

FINAL PORTFOLIO
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Intro to Creative Writing
Prof. vanMeenen
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This semester was much more enjoyable than I thought it would be. Being that I only recently switched my major to something more writing oriented and have really come to enjoy being able to write stories and exercise my creativity more fluidly. I hadn't done poetry in a long time, and was nervous about the prospect. Though, I became much more confident and excited when we learned how open poetry can be. I became even more driven when we branched outside of that form of media and did a lot of other things too. It really opened my eyes to the potential poetry has to offer, as well as the tools that it provides that can be used in other forms of writing.

Poetry was the part of the semester that I was unsure about as I wasn't sure the extent of what I was able to write at the time. However, when we learned just how open ended the idea of poetry could be, I became more enamored with the process. Rhyming was one of the bigger issues that I ran into when it came to poetry, so throwing that out most of the time in favor of telling the story or message I actually wanted was definitely a breath of fresh air.

Short stories were much more my speed when it came to writing. I regularly try to shove smaller stories into my dungeons and dragons campaigns as a means to make the world more lively, so putting my all into short and sweet stories was fun. I also found the 100 word story fun as it made my word choices deliberate and specific, without the overbearing restrictions that rhyming gave me as previously stated. This was definitely my favorite genre of writing.

On the other hand, Creative Nonfiction was by far my least favorite. I personally just dislike talking about myself in a formal setting and find it much more fun and easy to create these fantasy worlds to explore. I also feel like my past is something I should try to keep in my past and returning to it is something that I have yet to get to in terms of my mental health. One day I'm sure I'll be able to do so, but now is not that time. Fiction is much more my speed.

Lastly, when we got to our play writings, I definitely had a lot of fun in terms of writing a lot of the scene and background stuff. One of my flaws in writing is writing dialog so I struggled the most with that. But creating and writing the on stage movements and moments I think I had the most fun with that beyond anything else.

I wasn't able to enjoy all the pieces I made, mainly due to issues ongoing during this semester outside of academics, but I do think I did my best job when it

comes to it. I got to experiment with new forms of writing that were extremely fun and will probably continue to be used in the future as I move forward with my career.

The Jeklhive & The Little Hare - New

There once was a girl called Tabby
Who lived in a forest so drabby
But the winds all blown
And she sat alone
In a hut that was, oh, so shabby

She waited for a minute, an hour, or two
And wondered if she would be found
But as she did
The winds all stopped
Ceasing to make a sound

Tabby was worried
Her mind arace
and so she buried her hands in face

A moment passed, a minute, or four
As she prayed upon the rotting floor.
But no one listened
The sky only glistened
The night persisted evermore.

Her eyes with tears
and heart with fears
She wondered if it was nothing
But then there came a silent voice
Which threatened to tickle her ears

The man said calmly, and in a simple tone
"If you weep anymore you'll turn to stone."

Tabby called back, her voice in quakes,
"I miss my mother, my sister, her cakes,
I miss my father, my brother, his steaks"

The man then returned, with a voice of care,
"I'm sorry for what you have lost, my dear, little hare.
You do not deserve all that is gone,

But if you stay any longer, you'll be as helpless as a fawn"

The girl looked up, with wonder and with pause
For all she saw were his sharpened jaws
The man stood up, as tall as a tree
his fingers on his hand counted one, two, three

Tabby was scared, and taken by his unusual sight
But he held out his hand and promised he didn't bite
She waited for an instant, a second, or five
Until she agreed to go with the Jeklhive

**Ray simply noticed an issue with language that I fixed in line "as she did" I had accidentally repeated "as she did she did."*

I See - New

I see the world in her eyes

I see dirt at its center
Its rock holding strong

I see the verdant ivy growing on its sides
Growing brilliantly across its surface

I see the skies and silver clouds
Hanging above gently above our heads

I see the world in her eyes

**No one made a revision note for this one so I had to edit and revise it myself. One of the issues was that in describing the different aspects of her eyes, I used colors and it didn't come across well enough. I also edited the line "I see the life on its surface; Growing brilliantly in the sun" to "I see the verdant ivy growing on its sides; Growing brilliantly across its surface"*

May 10 - Midnight Madness

It had been long since I lost my faith
But the idea of god still hanged like a wraith.
Despite this, we watched the movie, wrapped up in robes.

One of Lions, Witches, and Wardrobes.

