, he looked another species. His pasty white skin was covered in freckles, and his reddish blonde hair peeked out from under his hat. Dillon was pretty sure he had a tobacco dip in his mouth, but he wasn't sure. He was having a hard time distinguishing between reality and stereotype at the time.

When they arrived at the police station, the officer ushered Dillon inside and told him to wait in a small holding area. The entire station was barely any bigger than the house in which he had grown up. There was no one else there that he could see, and honestly, he could literally hear crickets chirping outside. A bead of sweat formed on his forehead and began to run down. No matter what, he knew nothing good was going to come of this.

“May I use my cellphone?” Dillon asked the officer when he returned.

“Not right now. We need to get some fingerprints on ya.”

“But officer, really, that joint isn’t mine. And I need to get my car to a garage. I haven’t done anything wrong!”

“Look!” the officer said sternly. “I don’t care what you tell me. You don’t have no registration, and you did have an illegal substance in your vehicle. So, right now, we’re gonna get your fingerprints.”

Dillon thought it was best he shut up. He had heard stories, even from some of his friends. Guys like them had little power to do anything. When it comes down to it, the one with the badge and the gun has the power, and the one with the power decides justice. Whether it’s fair or not doesn’t matter. It’s what they say is fair is what really counts. So, Dillon decided he just better play along and hope some opportunity to tell his side of things would eventually occur.

Dillon wasn’t sure who he would call if he had the chance. His mother had passed away last year after battling breast cancer. His father had left them when he was young. He had no siblings, and other than an uncle in Chicago, he had no real family. Shandra had been his family for the last nine years, and Bruce was pretty worthless in these types of situations. Perhaps, Shandra might be his best option despite all that had happened.

After the officer fingerprinted him, Dillon was placed back in the holding area. He still had not seen another single person in the building the entire time. He felt truly alone.

“You can make a call if you like,” the officer stated bluntly.

Dillon fished his phone out of his pocket and went to his favorites. There Shandra was at the top of the list. He hesitated but then made the call.

“Dillon? What do you want? It’s 4 in the morning,” Shandra said in a bit of a stupor.

“Hey, sorry. I didn’t know who else to call. I’ve gotten myself in a bit of a bad situation.”

“You OK?”

“I think so. Not sure. I got arrested in some little town in Alabama.”

“For what?!”

“Well, the jeep broke down, so I was sleeping on the side of the road. And then this cop comes up and searches my car.”

“Why did he search your car?”

“God only knows. Maybe because I couldn’t find my registration. But anyway, he found a joint under the passenger’s seat.”

Shandra paused.

“How long you been smoking, Dillon?”

“I haven’t been! That’s just it. I don’t know how it got there. Nobody’s been in my jeep. Shandra, I seriously think this guy planted it on me.”

“Well, if that’s the case, you’d better just play along for now. The last thing you want to do is cause a fuss.”

Dillon knew she was right. She was usually right, which was why he hesitated to call her. He thought she would go off on some long lecture or some “I told you so” speech. But she didn’t. This time, she heard his nervousness and did her best to reassure him. It was exactly what he needed to hear. His world had suddenly become very small, and he was glad she was there.

The next morning, Dillon was abruptly awoken by the same officer opening the door to the holding area. Dillon had fallen asleep for about an hour sitting in the chair, and drool had traveled down to his collar. For a brief moment, he thought it had been a nightmare, but he soon realized that wasn’t so.

“Let’s go, Sanders. Rise and shine,” the officer announced.

Dillon gathered himself and followed the officer to a desk where another officer was seated. It was a female officer who was middle-age, overweight, and still wore a hairstyle that might have been popular in the 1970s.

“This is Officer Brantley. She’s gonna finish you up and tell you what’s what. My shift is over. Of, and by the way, we towed your car to impound.”

With that, he turned around and left. The baton of power had been passed along to Officer Brantley who would now wield it as she saw appropriately. Nothing thus far had been fair or just, and Dillon saw no reason to suspect things would change.

“Mr. Sanders, have a seat,” Brantley said. “You being charged with misdemeanor possession of an illegal substance.”

