

## **101 Fiction**

*Issue 15*

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Check your warding spells, refresh those summoning circles and be wary of the devil's forked tongue, for we have unleashed fourteen tales of devilry and demons upon the world.

And what a menagerie of darkness it is. Lucifer himself appears not once, but twice, in very different incarnations. We explore the territory between madness, possession and torment. We have old-fashioned deal brokers and one more modern-minded. There are the bound, and the binding. There's a little twisted myth, a reinvention of the horror movie psychopath. There are ravens and kings and things beneath the floorboards. And then... a tea party?

Remember, where devils and demons are involved, deception, domination and dirty deals are the games they play, where they make the rules and we mere mortals are but currency to be bet and traded.

Welcome to issue 15.

Read.

Absorb.

Enjoy.

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## **Faithful**

*by Danielle Bordelon*

His skin shone with the light of a star as he kneeled before his ruler.

“They will hate you,” the being said gently.

The starlit man nodded, his face impassive.

“You will hurt them.”

Another nod.

“You will offer them something vital, something that I cannot give: the chance, the choice to fight—or fall. Will you do this for me?”

“Yes, my Lord.”

The lord of all things stroked His servant’s face lovingly before plunging His hand into his chest. Twisting shadows snaked around the kneeling man, greedily devouring his sputtering starlight.

“Very well, Lucifer. It’s time to fall.”

*Author bio: Danielle Bordelon is a fiction writer currently focusing on flash fiction and short stories. Danielle shares a Dallas apartment with three friends, hundreds of abused books, and an overactive imagination. She has always loved to travel, volunteer, and, of course, write. Her published short stories, flash fiction, and poetry are available on [daniellebordelon.com](http://daniellebordelon.com).*

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## **Serving**

*by Voima Oy*

You missed a spot, he says. I say nothing, keep wiping the counter. He's the worst boss ever, a demon, a low-ranking demon fallen from demonic grace. Once, I surprised him in his office; I heard voices, I thought he said come in. There was something on his back, something black with claws, a long red tongue winding around his throat. It's our secret. I won't tell a soul, and he lets me take a day off now and then. Sure, he's jealous of my freedom, but what can he do? He's stuck here, like me, serving time in hell.

*Author bio: Voima Oy lives on the western rim of Chicago, near the expressway and the Blue Line trains. Her writing can be found online at Paragraph Planet, Visual Verse, 101 Fiction, Sick Lit and Unbroken Journal. Follow her on Twitter, too— @voimaoy*

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## **Feast**

*by John Xero*

You hear that scrabbling scuttling clatter of claws below the floorboards? That scritch and scratching in the walls.

You hear that tip-tapping at night... a branch on a window pane... or a sharp finger on the inside, signalling to fiendish friends?

You have an infestation.

Dinky devils in your in-betweens.

Oh, they aren't going to trick you, or taunt you, or tempt you.

They're going to listen. To your secrets, your fears, your schemes and your shames. Anything to give them purchase, a lever to crack a sliver of your soul away. A tiny morsel of you, a feast for them.

*Author bio: John Xero hungers... he needs a constant buffet of story, characters and imagery to fuel the imagination engine in his skull... and sometimes he wonders if it will ever be sated.  
[twitter.com/xeroverse](https://twitter.com/xeroverse)*

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## Tea

by R.S. Bohn

Crabapple soup: what demons are served when they slither through the Dream House portal. Dipping a splintered claw, Fifomene checks for poison. Two grams hemlock. Grinning, he tilts the plastic bowl, pouring hot liquor down his throat.

"My mother's milk was more toxic," he gloats.

She adjusts a slumping Elmo in his chair. "Check the bottom."

A fanged K scrawled in red.

She lifts a finger, where yesterday a doctor had poked her. Smoke billows up.

"Rune-brat! Pint-sized wh—" With a poof, he's gone.

Outside the door, her granny smiles. Demons always were suckers for a witch's tea party.

*Author bio: R.S. Bohn lives on one side of a moat and talks to crocodiles. Carries a trident everywhere. Drinks navy-strength rum. Has failed 'Talk Like a Pirate Day' six years running.*

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## **Perception**

*by Madeline Mora-Summonte*

Helen peers through yellowed curtains as Emma, clutching flowers, skips up the sagging porch. Helen grips her knife.

Everyone says Helen's crazy because she tries to expose the true evil among them.