We sat in wait, my friends in tow.
The display began to light and flicker and show.
It was funny at first, remembering old scenes.
But I was a bit amiss with what I saw on the screen.

I saw, not children but people of ears.
Of twisting flesh; of pain; of fear.

The lowly Satyr stood and waited.
A body of eyes preyed upon until sated.

Lastly, the lion, Aslan, the great.
Stood instead with mouths freshly ate.
No beast stood, figure of lord.
Instead a monster of hatred and scorn.
Whispering nothing but vitriol and mourn

I looked at my friends, my face in dismay
But my friends were crying and laughing away

I waited in silence for something to change.
for the mouths, the ears, the eyes to rearrange.
I looked back, hoping it had gone away.
But the mouths continued to have something to say.

A Silent Confession

I left it open again. The fridge across the kitchen from where I'm now sitting; shining its cold blue light on my face. I wonder why I do that? Maybe it's the hum of the electrical parts attempting to save itself and its contents from spoiling. Cold escaping, unable to hold onto its purpose beyond a fleeting pointless attempt. Blissfully unaware of its futility.

I wish it was that easy to spiral and never notice.

When I stare into its center I remember what I did. I think I will see them again. But then I remember it's just their head.

Karma

I forget exactly how we started dating, but I remember it started with a text. I was in Highschool and had just moved 2 hours away. I was astounded that this was my new reality. I, fortunately, hadn't really left anything in my old town, and now it truly felt like I was moving on to better things. I was excited to see how our relationship would bloom.

It lasted a month.

Eventually we got back together and things were looking up. I once again felt the dopamine rush of feeling wanted. But at this point red flags were beginning to make themselves more apparent. I would arrive at school and find the place we would normally meet in the mornings to find her pissed off because of a dream she had of me cheating on her - all while I could see the marks left on her neck from someone who wasn't me. I ignored these signs.

It lasted another month.

This pattern would continue for some time. Some days she would love me and others she'd be sending break up texts while I was in therapy. My loyalty tried and tested and tried again. It makes me sick to know I've never loved again the same way I loved her. My passion put on a person who never deserved me. Some nights I'd cry to sleep, and others I'd fall asleep texting her. There was never a stable moment.

Off and on and off again - It lasted over a year.

One of these times she finally dropped me and I didn't let myself get picked up again. She even had the nerve to get jealous when I moved on. For better or for worse, I was finally free of the cycle. To say I wasn't left with scars would be a lie. To say I was left unbroken would be a bigger lie. But I got better and in this time I learned the person I wanted to become.

It lasted 3 years.

I had just started my new life at college, having dropped my old life behind for the new person I was trying to be. One day, however, I received a friend request from someone who looked familiar but I shrugged it off and added them thinking it might be a friend of a friend. Eventually though, I realized who it actually was. I asked some friends on tips on what to do, most of which said to block her and be done. Instead I decided to see what she wanted, to know why she was back. I knew she had got married and was stationed in Japan. We had a conversation but I promised myself I wouldn't pretend to like her. I told

her I have never said anything nice about her - she apologized and we moved on, I thought that it was weird but nothing more.

It lasted one day.

It was about 5:00 PM when I got another message from her. "I'm getting a divorce" she said. I was curious, and unsure what to make of it. I thought that maybe she had a conversation and came to a decision with their husband; I gave her the benefit of the doubt. She went on to tell me about how her husband had cheated on her - which was hilarious on its own. But the real punchline was that he did it with her aunt.

It lasted 10 seconds.

I blocked her shortly after.

A Toast to Our Enslavement
A Play
by
Alyssa Torralva

Alyssa Torralva
Karen Van Meenen
ENGL 211
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Characters

TALBOT, Administrator of Earth and Voice of The Tower, resident number R3MP3R0R

SAM MARTINEZ, A middle aged latino man working as security for The Tower, resident number R5UN

UF00I, blindly following the way of the world, doesn't care too much. Naive

DASH ONE, loves the way things are, possibly naive, married to DASH TWO

DASH TWO, at odds with their spouse, hates the TOWER and everything it stands for, at the edge of their limit, married to DASH ONE

TOWER, oppressive force that dominates the world, ?

Setting

Post apocalyptic world run by an organization simply called The Tower.

Semi-Retro/Modern. MARTINEZ's apartment after work on the anniversary of The Towers takeover.

