

## Horrors 2: Bavarious Reasons

The Something Awful Forums

July 9, 2009

The authors wish to dedicate this book to the authors.

Unfortunately, the typesetter is instead going to dedicate this book to anyone who has ever vomited tears and/or blood. Stay strong, pukers.



# Contents

<b>I Bavarious Reasons</b>	<b>1</b>
1 The Stranger. Bavarious.	3
2 Brian	7
3 The Horrid Assignment	9
4 The Horrid Refraction	11
5 The Earache	13
6 The Scarecrow	15
7 The Snake Lady	17
8 Dames, they're all the Same	19
9 The Girl	21
10 The Runaway	23
11 Luke From Payroll	25
12 Thursday	29
13 L.B.; V.H.E.	31
14 The Painter	35
15 What Went Wrong	37
16 The Ninjas	41
17 The School	43
18 The Smile	45

<b>19 The Dock</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>20 The Mansion of Horror</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>21 What Lurks Behind Our Eyes</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>22 Nebulous Cupboard</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>23 The Unexpected Shocking Surprise</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>24 The Beginning</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>25 Yellow Eyes</b>	<b>69</b>
<b>26 The Last Night of Luke Bavarious</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>27 Mac</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>28 The Horrid in the Arcade</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>29 Invisible Monsters</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>30 Bavarious Reasons</b>	<b>83</b>
<b>31 Dream Hyena</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>32 The One Act Remaining</b>	<b>87</b>
<b>33 Untitled</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>34 In the Mirror</b>	<b>95</b>
<b>35 The Horrid Lighter</b>	<b>97</b>
<b>36 The Playground</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>37 The Exploding Curse</b>	<b>101</b>
 <b>II You're no Hakan</b>	 <b>103</b>
<b>38 The Death Hamsters</b>	<b>105</b>
<b>39 Son Of Bavarious</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>40 The Long Finger of the Law</b>	<b>109</b>
<b>41 The King</b>	<b>111</b>

## CONTENTS

v

42 The Creature / Dying	129
43 The Child	133
44 The Mosquito of Death	135
45 The Monster of Lake Grim	139
46 The Horrid Reflection - Redux	141
47 The Library	143
48 Pearl	147
49 Reunion Under a Blood Red Moon	149
50 Untitled	153
51 The Cellar Of Death	157
52 Untitled	159
53 The Boy That Lived	163
54 A Tin of Popcorn	165
55 The First and Second Stories	169
56 Nobodys Savior	175
57 Words Will Never Hurt Me...	179
58 Dead Tired	183
59 Black River	185
60 The Area the Moon Ignored	187
61 The Killer B	191
62 Character Sketch	195
 III The Chronicles Of Biddick	 199
63 Station 666	201
64 The Promise	203

65 Johnny the Knifer	207
66 A BUTTER KNIFE	209
67 The Cave	213
68 The Bodies of Bavarii	215
69 The Torrid Connection	217
70 Hell Cab	219
71 Destiny Calls	221
72 Horrid Transformation	223
73 Flow My Tears, the PI Said.	225
74 Horror D'oeuvres	227
75 I am NOT Luke Bavarius	229
76 Little Men	235
77 For the Children	237
78 The Cocoon: Part 1	241
79 The Cocoon: Part 2	243
80 THE BLOOD GAME	245
81 It's just me, 'Luke'	249
82 The Horrid Beginning of It All	251
83 The Sack of Horrors	253
84 Kindness of Strangers	259
85 Creature Of The Night	261
86 The Book	263
87 The Journey	265
88 Shiny Toy Gun	267
89 The Monsters in the Night	269

CONTENTS	vii
90 The Screw That Turned	273
91 A Red Sky at Night	275
92 The Warehouse	279
93 Untitled	283
94 AGAIN	285
 IV My God, It's Full Of Stars	 287
95 A Cursed Memory	289
96 Satanic Red	291
97 I, Lucius Baiuvarius	293
98 Chamber Pop	297
99 Luke Kills An American	303
100White	307
101The Pus-Stained Email from Hell	309
102Horrider Reflections	311
103Wicked Workout	315
104Gold Ribbon	317
105The Smoker	321
106The Homeless Monster	323
107The Horrid Realization	331
 V Inflamed Appendices	 333
A Colophon	335



**Part I**

**Bavarious Reasons**



# Chapter 1

## The Stranger. Bavarious.

By Batmanuel

### FOR MATURE READERS ONLY

"Whiskey." The stranger sat hunched over in the dark corner of the bar. I would have missed him if it weren't for my curiosity and his harsh cigarette tinged voice. I sat the glass down, opened the bottle and poured. "Leave the bottle."

"What's troubling you, Mack?" I asked as I pulled my hand away from the bottle. He didn't look up. I tended to pry, but I got the feeling that this guy wasn't someone to fuck with.