Emma's smiling face appears at the window. Helen shakes her head.

Emma's blue eyes fill with tears, but they bleed red. She holds up the flowers, now a bouquet of spitting snakes.

Helen trembles, but she won't invite the monster inside.

Emma speaks but her black, forked tongue flicks against the glass, drowns out her words. She sighs, walks away.

Helen watches the snakes slither after their mistress.

*Author bio: Madeline Mora-Summonte (<http://madelinemora-summonte.blogspot.com/>) is a reader, a writer, a beach-comber and a tortoise-owner. She is the author of the flash fiction collections *The People We Used To Be* (<https://www.amazon.com/People-We-Used-Collection-ebook/dp/B00G7QXOKO/>) and *Garden of Lost Souls* (<https://www.amazon.com/Garden-Lost-Souls-Collection-Fiction-ebook/dp/B014AMJYM8/>).*

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## **Pretty**

*by Alison McBain*

The woman's vivid eyes caught his attention. Unafraid, unlike Akhito's last girlfriend.

Akihito smiled. He could change that.

The woman approached and asked, "Am I pretty?"

Weird, but okay. "Very."

She pulled down the scarf covering her mouth. A jagged scar split her face. "Am I pretty?" she repeated.

His smile froze. He'd been warned about Kuchisake-onna in this neighbourhood. If he said no, she'd cut him to pieces. "Yes?"

Sharp steel flashed and he screamed as her scissors ripped into his face. His cheeks dripped blood.

"Now you're pretty, too," the demon taunted. "And women will know to beware."

*Author bio: Alison McBain is an award-winning author with more than fifty short stories and poems published/forthcoming, including work in Litro, Flash Fiction Online, and FLAPPERHOUSE. When not writing fiction, she is the Book Reviews Editor for the magazine Bewildering Stories.*

*Twitter: @AlisonMcBain*

*Website: <http://www.alisonmcbain.com/>*

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## **Masks**

*by Allen Demir*

The masked figure stood before Michael. It had killed the others, but now showed no malice. Dropping the blood-drenched hook, it grasped at the steel mask, pulling it off. Before Michael was the rotting visage of that which had pursued him for several horrifying hours. Presented with the mask, Michael hesitantly took it. The figure immediately collapsed to the floor, appearing as though it had been dead for several weeks, at least. A strange compulsion gripped Michael and he slowly put the mask on. He felt... euphoric. He bent down and lifted the hook from the ground, clutching it tightly.

*Author bio: Allen Demir graduated from Iowa State University, and currently lives in Denver. His work has appeared in Morpheus Tales and Perihelion Online Science Fiction Magazine.*

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## **Infernal**

*by Shannon Bell*

"You will join me."

His graveyard breath washed over me.

"No, I won't."

He grinned. I watched, terrified, as unspeakable things crawled between his teeth.

"I can smell your fear. That's a perfect way to start."

He touched my feet. They thickened into cloven hooves. Then he touched my forehead, and horns pushed through the skin.

"Please, stop." Tears ran down my cheeks.

Lucifer bent down, his forked tongue lapping greedily at them. "Your pain tastes magnificent."

"Oh my god."

A thunderous laugh rumbled through my blood.

"God won't help you. Rise demon, and take your place at my side."

*Author bio: Shannon Bell is addicted to words. You will find him madly writing away in the spare time he has available between holding down a full-time job, being part of a dysfunctional family and looking after his attention seeking dog.*

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## **Puppet**

by Line Henriksen

She inhales, and the red knit sock on her left hand exhales a writhing chain of smoke.

“That’s a Big Favour,” she says.

“Medium, surely?” he tries.

She and the sock-puppet shake their heads in unison.

“I can do – you know...” He glances quickly at the sock. It looks amused.

“An exorcism? Thanks, we’re good.” She hands the cigarette to the puppet. “What else?”

“Think about it!” He leans across the table. “Your immortal soul!”

“Think about your own.”

He does.

The red knit sock on her left hand inhales, and she exhales a writhing chain of smoke.

“Favour granted.”