Lights up to reveal an empty apartment. Parts of the surrounding wallpaper have since ripped and peeled to deliberate lack of care. Alcohol bottles line most if not all of the countertops. All furnishings hold a visual greenish hue and stain marks, as well as wear and tear. The only thing in the room boding for attention is a radio in the corner of the room, it emits a low hum of static and shines a dim light into the room.

A secondary sound emits, delivering a slow rumble that grows closer and fades as a light passes by the darkened window.

There's a thump at the door. Followed by another heavier impact. With a third the door swings open with a small spray of fractured wood, causing SAM to stumble through the doorway, barely catching himself. He rights himself, showing off his uniform with the words TOWER written across the chest like a SWAT vest. He turns around to close the door. He struggles to do so but eventually the door comes to rest.

He turns and stares blankly into his dark apartment for a moment before taking off his uniform.

SAM

(Taking off his top) God fucking-

The rest of his uniform comes off with a visual jolt, stopping his speech. SAM now wears a simple yellowed t-shirt and pants. He moves to the kitchen and unholsters his service firearm and tosses it into the silverware drawer with a crash. Afterwards he moves across the kitchenette and immediately pours himself a drink and puts the bottle down with a thud.

The Radio then flicks itself to life.

TALBOT

(Over the radio) Hello inhabitants of Sector 16 and a Happy Enthrallment Day to each of you! Before we get into tonight's festivities and comradery, we want you all to please stand for the Pledge of Obedience!

The Radio drones on with a cacophony of children and young adult voices. The pledge contains the occasional stutter in speech and brief static. The dialog from the radio fades slightly as surrounding audio picks up revealing the sound of muffled voices speaking to the vague tempo of the radio.

Sam looks up at his ceiling, sighs, and pours more of the drink into his glass and walks towards the dilapidated sofa. His fingers hold on the tip of the bottle causing it to tip slightly in his direction before his hand grasps around the neck and is dragged with him in his movement.

TALBOT

(Clapping emits over the radio as The Pledge of Obedience finishes.) Wow, a quick thank you to our lovely Sector 16 Chorus group for coming by to lend their wonderful voices to the TOWER.

SAM

(Scoffs)

TALBOT

Now with that out of the way we can continue our night of revelry! For the first order of the night, we have some fireworks prepared to go off as our broadcast plays, so for our adults, be ready to take a shot everytime one goes off! These will end with a wonderful firework show brought to you from the TOWER itself, what a treat! *(A chuckle emits from the radio, accompanied by slight static)* Next, in the middle of our broadcast we will have a guest questionnaire where we will be calling a few lucky residents, whereupon you will be asked a series of questions. Getting all of them right will earn them and their family two weeks worth of ration packs! *(“Oooo” sound effect plays over the radio)* And lastly, as our broadcast concludes, we will get a brief word, spoken directly from the TOWER’s inner circle.

Clapping emits over the radio once again accompanied by hoots and hollers from the apartment above.

A moment passes before TALBOT continues speaking.

TALBOT

Now speaking of fireworks, I think I hear-

A firework echoes loudly in the distance, causing the window to glow a radiant magenta light.

TALBOT

Yes indeed, you know what that means residents! Raise your glasses and give a big toast to our subjugation!

SAM raises a glass in the air disheartedly. Before the glass moves to

meet his lips. The radio then plays a short classical piece.

The stage lights dim, leaving the stage in darkness. Another flash of magenta light crawls along the apartment walls. We see SAM stand as the stage returns to darkness. Another flash; we see SAM moving rightwards towards the kitchenette. This time we see more bottles start to appear lining the counters and tables. The stage once again returns to dark. A final explosion of the sickening pinkish hue coats the room in its filth. This time, as SAM stands facing the Counter in a pose of anguish we see the window being silhouetted by the image of a tower in the distance. The lights then return to normal as we see SAM attempting to pour a bottle into a glass only to find it empty.

The classical piece comes to an end with the notes F-E-F-D-E-C. (The Dies Irae)

TALBOT

And we're back! Thank you to all the wonderful composers who were able to lend their talent to tonight's festivities once again! (*TALBOT applauds*) Now, let's get into our questionnaire and ring our first resident.

A ringing sound echoes within the apartment as SAM turns to face the radio. He stumbles forward, clearly inebriated.

SAM reaches the couch next to the radio and leans closer to it in a slouched position. As he does the ringing stops. A younger voice then comes over the broadcast.

