

WRITING

The Spooky Story of All Ages

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TYPE

FANTASY/SCIFI
NARRATIVE

GENRE

GRADE 6

“Everything on this side of town is so boring,” Jack said to Celina on yet another ‘perfect’ day.

“Well, at least you can do things here. Why don’t we play soccer or go to the mall?” Celina suggested.

“Those things aren’t fun without them,” he said and looked in the direction of a group of kids playing soccer in a field.

“Who?” Celina asked.

“Never mind. It’s just that nothing ever happens here!”

“Well, we could—”

“Wait!” he interrupted. “The storyteller!”

In some cases, Celina hesitated to do risky things.

This was not one of those times. She had a mischievous streak, so as soon as she heard the words, she was sprinting towards the wall. The wall was the

only thing ugly on this whole side of town. The wall was falling apart with graffiti covering the whole face. Most people avoided it, but not them. They climbed over the wall and stopped short. On all sides, there were buildings, crumbling houses, broken-down factories, and buildings looming over them. They were suddenly aware that the sun was almost completely gone.

They ran down the streets that were rumored to be where the storyteller lived. One of the houses caught their eye. In perfect sync, they stopped and turned.

On the door, in peeling red paint, were the words: The Storyteller. Before then, they hadn't said a word, but they broke the silence spell.

“On three?” Celina asked.

“Okay,” Jack squeaked.

They counted to three, then walked up the path. As soon as they knocked, the door swung open to reveal The Storyteller. She was dressed startlingly, in ripped jeans and a black T-shirt with a shawl draped over her shoulders. No one dressed like that on their side. Her dark hair was twisted like a rope and piled on top of her head in a messy bun.

“Come in, dear, brave children,” she said and gestured for them to follow her.

They followed her hesitantly and sat down on the couch. “Would you like to hear the tale?” she asked them. They nodded and she gave them each a cookie. “It all started in a place called the Shady Street.”

The Shady Street was a place that was generally avoided. The Shady Street was more like an alley, with trash cans knocked down and trash littered across the ground. There were worse things there. Creepers and thieves lurked in the dark streets. Even the council had advised them to steer clear. Because of this, very few braved this street. Except for three triplets who happened to live there. Three pairs of eyes peered out of the shadows. Three sleek, dark bodies crept toward a lopsided tower of boxes. Three tails disappeared into the tower. Three cats dropped their new meal in the middle and began to eat.

“The food is almost all gone here,” said one cat.

“We need a new feeding ground,” said the second cat.

“The school has loads of food. We could go there,” suggested the last cat.

“Okay,” the other two agreed. They left the shady street and walked up to the huge school. The trio leaped onto the window and crawled in.

The church used to be an ordinary church. But then the virus struck. Virus X claimed the scientists who were trying to stop it. They were zombified. A group of skilled people stopped it the first time. But Virus X came back. It was stronger and smarter, like it had a mind of its own. This time, they couldn't stop it. Thus, zombies reigned, prowling the streets. The rest of the humans built a wall, protecting themselves and cutting them off from half the town.

RRRRRRRRRIIIIIIIIIINNNNNNNGGGGGGGG!!!

“Okay, class,” said the teacher, “remember that we will continue this topic tomorrow.” Half of the class groaned.

“At least half of you know that knowing our history and background is important.”

“I’m not one of those people,” whispered Brennet to his friends Zelestia and Jake.

“I think it’s fascinating,” Jake said. “I never knew anything about this.”

“It’s cool. Kinda creepy. Virus X is a creepy name. I approve. I hope we get to go there,” Zelestia said.

They heard a crash from inside. Brennet was torn between investigating and lunch.

Without hesitation, Zelestia crept stealthily into the classroom. Jake followed her. Lunch would have to wait. They hid behind a coat stand and looked at the desk. On the desk, there were three cats. A small, potted bush was on the ground.

“So that was the noise,” whispered Zelestia.

“That was Ms. O’Conner’s favorite plant,” said Jake.