*Author bio: Line Henriksen lives in the cold, dark depths of Denmark where it rains a lot, except when it drizzles. Her work has appeared in, among others, The Unlikely Coulrophobia Remix, Jersey Devil Press and freeze frame fiction. Visit her at <https://henriksenline.wordpress.com/> or on Twitter: @\_linehenriksen\_*

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## **Ravens**

*by Dustin Blottenberger*

Young Ivyr welcomed the ravens, Huginn and Muninn, fed them, talked with them. As he grew, they grew. When Ivyr crested the hill of his life, he learned to fear the birds. They dove at him with fiery eyes and needling beaks, gave him no rest with their screaming. Once old, Ivyr could no longer hear or see them, swung his ax at men and birds like a madman.

Before Ivyr was hanged, Huginn came, hungry for his soul. Once Ivyr swayed beneath the branch, Muninn came, and asked the world that Ivyr not be forgotten, yet none remember him.

*Author bio: Dustin Blottenberger is a writer, painter, and printmaker living in the jungles outside of Baltimore, MD. To reach him, please contact your local animal control agency or follow him on Twitter/Tumblr at NeverSayDustin.*

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## **Assassin**

*by John Xero*

“They say he is a demon, sire, and his mark means death. They say no door can stay him, nor weapon harm him.”

Eon considered the red snake coiled beneath the skin of his left palm, like a tattoo, where yesterday there was nothing. “Who say?”

Rutledge blinked. “Sire?”

“Who say this? A simple question.”

“Well. People. Rumours. Gossip.”

“Ah. Those most reliable sources.” Black fire flickered gently in Eon’s palm, burning the snake away. “Leave the castle gates open, the windows unshuttered. Let this *trickster* come. Let him meet a true demon, before I make him eat his own heart.”

*Author bio: John Xero enjoys a challenge but firmly believes fighting demons and assassins should be kept to the page and not indulged in for reals. He writes a little, edits a little, and has recently started making a little music too.*

*twitter.com/xeroverse*

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## **Mirror**

*by Alex Salinas*

I woke up and went to the bathroom. I'd been dreading it.

"You look like hell," my mirror-self said. He looked exactly like me except for his eyes: two jet-black marbles.

"Likewise," I replied.

We both smiled.

I turned on the faucet and splashed water on my face. Familiar pressure still behind my eyes.

"It's a tragedy that my only role is to reflect what's here," mirror-self said.

"It's your job. Now shut up," I commanded.

"Remember, I choose to be here," he said, smiling.

I wasn't smiling.

I shut off the lights and left.

"Be seeing you," he whispered.

*Author bio: Alex Z. Salinas lives in San Antonio, Texas. His flash fiction has appeared in Every Day Fiction, escarp, 101 Words, Nanoism, and ZeroFlash.*

<https://alexzsalinas.wordpress.com/about/>

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## **Conditional**

*by Margaret McGoverne*

RUNTIME ERROR

She back arrowed, cursing. This programme was too complex for spreadsheets but her stiff-necked boss insisted. She scrolled through coding.

It was nearly five. If she was late, her childminder charged extra.

It was his fault! Mahindra, the smug IT Manager, flirting with the temps. Since she rebuffed his advances, her job had been hellish.

She wished him dead.

EXPUNGE. PACT. BOON.

Were these new functions?

And what was this cruel voice in her head, hissing "DO IT!"

She typed EXPUNGE.

Mahindra unbecame. Nobody noticed; he never was.

Clicking save, the macro she had recorded reran: EXPUNGE. LOOP.

*Author bio: Margaret McGoverne has recently issued her first novella, *The Battle of Watling Street* (<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Battle-Watling-Street-Margaret-McGoverne-ebook/dp/B06WWJS6MN/>), and is currently working on the sequel, while being distracted by short stories, flash fiction and her blog about all things writing: <http://margaretmcgoverne.com/>*

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## **Veiled**

*by R.S. Bohn*

Pink eyed, the pigeon stares at me, head cocked. On the fountain edge, gray and black birds coo nervously, but this one is silent.

Next to me, a young woman in mourning dress says, "That one's the Devil. I saw it on the window ledge the day Stephen died."

Before I can tell her that albino pigeons aren't a rarity, that there are bound to be a hundred of them in the city, she darts forward, tossing her black veil over it. It flaps in a panic, as she pummels it with her bare hands.

She leaves, triumphant and bloody-handed.

*Author bio: R.S. Bohn lives on one side of a moat and talks to crocodiles. Carries a trident everywhere. Drinks navy-strength rum. Has failed 'Talk Like a Pirate Day' six years running.*

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Thanks for reading.

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