UF00I

(Nervously) Uhm, hello?

TALBOT

Hello! Is this Resident U-F-0-0-I?

UF00I

Yes it is! Oh my gosh, hi! Is this for the questionnaire?

TALBOT

Indeed it is! Do you think you have a chance to win tonight's prize?

UF00I

Uh maybe! I can at least give it a go!

TALBOT

Alright well you better be because your time starts now!

Static blares from the radio for a moment causing SAM to wince away slightly. The sound quickly turns into cheerful background music.

SAM

(In annoyance) Ah! Fuck you...

SAM puts the empty bottle to his lips for a second before remembering it's empty to his frustration.

TALBOT

First Question - How many years has it been since the TOWER so gracefully gave us our new lives?

SAM

(Monotone and deadpan; as if he's sick of answering the question) 43 years.

UF00I

Uhm... I think it's been about 43 years?

TALBOT

That is... *(Pauses deliberately to build tensions)* Correct! Next question - Four years after our enthrallment, what substance was outlawed by the TOWER?

SAM

(Monotone and deadpan) Autonomy.

UF00I

Gosh... uhh...? I think it was salt? *(with uncertainty)* Right?

TALBOT

That answer is... *(Pauses again but somehow does it in a way that makes you wanna punch him)* Correct! You're 3 questions away from winning that prize! You ready for the next question?

SAM

Prick.

UF00I

(Excitedly) Yes! *(Deeper; Trying to appear less excited)* Yes.

TALBOT

Next question - What flavor of Spaun Soda is the TOWERS most popular beverage?

At this point SAM stands up with his fingers rubbing his eyes. He moves to the kitchenette and opens a couple drawers before stopping and taking out a small pill bottle. He reads the back of the bottle as the radio continues.

UF00I

Oh gosh! I don't know... To be honest I'm a fan of the yellow ones but I know my co-workers aren't. Uhm... I think it's the blue one? No! Red!

TALBOT

Is that your final answer?

UF00I

(Hestience) Yes!

TALBOT

That answer is... *(pause like an asshole)* Incorrect! I'm so sorry! Better luck next time!

UF00I

Gosh damn it! I was- *(is cut off)*

SAM finishes reading the bottle and rubs his eyes again. He holds the pose for a second before moving to open the container and throws a single pill into his mouth.

TALBOT

Alright, let's get our next resident on the line.

The sound of ringing is heard again. This time a secondary ringing is heard, though more muffled. SAM looks up at this revelation. Both ringing stops and an older woman's voice comes onto the broadcast.

TALBOT

Hello, is this Residents R-10-V-3-R-5?

DASH ONE

Oh goodness me! *(Her voice turns away from the phone and is clearly talking to someone else now)* Sweetheart, Mr. Talbot called us for the questionnaire! I told you this would be our year!

DASH TWO responds, though unintelligible.

DASH ONE

(Her voice comes back in full clarity; and with an old woman charm/flirt in her voice)
Hello, Mr. Talbot.

TALBOT

Hello. I take it by your beautiful voice that you're Resident R-1-0-V-3-R-5 dash one?

DASH ONE

This is her, yes.

TALBOT

I take it you're ready to answer a few questions, then?

DASH ONE

(With confidence) Yes! Absolutely!

TALBOT

Well let's get started, shall we? Your first question - In last year's announcements, the TOWER used what metaphor to describe “liberty”?

DASH ONE

Oh I know this one! It was-

DASH TWO responds in the background again. His tone clearly showing disapproval. Though once again the specifics are unintelligible.

DASH ONE

(Turned away from the phone) Oh hush. *(Returning to the phone)* It was “cattle believing they knew how to run a farm.”

TALBOT

That is... *(pause)* Correct! Well done! Now let's move on to question two - What is the symbolic significance to the triple chain present in the TOWERs flag?

DASH ONE

Oh that's simple! It's symbolic of our united and bound purpose. Is it not?

TALBOT

Ooo, sorry that is only partially correct. But I'll tell you what - If you can clarify a little more, I'll give you the point, deal?

DASH ONE

Oh thank you! Uh... Let me think...

DASH TWO

(Muffled and far away) Ask the muppet if he likes sitting in the booster seat daddy gave him.

DASH ONE

Oh hush now, I'm not gonna say that!