“But it wasn’t mine,” Dillon blurted out before thinking twice.

“Well, you can tell that to the judge. Your court hearing will be in 3 weeks at the county courthouse.”

“Hearing? In 3 weeks? But I’m headed out west on a trip!”

“That’s fine, as long as you’re back here in 3 weeks. Also, it’s gonna cost you \$250 to get your car out of impound.”

“But it’s not running.”

“Then you’ll probably want to have towed to a mechanic after you pay to get it out.”

Dillon could see his savings and his best made plans evaporating right before his eyes the more the officer spoke. But at this point, he only had one thing on his mind, and that was getting the hell out of there. That was his priority, and everything else would have to take a back seat for now.

It took Dillon most of the day to get his jeep over to a mechanic. A timing belt had broken, and after a few more hours, Dillon was back on the road. This time, there was no glimmering lights of a big city in his rearview mirror waving goodbye. Instead, it was a dinky little town in rural Alabama

that Dillon wished he had never seen. Leaving Orlando had been exciting, but leaving this town in one piece felt like a blessing.

As Dillon approach the entryway to the Interstate, he had two options. He could continue his journey west to explore parts of the country he had never seen. Or he could go east and return to the only real family he had. Both options had some appeal, but the freedom that lured Dillon out west before didn't seem quite as powerful as before. He appreciated much more what real freedom looked like now. And he also appreciated the fact that being alone and independent wasn't all it was cracked up to be.

Gut Instinct

By Lorianne Scandalito

Always trust your gut instinct.

The seniors of the previous years said it was haunted. They said that bus cost them two hours of time from the park. They said it was probably the worst experience in the trip. Now I'm not the one to believe in superstition, or the supernatural, I don't even believe in a higher power. My friends knew this about me, that I'm not the type to follow the crowd in their beyond worldly views. Except this time was different.

It was the first time I've been to Universal Studios; I believe I was there when I was a kid, but I wouldn't remember.

Now it was senior year for us, all that time studying, taking tests enduring boring lectures have paid off and now we get to spend a whole night at Universal! This was the last year of my high school career, and I get to spend a whole night with my best friend, what could be better? One thing did bug my mind the days leading up to the trip.

The incident happened the year before with the previous seniors, and it was the talk of the rest of the year leading up to their graduation. Even though everyone was talking about it, no one really knows what happened. All that was said was the second bus to Universal broke down and they had to wait nearly two hours for another bus to pick them up, and everything was fine after that. But if you ever seen any of those seniors on bus two, you notice they were never the same after that. In fact, an eerie feeling would tell you something else happened on that fateful evening.

Something about that story freaked me I never stopped thinking about it, which began to really irritate my friend, Sophia.

#

It was lunchtime, one month before the trip, Sophia and I sat at our usual table.

“I was thinking,” I said as I bit into my hamburger, “We should sign up for seats the minute Mrs. Stewart puts up the lists of bus spots for the trip.”

“She says there’s going to be five buses, what’s the rush, Laura?” Sophia asked.

Well, a lot of people would want to sign up to the same bus as their friends, we should do the same before we have to sit in different buses.” I said.

“Or... is it something else?” Laura asked.

I bit my lip, “I... don’t want to ride bus two.”

“Come on, Laura! We’ve been over this!” Laura says.

“I just think, I’d rather be safe than sorry.” I said.

“Well I thought you didn’t believe in superstitions.” Sophia muttered.

“I don’t, but something about last year made me think otherwise. Listen, just go along with this, for this one time. Any bus than number 2.” I pleaded.

Sophia sighed. “Okay fine, but I’m sitting in the window seat.”

I extended my hand, “Deal!” we shook on it.

#

I had not realized how fast time flew by. I knew Mrs. Stewart could post the sign up at any period so I took the time between every class for the next week to check the board. Again, and again and again, four periods each day. Until one day I completely forgotten until lunchtime on Friday.

#

Sophia and I sat at our usual seat. A classmate that we knew, Justin, approached us. He is wearing his usual sunglasses inside.