All of a sudden, the cats began speaking.

“Sorry!” said one cat sheepishly. “I thought it was broccoli, so I pounced.”

“It’s a shame it wasn’t,” said the second cat, “I’m starving!”

“I know. That’s why we’re here,” said the last cat. “The hunger weakened our senses. That’s why you couldn’t tell it wasn’t broccoli. Wait. Do you hear that?”

He was staring at them. Zelestia had immediately hidden herself, quickly and silently. Jake and Brennet both fumbled. They practically tripped over each other, scrambling to get behind the coat stand.

“We aren’t stupid! I can see you both,” said the cat who broke the plant.

“Come out!” hissed the second female cat. They all came out and stood in front of the desk. The third cat looked surprised at Zelestia’s sudden appearance. She had hidden successfully, unlike the boys. “You guys like broccoli?” asked Zelestia. “We could give you some. I know you’re hungry. Dang it. I don’t have any. Do you guys?”

“Nope. I only have broccoli on Friday. I have a cauliflower casserole. You guys can have some if you want,” said Jake.

“I have some,” said Brennet. He broke them each a piece. The girl cat devoured it immediately, then thanked them. The cat who knocked over the plant hesitated, then seeing his sister, he ate the broccoli. The final cat eyed the broccoli suspiciously.

“Just eat it. It’s not like it’s poisoned. We’re fine,” said the girl cat. “Even if it was, I’d rather die trusting and full of broccoli than cold, suspicious, and hungry.”

“It can’t have been poisoned, because he didn’t know we were coming,” added the other boy.

The cat rolled his eyes at his siblings. Or that’s what was implied. Cat eyes are different, so it looked like he was just looking up to the left. They got the message though. The girl looked at him with a head tilt that seemed to say: Well? Get on with it

Looking very annoyed, he took a bite of the broccoli, doing his best to look dignified. He dropped that act after the first bite. He shoved the broccoli into his mouth, sending tiny green bits flying through the air. The girl snickered. The second cat opened his mouth to talk, but his brother shoved him, broccoli still clinging to his face.

“We still haven’t introduced ourselves,” said Zelestia, “My name is Zelestia. This is Brennet and Jake.”

Jake waved. “What are your names?” he asked.

“We don’t have names. We’ve never been given them,” said the cat, who had finally brushed the broccoli off his face.

“Can we give you names?” Zelestia asked the cats.

“Sure,” the triplets agreed.

“Ok. Can I name you Cisca? It’s cool and a little creepy,” she asked the girl cat.

“Yes! I love it! Cisca. It’s like a hiss and a whisper. It’s perfect!” Cisca responded enthusiastically.

“And for you,” Jake gestured at the cat who broke the plant, “it might be weird, but what about Shadow? People could call you Shade if you want, and when you walk into a

room, people could say: “It’s The Shadow!” “I think it’s funny and cool! I’m going to make my siblings say that when I enter a room,” said Shadow, or The Shadow. Zelestia and Jake looked at Brennet, then to the last unnamed cat.

“Oh, um...” Brennet thought for a minute, “Tiger? It’s kinda fierce.” Tiger accepted this with a nod. The triplets tested the names on each other.

After a lengthy conversation, Zelestia said, “You guys live on Shady Street, right? Could we come over tomorrow? It’s near the church. I could interview you guys on the impacts of living so close for my history assignment.”

“Sure. Tomorrow after school?” asked Shadow. They all agreed and went home.

The humans, although scared, became violent towards zombies. They developed weapons to use on the zombies to keep them inside the walls. Even family members of zombies acted like this, shunning zombies from their homes. They removed everything involving zombies from their culture. To this day, zombies and humans remain separate.

“We will do a deeper dive into the human persecution of zombies over this week,” Ms. O’Conner said, “but that is it for today.”

The class started packing their stuff and waiting until the bell rang. Ms. O’Conner suddenly looked up, worried. “Class, you are staying in here,” she said. The class looked around, confused.