DASH TWO

(Slightly closer) I bet he needs to wear diapers after having so many hands shoved up his ass. *(Speaking directly into the phone; in a mocking tone)* Hey have you heard of muppet necking?

DASH ONE

(Pushing DASH TWO away) (In annoyance) Oh god damn it Hugh! *(The sounds of a light scuffle)*

TALBOT

I presume that would be dash two? Care to put him on the line?

The scuffling on the line stops. SAM seems unable to determine whether to look up or at the radio. Eventually the silence is broken.

DASH ONE

Uh sure...*(DASH ONE hands DASH TWO the phone)*

DASH TWO

(A moment passes) Hello...?

TALBOT

Hello R-10-V-3-R-5 dash two. Do you have anything you'd like to say?

DASH TWO

(Now sheepish) No... Not really...

TALBOT

It's alright. You're able to disclose your opinions here.

DASH TWO

(DASH TWO waits a moment) Well. You haven't been exactly easy on us lately. I mean ration packs were increased to double the price they were just two days ago! Not to

mention half the people at my work have been let go. Sure I'm lucky I wasn't let go with em, but that ain't exactly the point there, chief.

TALBOT

That's entirely understandable. Tell you what, I'll send some people over to your residence and we will make sure that you get the extra help you need. Does that sound good?

DASH TWO

Uh... Yeah Sure! That would be wonder- (*Cut off*)

TALBOT

Well, we will be sure that they will get the help they need, anyway back with our next caller-

The radio is tuned out as SAM walks around his apartment. The sound of DASH ONE and DASH TWO arguing can be heard above. SAM moves about his apartment, trailing the voice of DASH ONE. Another firework goes off, once again illuminating the silhouette of the tower in the window curtains. A dull thud vibrates through the apartment. SAM's head shoots down at the floor below him. His face in a state of knowing dismay. A dozen or so footsteps muffled by the walls rebound continuously as his gaze slowly lifts upwards facing the back right corner of his apartment. Eventually his eyes stop as they come to rest on the ceiling directly above his door. Three thuds are heard. DASH ONE and DASH TWO stop for a moment as SAM's head spins to face the spot that he heard them last. DASH ONE says something and her footsteps move towards the spot above the door as SAM's gaze follows. DASH ONE says something before chaos

echoes from the floor above. SAMs head is glued in the upright position as he hears DASH ONE and DASH TWO get tossed about their apartment. DASH ONE and DASH TWO try to cry for help but their speech is interrupted and goes silent. The sounds continue for a moment, clearly still a struggle, but soon all noise stops. SAMs eyes unable to break from the unknown chaos upstairs.

Slow and methodical footsteps walk about the upstairs apartment. SAM moves as if to not get caught in its way. This movement pushes him to the very corner of his kitchenette. The footsteps then walk out.

Sam stands there in shock for a couple seconds before moving to the drawer he found the pills. He takes out the container and downs a couple extra before seating himself on the ground by sliding his back down the wall. SAMs eyes are wild, staring forward. Another firework explodes sending pink light across the room like a smattering of blood.

TALBOT

Question one - Do you think they'll make it til' morning?

SAM leans to his left and looks into his living room where the radio is.

TALBOT

Or do you think they're already gone?

SAM

The fuck...?

SAM slowly gets up with a grunt and walks towards the living room.

TALBOT

Is that your final answer?

SAM

I don't understand.

TALBOT

(Having fun and toying) Of course you understand. I mean you do it basically every day! I'm sure you have theories on what they're doing to them.

SAM walks closer to the radio. Each step he makes is deliberate. When he reaches the radio he cautiously picks it up.

TALBOT

(Yelling) ARE YOU LISTENING?

SAM jumps back and falls to the ground as he throws the radio which lands in the chair next to the couch.

TALBOT

(TALBOT laughs; There is an underlying genuineness to how he laughs while also feeling sinister)

SAM

What the FUCK is happening?

TALBOT

Well your times up anyway. The answer was that they probably are already dead. But if they are alive you just KNOW what kinda fun comes next, huh?

SAM

(SAM grabs his head as if trying to knock himself out of a trance)

TALBOT

Trying to knock yourself out of it won't help and sure as hell won't get rid of me. So might as well have some fun, yea?

SAM

(Angrily) Be quiet!

The radio stops and the apartment goes silent. SAM breathes for a couple seconds before attempting to stand. He walks over to the counter and puts his hands on it to try and ground himself. After a moment he pushes a bottle off the counter and it shatters into the floor.