“Hey, you guys sign up for buses yet?” he asked.

We looked at him confused, shaking our heads.

“No, I figured Mrs. Stewart will be posting it on Monday.” I said.

“Oh man, you better hurry then, she posted it this morning!” He said.

Our eyes widened. We thanked Justin and quickly finished our meals so we can rush to Mrs. Stewart's bulletin board in the front of her classroom door.

#

"Damn it! Nearly all of the spots are full!" I cursed, scanning the list.

"Unless we want to ride separately?" Sophia commented.

"The only bus with two seats left is number two..." I said.

"You're seriously not thinking we should sign up there right? You said yourself, that bus is haunted!" said Laura.

"Yeah but... now that I think about it... it couldn't have been the bus, right? I mean it could've been a rotten fruit that caused the bus to break, or a cursed shirt, a necklace, a pendent," I rambled.

"Well we're not signing up for bus two now. We're going to have to convince two people to switch with us." Sophia suggested.

"Like whom?" I asked.

Sophia scanned the list, her finger pointed at two names, Austin, and Brittany. "Them."

"You think we can get them to switch to bus two?" I asked.

"Well... not you, me." She said.

#

During History, we sat in groups of four. Sophia and I just so happen to be seated in front of Austin and Brittany.

"So, everyone excited for Grad Bash?" Sophia asked the table. I nodded, so did Austin and Brittany.

"Yep, we were one of the first to sign up!" said Brittany in her overly annoying bubbly tone that made me want to punch her.

"I saw you two were signed up for bus three, are you sure?" Sophia asked. I wondered what she was up to.

"Are we sure about what?" Austin asked.

"Well haven't you heard the rumors, by the seniors from last year? Bus three is haunted." Sophia lied. I beamed.

"Nah, that was bus two." Austin said.

"Whoever you heard that from was lying, it's bus three." Sophia clarified.

“Um, yeah, she’s right. The kids say it’s totally haunted.” I stumbled.

“Austin, I don’t want to ride bus three anymore, I told you we should’ve signed up for five with Jacob and Candance!” Brittany whined.

“I don’t believe that!” Austin interrupted. “I know it was bus two that broke down last year, my brother was on that bus.”

I had forgotten that Austin’s older brother graduated last year.

“You were trying to trick us?” Brittany asked. “Why?”

Austin answered her before I could, “I bet you they didn’t sign up in time and the only slots left are for bus two.”

They got us there, now what?

“Yeah, but who even believes in haunted buses anyway? You’re probably just chicken!” Sophia said.

“Well you believed it enough to try and trick us.” Austin said, annoyed.

“Well fuck you then! We’ll just see which bus is actually haunted!” I said.

Sophia and I turned around in our seats and finished the day’s work.

#

A few weeks went by and it was the day of the trip. Everyone was dressed in their best, some even wore a button-up, flower shirts, that made them look like a tourist, as a joke, including Justin.

I still had a bad feeling about bus two, it was making my stomach turn. There was no way I would be able to get on bus two.

I walked up to Sophia and confided in her. “I can’t go on bus two, I have a horrible feeling about it.”

“Not much we can do about that, now can we?” Sophia asked.

“Well what if we just... I don’t know... sneak on bus three?” I said not too sure if my plan would work.

Sophia stared at me for a few seconds, “Are you high?”

“Only naturally.” I quickly responded. “But seriously, what’s the worst they could do if they catch us?”

“Um... lets see, kick us off the trip?”

“Well if we’re caught, we can just say we got the wrong bus.”
I said. I can feel my plan coming together.

Sophia sighs. “You will be the death of me.”

Bus one was the first to board, we had missed it while I was pitching my plan to Sophia.

Bus two was next and we stayed here while the cursed bus took its next victims.

#

At the call for bus three Sophia and I ran to the front to be first on. We went straight to the back of the bus so no one would be able to guess it was us that did not belong. Austin and Brittany were last on, they are stuck in the aisle without a seat. Sophia and I ducked in our seats so they would not see us.

