

# N I N E

a collection of horrific fiction  
Capilano University Serious Fun Camp 2018

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# Table of Contents

3

The Portal Guardian (Part 1) by Aleks Zamarashkin

7

Stage Fright by Emma Bigland

14

Coma by Devin Hawman

20

I Love Disney by Jazzy Gillard

25

Lost Control by Gianluca D'Alfonso

29

James the Great and Powerful by David Collings

35

That Weird Kid by Logan Seper

38

Aliens by Lael Lassmann

42

No Such Thing by Leona Sylvester

49

An Introvert's Day Off by Grace Ezzati

54

The Portal Guardian (Part 2) by Aleks Zamarashkin

56

Student Bios

# **The Portal Guardian (Part One)**

by Aleks Zamarashkin

The rocks crunched under my feet as I walked home from work. It was another horrible day, and I was really tired. I never did like kids, and becoming a student teacher was a bad idea in the first place. But here I was. The job paid well and provided full medical coverage, but I hated it nonetheless. The screaming kids and the pointless homework assignments that I had to hand out have been driving me insane, and I knew that if it kept on going, I would lose it at some point.

Being single also didn't help. For me, a 5'12 guy with brown eyes and dirty blond hair, getting a woman wasn't an issue. However, I'd gotten used to living alone, and getting a girlfriend would change my life drastically. Too drastically. My parents both died when I was young, and I had to live in an orphanage for the rest of my childhood. The forest was my only way to forget about everything, and when I would have a bad day at the orphanage, I would run off and explore the marvels of the trees and the grass.

Spending so much time in the forest made me quite adventurous and brave, and maybe even persistent. I didn't want to admit to myself that it had also made me very careless and outright negligent. Deep in my thoughts, I didn't even notice at first that the man who stood by the abandoned house every day was gone. Only after walking another block, I realized what I had just witnessed and turned back. The house was always empty, but an old man always stood right by the house whenever I walked by, and every time that I walked by, he would give me a cold stare, and I would always get the chills.

Today, however, the man wasn't there. That was new. I stood for a minute, inspecting the house. It looked extremely worn from years of rain, snow, and wind. The colouring of the house was crumbling away, revealing the rotten wood. Half of the roof was gone, and pieces of it were laying on the tall grass that surrounded the house. Even the air around the house felt very stale and stagnant, and the feeling of threat and dread was in the air. There was also a

smell, a smell so nasty that I scrunched up my nose in disgust. The smell was a mix of body odor and rotten fish.

As I looked around, I heard the sound of glass breaking. I shuddered, and frantically looked around for the source of the sound. The sound came from the window by the front door. The glass shards were laying on the ground. The window was broken with a blunt strike, and I couldn't understand what happened. I then looked through the broken window and gasped.

Inside, stood the old man. His forehead was covered in blood and small glass shards. It was obvious that he had hit the window with his head. Our eyes met. His eyes were usually dark and very cold, but today, they were filled with joy. He looked like a child who had just received a toy for Christmas. His hands were shaking, and he was holding something. It was impossible to tell from the distance what it was. But then, the man lifted the object to his head. That is when I realized what he was holding.

A pistol.

Before I could say or do anything, he pulled the trigger. I heard a loud bang, and was frozen with shock. The man toppled over to the floor and disappeared from my view.

"Holy shit..."

I could then control my body again. I took a few shaky steps, and then I dashed towards the front door. I had to help! I rammed into the door with my shoulder, and the rotten wood broke. I got up from the ground and almost tripped over again as I rushed into the room where the man was.

He was lying on the ground, the blood from the wound in his head pooling underneath him. The gun lay on the ground, covered with the insides of his brain. I almost barfed at the sight. The man was moving. It was very faint, yet I could see his arm twitching. I gathered my thoughts quickly and slowly approached the man. I sat on my knees and looked at his face. He looked happy and peaceful. I couldn't understand. He then started to whisper something. It was very quiet, and I couldn't hear a single word. I leaned my head closer to his and heard his final words,

"So... nearly... free..."



He then let out a raspy breath and closed his eyes. His chest stopped rising and falling, and he was dead. I couldn't believe it. I just saw a man commit suicide and I didn't do anything to help him. I fell back, contemplating. I had to tell someone. A man had just shot himself and no one knew about it except me. I had to call the cops. I pulled out my smartphone and turned it on. No service.

Great!