TALBOT

How about a toast? A quick toast. A toast to our subjugation... *(TALBOT laughs)* No no no. That's much too cheesy. And frankly only half true. How about a toast to our enslavement, huh? I mean what did we do with our miserable lives anyway. I mean we were pieces of shit. Truly! People SUCKED.

SAMs turns back with an exacerbated expression.

TALBOT

But you know I think this whole lack of freedom thing is pretty freaking great! I mean granted I'm over here drinking champagne, which might I tell you *(he sips)* is fantastic, but you're you're over there drinking crappy beer mixed with piss. But still: freedom was much too stressful. It was awful. But now we're free to be chained as we please.

SAM

You are a fucking prick.

TALBOT

(With food in his mouth) So you keep telling me. Prick prick prick, it's all you call me. You seriously got to expand your vocabulary.

SAM

I would but you only deserve the one.

TALBOT

I don't know if I should feel special or offended. For now I'll go with "special" because you know what will happen to you if it's the latter.

SAM

Yeah and I don't exactly give a damn.

TALBOT

Oh it's not polite to lie now is it? I mean there's a reason that you are only telling this to a radio in your apartment, right? Why you come home everyday and drink yourself under the table. And then wake up and go do the same damn job, one that you're remarkably good at by the way, I mean like you deserve a (*emphasis*) promotion.

SAM walks about his apartment and moves to a spot, holding both the radio and the window in his periphery.

TALBOT

I mean if you're asking for my opinion, I'd say there's a part of you that likes it. Likes a world where the one thing you gotta hate is the big bad thing in the sky. Everything else can be filled with alcohol, sex, and more booze. I mean otherwise why would you do your job so damn well? Why would you- (*Cut off*)

SAM turns his head briefly to the radio.

SAM

(*Pissed off*) Are you finally done talking?

The radio doesn't make a sound. The apartment is filled with an oppressive silence. Another firework goes off, the pink grime plasters the walls again as the TOWER becomes silhouetted. SAMs head turns to the window, then back at the radio, then back out the window. The Radio once again springs to life, but not with TALBOTs voice.

TOWER

Trusted devotees and sycophants, we wish to thank you for your continued servitude towards our wonderful collective. Your effort has not gone unnoticed, nor will it go unrecognized. We hope to continue this trend as we move into our next year of continued and unwavering dominion.

Another firework sends its fluorescence curling around each corner of the apartment. The silhouette of the TOWER looks different, as if now only bearing a crude resemblance to the previous shape. SAM tilts his head to the side and takes a step back in the process.

TOWER

Your freedom was your cage, and now you are bound and free. Your bondage has become your salvation. Your enslavement has become your victory. Your fate was fraught with torment, but now it is one that will mold you into your most perfect self. Be not afraid - For it is beautiful.

Another echoing boom sounds as the gnarled radiant glow grips itself into the floorboards. The Tower now enters an uncanny appearance. Its sides twist and curl into an abnormal and indescribable form. SAM steps back more hurriedly this time. He steps behind furniture as if thinking he could easily duck behind it and hide from the beast that only exists in flashes. The momentary darkness fills the room once again as SAM trips and stumbles back.

TOWER

As our new stage is set, we all take our roles - and you fill yours wonderfully. We will be sure to keep a watchful eye as we move forward. To ensure that our performance goes smoothly once again. But I can assure you-

The silent dark is soon interrupted by the discordant symphony of booms and crackles that rhyme so vaguely as to

attempt to describe the monster present. Its form now is ever moving, ever shifting, and ever hungry. SAM continues moving back as the entire apartment is swallowed by the light. Its putrid color invading every cavity hidden by the shell of a soul. SAM pushes past knocking over a table in the process. His fingers dip into the floorboards effortlessly as he pulls himself to any glimpse of escape. The tower morphs again. Its writhing tentacles and malicious face give way to a circle at its center that malforms itself into the parody of an eye. A watchful being devoid of personhood.

TOWER

We will be (*Pause*) beautiful.

END OF PLAY.

HOW TO KEEP DOPPELGANGERS AWAY

Doppelgangers are probably one of most tenacious - and clever - suburban pests. These little guys are a common problem among urban and rural households. They boast an uncanny ability to climb and scale the shackles of your roof, and even hang from your window sills with barely enough grip for an ant. So making sure your home is protected from these pesky intruders should be of the utmost importance for the safety, and privacy, of your family.