“Sorry kids, the bus is full, you’re going to have to go to bus 2.” I heard Mr. B say

“But we signed up for this bus!” Brittany cried.

“A lot of kids switched buses last minute, we don’t have time to check everyone. It’s no big deal.” Said Mr. B

“There’s a curse on bus two!” said Austin.

“That’s just a story, now come on.”

I hear more protest as Austin and Brittany left the bus. Sophia and I sat a little up our seats.

“Well... it worked.” Sophia said.

“Yeah.” I replied. I feel bad that they now must go on the cursed bus.

Like I said before, I’m not a superstitious person. I do not even want to believe a curse was real. Before we snuck on the bus my gut instinct was skyrocket...now its gone, and what’s left is this awful feeling of regret, and guiltiness.

“Do you even believe in ghosts?” Sophia asked me.

“Huh? No of course not.” I replied.

“Then why did we do this? What’s so special about bus three?” She asked.

I thought about that question for the rest of the trip.

#

Everything else went fine heading to the park. We made our way to dinner where the rest of our friends was waiting. There, we ran into Justin, his plate full of potato chips and hotdogs.

“Hey, I see you two made it unscathed!” Justin said.

“Yeah, we managed to change seats last minute.” Sophia said.

“Well good thing you did, bus two is late now.” Justin said.

“What happened?” I asked.

“Don’t know, but hey if you see anyone from bus two just ask. See ya later!” Justin said.

“Bye,” We both replied.

Through the rest of dinner, I could hear other students mentioning bus two. I knew I had a bad feeling about that bus, and I was right. I wish it weren’t true though. What happened to those kids? I can’t help but wonder, if I was on that bus, could I have prevented it?

Just then, I hear the buses loud engine coming up on the other side of the fence. Slowly, one by one, the students come off the bus. Each one of the students looking stone faced, void of emotion or reaction.

Something happened on bus two. It was my fault Austin and Brittany were on that bus. But if it were not them then it would have been Sophia and me.

I watch all the students come off the bus, there were no smiles on their faces, no laughter. I did not see Austin or Brittany exit the bus.

Unrequited Relief

By Tyler Adams

The pain of stress is easily forgotten.
with one vast thought, throws your mind off the scent.
That returning rush of fear is oh so rotten.

No matter the time the urge will blossom.
Sometimes you must run for it is hell-bent.
The pain of stress is easily forgotten.

Let it build and you will begin plotting.
Screams so loud in hopes to make a dent.
That returning rush of fear is oh so rotten.

Looking for any rope to pull you from the bottom.
This urge to climb free is very frequent.
The pain of stress is easily forgotten.

Hunting down the release of corticotropin.
But held back behind in shackles of cement.
That returning rush of fear is oh so rotten.

Bottled up rage seems just as common.
The fear to climb leads me back to the descent.
The pain of stress is easily forgotten.
That returning rush of fear is oh so rotten.

My Disguise

Samantha Asselin-Cazares.

TRIGGER WARNING: THIS POEM CONTAINS THEMES
OF SUICIDE AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE.

They say I look stunning.
That I'm doing amazing things.
Little do they know such lies exist.
On the outside I'm amazing,
Inside I'm struggling to stay alive.
Little do they know
I haven't showered in weeks,
I haven't brushed my teeth,
And I could not even get my hairbrush
to run smoothly through my hair.
The thought of disgust would
Take over their mind
However,
clueless
. .
That's
my disguise
. .
They say I have ambition,
That my passion is admirable.

However, hypocrisy shines
They say I'm unrealistic
My dreams are invalid.
As they laugh,
I work to keep my dream alive.
Little do they know
I raid the cabinet every morning.
The one when one needs first aid.
To gamble if I would wake up,
To see the light the next day.
While I take my place to eat dinner,
With every chair full.
The sound of chatter and laughter
A beautiful blurred sight,
As all the thoughts savagely
Ruin my mind.
Clueless
.
That is
my disguise..

They say it gets better with time.
My passion has faded
And that dream, that precious dream,
Had a funeral that no one attended.
The cracks showing the side
The side that no one knew.