I slowly stood up, trying to not look at the man. There were now flies flying around, eager to feast on fresh meat. Ugh. I slowly backed out of the room, anxious to get out of the house.

I stepped through the doorway and suddenly heard a humming sound. It was very faint, however still persistent. I rotated my head, trying to figure out the source of the sound. It was coming from one of the rooms deeper into the house. Being the stupid, adventurous person I was, I convinced myself to go check it out. I completely forgot about the man, and was yearning to find out what was making the humming sound.

I approached the door where the noise was coming from. It was very loud now. I tried the door, but it was locked. I looked around, but couldn't find a keyhole. I took a few steps back, and rammed into the door. It fell over, and I toppled over with it. I hit my head on the floor, and felt immediate dizziness. After laying on the ground for a minute, I got up on my knees and lifted my head. There was a searing pain in my brain, but it didn't stop me from gasping.

The room was brightly lit, and in the middle of it, there was a hole in the floor, which radiated heat, light and the intense humming sound. I got up, and almost fell back over. Grabbing the door frame, I steadied myself and looked back towards the hole. It was almost the size of the whole room, and when I decided to look into it, I saw pure darkness. I looked around for a rock or something to throw into the hole, but as I examined the room, I couldn't find anything.

I heard a faint rumbling noise coming from the hole. Every second, it grew louder and louder until becoming ear-splitting. I grabbed my head and closed my ears. The sound was now

so loud that the house shook, and pieces of the ceiling were falling off. I couldn't bear it anymore.

Then the room filled with dark smoke, and it was coming from the whole. It kept on coming, and before I could react, I was thrown back, out of the room into the hallway. The smoke rushed by, and the last thing that I saw before blacking out was the smoke disappearing through the front door.

# **The Portal Guardian (Part Two)**

by Aleks Zamarashkin

"...and then that smoke just flew out the door." I finished telling my story to the bartender, who was cleaning one of the beer mugs.

He looked at me sympathetically.

"No one believes me. Everyone considers me insane..." In my drunken state, I felt even more horrible than I had before I came into this bar. "B — but, you believe me, don't you?"

"Of course I do, Buddy. Of course I do." The bartender kept cleaning the mugs, and it was obvious he didn't want to argue with me while I was drunk.

"W — what if those things, the ones from the portal, were actually demons and are now causing all this chaos in the city?"

The bartender looked at me with a mix of surprise and pity. "I think that is enough drinking for tonight, bud."

He then proceeded to take the half-emptied bottle of vodka from my hand. I started to argue, but he gave me a stern look and walked off to assist another customer. I sighed.

It had been two weeks since the *incident* at the house, and those were the worst two weeks of my entire life. No one believed me. I talked to everyone. The police, the local newspaper, hell, I even called a psychic. All of them laughed at me.

My head was blurred and my thoughts scattered. As I looked around the bar, I saw a newspaper laying on the bar stool next to mine. I picked it up. On the front page there was a big heading:

**"Boy Murdered in His Own House!"**

I scanned the text quickly and turned to the next page.

**"Are Zombies Real? A Grave Found Empty Last Night!"**

Hmm. Interesting. Underneath, I saw a smaller heading,

**"Girl Wakes Up After 3 Years in a Coma!"**

As I stared at the picture of a young, pale girl and a group of doctors surrounding her, I could clearly see a dark cloud of smoke right above the girl's head. All of the medical personnel didn't seem to be aware of it, but I was stunned. The smoke looked exactly like the smoke that had come out of the portal. I stared at the picture for a while longer, and then put the newspaper down. Even in my drunk state, my head was filled with questions.

What if all of that was happening because of the smoke?

What if that old man was actually some sort of guardian, who was guarding the portal so the demons wouldn't get out and do things like this?

And now, with him gone, who will be the new guardian?

No one believed my story of what really happened at the house. That meant that no one, except me, knew the truth. There was no one else who knew what the consequence might be.

But I would be giving up everything. My job, my routine, my life!

But if I don't do this, I will be giving up much more.

My head was swimming. I couldn't believe that I was about to take this step. I would lose everything. But I wouldn't be doing this for myself... I'd be doing it for the world...

I took out a twenty dollar bill from my wallet and placed it on the counter. I then put on my jacket and stepped out into the cold street.

As I walked home, I kept on thinking.

No one knew about the portal, and no one was guarding it. The demons might escape and cause even more chaos. I have to do this, I thought, I must guard the portal. Even if it means losing absolutely everything.