Disclaimer: These tips and tricks are not permanent solutions. Once you have a doppelganger infestation, there's no real way to get rid of it. So make sure that your runes stay up, and the smell of citrus lingers in your yard.

1. Citrus

Doppelgangers **HATE** the smell of citrus. So even just having a couple orange plants, or even spraying some diluted orange juice and water mixture should be

enough to deter any wandering Skinwalkers for the night.

2. Recite The Ancient Text

Our little identical guys hate the words from The Ancient Text of Soglo'Dath'Letek (Likely due to their connections to the Age of Shadows). So be sure to have your Ancient Tome at the ready for when these little skin thieves come knocking on your third story window at 2:00 AM.

3. Coffee Grounds

Coffee grounds confuse Doppelgangers so that they end up losing track of scent trails. Be sure to spread fresh coffee grounds near the windows they frequent.

4. Salt

Salt has been used in many religions and traditions as, both a purifier, and a repellant of evil. So it's no real surprise that the creatures from the Deep-Marrow aren't fond of such a substance. *NOTE: Be careful, if the salt turns blue. It means that the salt has been tainted with a blood curse and therefore is close to being dispelled.*

5. Tending to your Runes

When the dark moon speaks be sure to have a pen and paper at the ready. Once a Rot Moon, the gods speak a rhyme of warding. Keeping up to date with the latest runes and sigils will be one of the best ways to keep out all sorts of beasts from beyond the veil, especially Doppelgangers. And trust me, you don't wanna be the guy who forgot to update his runes! *NOTE: RIP Jimmy.*

6. Light the Gnarl-Root Candles

Gnarl-Root grows where the blood of the fallen hero's lay and the twisting vines of fate grow withered and decayed beyond hope of remembrance - or just find it in your local pharmacy. Lighting up one of these and placing it in front of a mirror will be sure to keep out Doppelgangers and The Wither Wroughts.

7. Destroy the Altar

Doppelgangers always have a nest that may not always be easy to locate. If you do happen to locate it, be sure to burn it while once again speaking from The Ancient Text of Soglo'Dath'Letek. This will work wonders, and even doubles as an excellent skincare routine.

Unfortunately the Face Stealers will be back.
They will always be back.

8. Commit Hypocrisies in His Name

Speak his name and utter a falsehood. Do not look in a mirror until the strike of midnight. The words will repeat. They will hear you whisper. Be afraid. He will be watching.

9. Cinnamon

Cinnamon has the same effect as Coffee Grounds.

NAME: Petra de Mori-Ann von Ker'Stein II

ALIAS: Willow Hollowvale

APPEARANCE:

Willow/Petra has long curly back hair, two strands braided in an organized pattern on either side of her face. She always bears a dark maroon flower behind her ear. Her two most notable features, however, are her dark marble stone right eye, and her right fingertips made of the same dark marble material. She wears what looks to be a mix of noble fancy clothing, and less flowy clothing to compliment a better range of movement.

SETTING: High Fantasy (aka DND)

FAMILY:

Mother: Petra

Father: Fredrich

Older Sister: Vera

Younger Brother: Isaiah

BACKSTORY:

Chapter 1 - Early Life

Petra grew up alongside her family of Nobles. Her father, Fredrich, and Mother, were both well respected individuals within her government and were well regarded in the mineral trade, which is how they procured such wealth. Her home, being as old as it was, bore lots of dark corners and creepy noises. Rather than being scared of these things, Petra would make stories out of the noises, turning what a normal kid might assume as a monster into tales of magic, heroics, danger, and love.

Chapter 2 - Young Adult

As Petra grew up she became infatuated with the concept of the stories that the dead could tell. Still holding onto many of the stories she would make when she was younger. With this in mind she learned ways to entreat spirits. Many people thought her practices were nothing but hogwash, but she was passionate about it none-the-less. Eventually becoming successful a handful of times, she would turn the spirits stories into songs, though she never would perform the songs she would write except in her bedroom at night.