As they ask
what happened to you?
Where is the old you?
To that I say it is me
The me you do not want to see
The part I keep tucked away for
The sake of your sanity.
It is now known,
So what now?
Now I can heal.
The ambition,
The passion,
And the dream,
I have buried 6 feet down
As my vision is clear
And the colors of life
Come back to my eyes.
Aware
.
As
my disguise is revealed.

Lost in My Dark

Lindsay Hunt

Submerged in the heat of the moment so rigid
The words splatter on the ceiling like a blood stain
Intense in the tone of the voice so vivid
The screams so loud they echo in the rain
Turn down the lights it's getting late it's getting dark
Lost so confused mind is in a whirl
Feels so cold ice straight to the heart
Spinning in circles thoughts turning in twirls
Powerful message of beauty and despair
Stronger than weakness that flows in the veins
This isn't for the faint hearted just for the ones nowhere
Must feel the hurt the amount of the pain
Frustration floored into the roots of the ground
Raining on the soiled emotions
Growing bigger and louder breaking though the sound
of the thunderstorm raging a destructive commotion
Lightning strikes of anger in the words spoken
Dark clouds form precipitating feelings mixed with a hail-
storm
Fog in the air to keep alert and awoken
So cold trying to stay warm
It is dark unable to see

Been here a few times before
Light is lost gone out of reach
Lost in the darkest storm this happens to often that I am
sure
Nowhere to go nowhere to hide
This is too much keep it dark
Trapped inside the madness that keeps me alive
Hopefully this storm will light up a spark.

So Far Away

By Lindsay Hunt

Oh, I remember your soft, with warmth, the touch
You must be near yet still seems so far away
I long for you, in the wind, racing heart the rush
I anxiously awaited you to hold me at the end of the day

You seem distant too much to bear
I don't understand where your mind has gone
Do you even care?
All the time searching for you, wondering what could have
 went wrong

My mind is submerged in ruins and ruts
The tears have dried up from my red swollen eyes
The words you say leaves millions of cuts
My mind tells me this isn't the way to live your life

It is the end of the day now on our pillows we lay
I rest on my side of the bed that you never see
With hurt in my heart I think of how we grew so far away
Whatever happened to what we used to be

One day, this too shall pass where you will see
I close my eyes to rest my soul
Time had gone for you and me
One day, I dream that life will be whole

Fading to sleep; I wake up to a decade gone
Start of a new day I look over to your side
You were not there, leaving did not seem wrong
This is the day sunshine so bright I may be able to start a
new life

Souls at Rest

By Serenaty Lumpkin

Light receding from darkness,

Their lives were wept.

Longing to be seen and feel a caress.

The Great Awakening of the World came, as the new dawn crept.

The tragedies of the past conspired, none peacefully slept.

Melancholic reveries sang and whispered, exposing the truth, unkept.

The wronged souls waited for the new dawn, the only one left.

Waiting for their burdened souls to be laid to rest.

Waiting for the strength to abandon betrayal and for justice to be kept...

In the skies away from the fabricated lies,

Free of darkness and full of light.

Ascending into the rising dawn,

Transcending into the stars shining spawn.

Free of all sin and tragedy.

Free of grief and melancholy.

Full of spirit and blessed divinity.

Full of forgiveness and pity.

Feeling no regret but the passing of life,

The unbroken chains of time...

Feeling drawn to the lightness of the light,

The sweetness of the hymn.

Weighing down the mortals and liberating the dead.
Passing time is what the living often dread.
Each day and passing hour,
Closer to the end of the life of a flower.
For all that life is, it travels fast.
For today's present becomes tomorrow's past.
Each involuntary breath becomes harder to grasp.
Like a lingering shadow straying to cast...
Hiding from solitude and fearing loneliness.
The lost souls miss their homeliness.
They wish to not be forgotten but remembered.
To be freed from the injustices of immoral creed.
Sins trembled...
The Sun rose...
The new dawn is here...
Now, they will go...
Beyond the clouds into the light...
Beyond the stars above the night.

~ Confidence/Doubt ~

By Zackery McMurray

You're perfect.
You're imperfect.