“What’s going on?” asked Jake.

“Well, you guys know about the unfair treatment humans have given zombies,” Ms. O’Conner started to explain.

“Um, it was a bit more than unfair,” a student cut in. “That’s what a group of protesters thought. They were usually peaceful, but some people got riled up. They brought a crane and a wrecking ball. They are going to try to knock down the wall.” The class gasped, and panicked whispers filled the room.

“As you know, our school is right next to the wall. It’s a safety hazard for some classes that are right next to the wall, so they will be coming into classes like ours,” Ms. O’Conner explained. Another class knocked on the door and Ms. O’Conner let them in. Students had hushed conversations about what would happen. They started to hear the noises of thudding, and the beeping of machines.

“Parents will be picking kids up early,” Ms. O’Conner told them. “We are going to go to the side entrance.” The class walked to the entrance, where the school was gathering for parents to take their kids home.

“Zelestia, Brennet, and Jake, you are being picked up!” called a woman helping get the kids out. “Nona!” the three of them cried in unison. They ran to embrace an old woman who smiled joyfully at them. She was Brennet’s grandmother, but Jake and Zelestia were practically family to her.

“I’m picking up you two because your parents are at work across town, and we live close to the school,” Nona told them. She brought them to the house, which was only a block away from the school. They heard a huge BOOM!, then a crash and lots of screaming. “Ay, Jesus Cristo!” Nona exclaimed. “You kids stay here. I’m going to stop those people.”

“Nona! We’re staying with you!” Zelestia told her. Nona had to be in full problem-solving mode, because she didn’t argue. She just said, “I trust you guys. Stay safe.” They ran toward the wall just as another part came crashing down. They saw the cat triplets running near them.

“Hurry!” Tiger shouted. “We have to get there before something worse happens.”

They ran through the broken wall. There was screaming everywhere. Humans and zombies were both running frantically. Some humans had weapons aimed at the zombies. “Look, there are speakers everywhere! That building is hooked up to all of them,” Shadow said. “If we can get inside, then we can make an announcement.”

“It’s locked!” Jake shouted, rattling the doorknob.

“I got it!” Cisca cried and leaped into an open window. She unlocked the door to let them in. The humans were screaming, “The zombies got in!”

Nona shoved people out of the way and reached the microphone. “Stop, before anyone gets hurt!” she hollered into it. “Everyone please go home! To discuss the breaking of the wall, go to the town hall. I’ve just made a huge batch of broccoli casserole. No one should ever have important legal conversations over an empty stomach.”

Humans and zombies sat together, closer than they had been for years. There was tension in the air. They were all looking sternly at each other. Finally, a human spoke.

“Knocking down that wall was very dangerous.”

Suddenly, Nona burst in with a plate of broccoli casserole for each of them. Zelestia, Jake, and Brennet came in behind her and began to pass the dishes out. There were satisfied sighs from the zombies and surprised noises of pleasure from the humans. They all began to chat over the food. After a long, happy meal, they remembered that they were here for legal matters.

“Well, I think we can let this particular thing slide. We still need to discuss the future, but, for now, we can celebrate.”

Nona gave everyone a glass of sparkling apple cider. “A toast to peace, justice, and especially Nona!” said a zombie.

“CHEERS!!!” everyone shouted.

“Thank you for the story, Ms. Storyteller,” said Celina.

“You can call me Celestia,” she told them.

“You’re Zelestia?!” asked Jack.

“No. That was my mother. Most people call me Celeste. You see, Zelestia married Bennet’s uncle, who was 16 years younger than Bennet’s dad. Nona had two sons, and one of them became a zombie with her, and the other stayed with the humans.”

“But what happened to the zombies?” Celina asked.

“The zombies would stay on their side until humans were ready in a few years. The day all of the walls would come down is today.”

Jack and Celina walked home on yet another ‘perfect’ day, with walls falling on all sides. Maybe this town wasn’t so boring after all.

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