Chapter 3 - From Stone We Return

While wandering through Hollowvale cemetery, working on entreating more spirits for her writing, she felt drawn to an unwelcome part of the graveyard. There was a gate wrapped in barbs and vines, despite the warnings of nature, she persisted, in search of a new story still. She walked through vine covered tombstones and spiderwebs before settling on a location at its center. There she entreated a spirit, as she would normally do, to speak their story through her. However instead of her normal visions of tales past, she instead reappeared in the dead of night with rain pouring on her face. Unsure of what happened, but feeling as though time had passed, she wandered back home, breaking through vines once again. While home her house seemed empty. She called for her family but none answered. As she walked, she heard the front door open, and ran to greet who she thought was her family. Instead one of her house maids came through the door, and upon seeing her, ran to Petra and gave a deep hug.

Petra then began to ask what happened and where her family was. With a heavy heart the maid told her about her family's fate. Turned to stone and put in the family mausoleum, an event which took place 3 weeks prior. Before Petra could act hastily the maid informed her that Petra was declared suspect number one, as she was the only member unaccounted for.

Instead the maid told her to grab her belongings and come with her. Petra did, throwing

over a cloak she followed the maid to the mausoleum in question, of which was built below a Willow tree. When she walked in she saw the still expressions on each of her family's faces, it looked like they had no idea anything was happening. The maid once again apologized for what happened and left her to be with her family.

Petra sat in the room and cried for a time, still deep in her grief, and unsure of how she ended up in this situation. Gently she began to hum to herself, a song of comfort, one her mom would sing to her when she was little. Slowly the stone on her family began to peel away, her family confused and looking around frantically before her mother perked up “Petra?” In Petras excitement she stopped her singing and ran to hug her mom, thinking that it was just a bad dream, but as soon as she wrapped her arms around her, her mother returned to stone. Petra frantically tried to sing again, maybe that was the key, but as she did she noticed her right eye going blind. Eventually reaching up to look at it she saw her fingers had already turned into the same marble her parents were.

Confused and distraught, Petra made way to the forest with everything she could carry with her.

NOTES:

Personality: Petra, now Willow, hides her emotions behind a thin veil of cheerfulness. Choosing to have a much more happy demeanor on the outside to avoid questions or prying into her personal life.

Flaws: Petra/Willow has a tendency to be a very judgemental person. She often doesn't even give first chances let alone second ones. She's hellbent on being perfect, or at least her own version of it, refusing to ask for help even when she desperately needs it. As far she's concerned she's the only one who can fix her problems.

Dislikes: People telling her what to do, Citrus Smells, Statues, and Dirty or gross things.

Likes: Salty things, Tea, Fancy Food she can't pronounce the name of, and Stories

DIALOG:

Willow: I'm sorry; I don't know if I can eat (hesitance) that (emphasis).

Party Member: (pleading) Oh come on you have to eat. If you don't you'll starve.

Willow: I'm quite good thank you, I'd rather wait until the next town over.

Party Member: The next town over is three days out. If you think you can last that long that's fine by me, more for us!

Willow: Thank you for respecting my wishes to not eat... What did you call it again?

Party Member: It's me mama's Grub Slop! Made with love and the highest quality grub worms.

Willow (Nearly gagging): Ah, sounds... interesting! Unfortunately it doesn't seem like it matches my palette.

Party Member: Well it's your loss!

Willow: Indeed it is.

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THE MORNING AFTER

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Willow: You wouldn't have any more... of that food would you?

Party Member: You mean Mamas Grub Slop! What? Were the overwhelming smells of good cooking getting to you last night?

Willow: Something was overwhelming, yes.

Party Member: Well lucky for you we got some leftovers left, but be sure to chew carefully, I think I missed a couple Grubs!

Willow (Sarcastically): Fantastisch.

- THE PARTY MEMBER HANDS WILLOW A CONTAINER AND WILLOW LOOKS INSIDE

Willow: Mmmm... Looks... Digestible... (Mostly)

- WILLOW HESITANTLY PUTS HER LIPS TO THE CONTAINER AND TILTS IT BACK

- A MOMENT PASSES BEFORE A LARGE GLOB OF SLOP SLAPS INTO HER MOUTH

- SHE NEARLY VOMITS FOR A MOMENT BUT SWALLOWS IT IN ONE GULP

- THE PARTY MEMBER LOOKS AT HER WITH GLEE

Party member: *Enjoy it that much did you?*

Willow: *Oh... (gag)... yes I (gag)... did... But I don't think I could have anymore.*

Party: *Shame, all we bought for this trip was Grubs... You'll get used to it just you wait.*

Willow: *Wunderbar*

THE END