You're beautiful.
You're superficial.

You're centered.
You're narcissistic.

You're wise.
You're bossy.

You're smart.
You're cocky.

You're determined.
You're stubborn.

You're a stunning rose.
Roses have thorns.

You're a flamed candle.
Shadows surround you.

~ *Now read from bottom to top* ~

Your Story

By Lorianne Scandalito

Every Story will be heard
even if no one reads yours.

Every song will be sung
even if no one hears yours.

The words, the lyrics
have a meaning,
a meaning to you.
And who cares if no one sees it?

The one thing that matters,
the only thing that matters
to you,

Is every story will be heard,
even if the only reader, is you.

Ingenuity

By Tessa Bravata, Justin Wlazlo, and Anonymous

We create something bigger through continuity.
Cautiously at first, and then whizzing like electricity.
The sudden excitation of neurons births new universes.

This poem was created by submissions from participants during the SCF Venice Campus Arts and Letters Day.

The lines were written based on the day's theme: ingenuity. Participants did not see the other lines. They are pieced together in a style of poem called an *Exquisite Corpse*.

Any meaning is simultaneously miraculous and serendipitous.

Contributor Biographies

Tyler Adams

My name is Tyler Adams, I am a student at the State College of Florida Collegiate School - Venice (SCF-CS Venice). Currently, I am working to complete my associate's degree with the prerequisites to major in sustainability and the built environment. My main goals are to earn acceptance at the University of Florida to continue my education after this year, further hope to earn a second degree in construction management. With these degrees, I plan to help design and construct the infrastructure of tomorrow while saving the planet on the way. Within my submissions, I found interest and attributes of myself and attempted to recreate them in my work.

Samantha Asselin-Cazares

Hi My name is Samantha Asselin-Cazares and I am currently a dual enrolled student I enjoy writing, photography and drawing as a hobby. My real passion is hospitality in the restaurant industry and the entrepreneurial spirit. My goal is to own my own businesses and be financially stable.

Marissa Briggs

Marissa Briggs is a 17 year old senior at Lakewood Ranch High School, and she is taking Dual Enrollment classes with the State College of Florida. Marissa has written multiple works of fiction and poetry, and this is her first published piece. She plans on publishing her first novel by graduation,

and continuing to study Creative Writing in college while publishing her other works.

Serenaty Lumpkin

Serenaty Lumpkin is an aspiring poet and emerging author in the literary world. Inspired by Arabic poetry, Serenaty often reads the works of Rumi and Omar Khayyam. Serenaty also enjoys reading the styles of Classic Surrealism and Post-Modern Romanticism.

Davian McKinon

Davian McKinon is an honor student at State College of Florida pursuing his Associates in Arts degree and will be graduating in December of 2020.. Davian is planning on earning his Bachelors degree in Aeronautics to pursue his career in Commercial flying. In addition, Davian is also attending USF to earn a dual degree in Political Science in hopes to one day become an ambassador. Davian is actively earning his Private Pilot License and works at a retirement community as a server. When it comes to fun, Davian enjoys playing strategically war based video games, drawing , watching historical documentaries, anime, movies and news feeds.

Zackery McMurray

My name is Zackery. I am currently studying Biology for my undergrad. Am I looking to further my career in healthcare by going to graduate school for a healthcare-related degree. Currently, I am working

as a Multi-skilled Technician (Certified Nurse Assistant, with additional skills and training). I also run a Martial Art school which I love doing. Shall my work be selected to be published, I wish to receive credit for it.

Lorianne Scandalito

My name is Lorianne Scandalito, I am graduating SCF with my A.A. degree in the spring. I started writing when I was in the 7th grade through works of fanfiction. Someday I hope to become a teacher to inspire other students to write!

Maria Spelleri

Maria Spelleri enjoys many forms of art as hobbies and especially likes looking at the world from a more uncommon perspective. She believes the deeper you go into the reality of something, the more unreal it gets. Maria currently divides her time between trying to imagine the future and working as a professor at State College of Florida. She misses sharing the arts with her students face to face.

Joseph Truong

Joseph, currently studying Business at SCF, is an actor/singer/dancer hoping to make it in the entertainment industry. Until recently, he had only written music. Now, with the help of Dr. Ford, he has greatly expanded his world of writing into that of poetry and short stories. He hopes to use these new skills to further every aspect of his creative abilities, bringing something new to each.

Elektraphrog Staff



Brianna Barron Moreno is a first time staff member on the Elektraphog literary magazine located in Venice, Florida SCF Campus. They are the coordinator for foster animals and was a vet intern in Forest Lake Animal Clinic, best known for helping out when it came with nail trimmings. Brianna's favorite thing is listening to music and most recently made a new song for one of her music projects, a Halloween theme song!



Jerod Buchler is a second time staff member on the Elektraphog literary magazine located in Venice, Florida. They are also a full time grocery clerk for Publix super markets known for keeping one of the best organized freezers. Jerod's two favorite things are getting tattooed and cooking. His most recent addition to his tattoo collection is an almost complete spirited away sleeve.



Sherly Bonilla is a current student at the State College of Florida, born in Honduras she has been residing in Florida for seven years. After completing her Associates in Arts, she intends to major in Journalism with a minor in Photography. She has been doing photography for the past four years, winning awards in the Scholastics Art and Writing competition, including the Gold Key Overall County and the Silver Metal Overall Nationally. Though photography is her main art medium, most of her inspiration derives from Latin painters Frida Kahlo and Salvador Dalí.



Cheyenne Colt is a first-time staff member on the Elektraphrog literary magazine located at the Venice SCF location. Aside from taking classes working toward her communications major, she also works part-time at Home Goods. Cheyenne enjoys baking, painting, and going to the beach in her free time.



Devon Geary is a first-time member of the SCF magazine, *Elektraphog*, on the Venice, Florida campus. She is in management and marketing for a tiny house business in Sarasota, which has achieved and maintained a Super Host status. She is best known for her social media work, mainly promoting the business on Instagram. Devon's favorite things include rock music and playing acoustic and electric guitar.



Jonathan Lallement is a first time staff member on the *Elektraphog* literary magazine located in Venice, Florida SCF Campus. He is also a Valet at Zota Beach Resort, best known as one of the top vacation resorts in Sarasota-Manatee County. Jonathan's biggest hobby is watching sports such as basketball, football and, baseball.



Jordon Moran is an award-winning actor and an avid writer who has been writing and performing since 2004. Awarded *Best Supporting Actor* for his role as Selsdon in a 2006 production of "Noises Off," Jordon had since gone on to act and write for Chicago's premier improv company, *Second City*. His most recent performance was the role of Benjamin The Donkey in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with

the production company *Quasimondo* in their original rendition of George Orwell's, "Animal Farm." Since then Jordon has lived in Venice, Florida working as a bartender at Pelican Alley Restaurant and writing, disc golfing, gaming and fighting in Belegarth (a medieval combat society) in his spare time. He has recently returned to college to pursue a career as an author and currently has at least six projects in the works.



Edward Venetucci was born in Brooklyn New York into an Italian middle class family. He attended the New York City public school system where he did not do well. Edward spent most of his school hours playing hooky in Coney Island a famous seaside amusement park. However, when he did attend school he managed to do well. Edward went on to be a star high

school football player, playing both junior varsity and varsity at the same time. That would be the one and only year Edward would spend in high school. Edward kicked around odd jobs for a while but at the age of 17 he became a bartender in a Brooklyn after hours club, a profession he would continue at for over three decades. In and out of jail Edward was able to get a GED while being incarcerated. Edward feeling he needed a lifestyle change began driving an over the road semi-tractor trailer truck all over the country until being diagnosed with cancer. Due to health issues Edward was put on disability and began to go to college where he did well for a time. But again, health issues cropped up interrupting Edwards academic pursuit. Edward is now back in college and pursuing degrees in History, Journalism, and Political Science. Edwards goals are to teach and write books and creating a positive influence by bringing his education and life experience to bare on the issues facing society today.

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