Minutes passed and I forgot all about this stranger. Smoke hung aimlessly in the air as someone busted out a trick shot in the billiards game on the other side of the dark tavern. Maybe a fight would break out. The regulars hate it when new people come in with that slick shit. Almost right on cue, Jimmy Dean, a hulk of a man, grabbed the trick shot artist around the neck and slammed his face on to the table. This collision proved hard enough to send the balls rolling in every direction. In practically the same breath, the guy was thrown out onto the pavement. I let this shit happen. No cops. Justice prevails and everything returns to a despairing level of normality.

I turn my attention back to the stranger only to find him gone and a fifty dollar gold coin on the bar. Under the coin was a business card with one word on it: Bavarious. How I missed a man dressed in all black, wearing a knee length black leather trench coat duster, walk right out the door is beyond me. He had to have crossed right in front of my field of vision, but I must have been too distracted by the fight to notice him leave. Whatever.

I couldn't sleep that night. A feeling of uneasiness stuck with me after my brief encounter with the stranger. He just wanted a drink, right, lots of people do that, nothing weird about them. All I could think of was his name. Bavarious. What did it mean?

The next day, I enter the shit hole and take over for the night. I expect much of the same. The regulars were already there and most likely drunk. The stale air welcomed me as I pushed through the wooden doors of the tavern. I felt a chill rush down my spine as I looked towards the end of the bar. I didn't even make it behind the bar before I heard a familiar voice that would remind me of exactly why I could not sleep.

"Whiskey." Fuck. The stranger sat in the exact same spot. 'Same shit, different night' I thought to myself. As if he didn't remember the minute details from the night before, his grizzled voice said, "Leave the bottle."

"So, are you drowning your sorrows away?" I tended to pry. He didn't look up, so I turned back to cleaning a yellow beer stained mug. My mind wandered and I began to picture a lost love. For some reason, I came to the conclusion that he fit the motif of a heartbroken pathetic being taking everything he did wrong out on himself. After this, he's probably going to the nearest bridge and tease ending it all by dangling one foot over the railing. Pathetic bitches never actually jump since they're always back the next day drinking the same drink. If not the bridge, he'll probably stare down the cold steel barrel of a Beretta. Visions of my ideal womanly being played in my head and I wanted to join him in downing the fuel of the unwanted. The poor bastard losing the dark haired, tan skinned, beauty running through a meadow on a sunny day, must be hell. I snapped back to reality, shook my head and spun around towards this guy with another bottle of whiskey. Almost exactly like the night before, I fail to see him leave and I'm left to wonder why he leaves the coin. One fucking tip.

"Hey Marv, did you see that cowboy looking son of a bitch leave?" Marv, the rat-faced bug-eyed shrew of a motherfucker, shook his head with a look of confusion. I didn't look too much into it, as the smoke hovering in the air tends to get to my head. Unlike the night before, I was able to thwart any thoughts on the guy. I mean, I was never the obsessive little bitch type. I tended to pry, but that was part of the job title. I had to talk to these characters while they drank the night away.

These nights always seem to run together. The same rituals repeat themselves. The same poor saps gather in this shit hole. The same rain falls outside. Jimmy and his gang exchange the same stories. The same game of pool is played. The same fight breaks out. The same song plays on the jukebox in the corner. The same 'out of service' sign hangs on the bathroom door. The same tourist loses a wheel on the same pothole and drags his scared wife who'd much rather stay in the car inside to use our phone. The same poor fools come and go like fucking clockwork. I can't complain.

Every night for the past week, the Stranger sat in the same stool under the same shadow, said the same four words, drank the same whiskey, left the same goddamn coin and vanished the same way. If it weren't for the same bad vibes that surrounded him, I would not have even noticed him.

I still have trouble sleeping at night. It's not that I don't want to sleep; it's just that I can't. I stopped trying. Techniques that bobble heads preach up and down to levels of total effectiveness fail. Pills don't work, lying in bed

passively watching infomercial after infomercial have the effects of making me wonder what exactly will blend. When I am able to close my eyes, my mind begins to play a constant slide show of the worst things imaginable. Decapitations. Bodies buried in shallow graves. Houses burning. Screams fill my ears and I awake in a cold sweat. I can't breathe. These problems began the first night the stranger came into my dive.

I find myself feeling nothing but disdain when I gaze upon my tattered reflection in the mirror. The unshaven man staring back is not me. Blood-shot eyes sunken deep into hollow cheeks. I lift my hand up and it shakes as if my blood created vibrations as it moved through my protruding veins. The mirror not only shows a vacant waste of a man, but also serves as a vessel for vengeful shadows that dance around in the dimness created by the talking heads on their soapboxes of lies. I look again at my shaking hand to find it in a tightly clenched fist flying towards the primitive zombie in the glass imprisonment. The glass shatters into a sea of red.

"Whiskey." He's there. Right fucking there. No one knows where he comes from. No one even bothers to notice this motherfucker. "Leave the bottle."

"You know, you've been coming in here for a while now and it's the same four fucking words." I tended to pry, but it has gotten to the point where this dude needs a crowbar upside the head! I wanted answers or just a simple response. "And man, you don't need to leave a fucking gold coin lying there. That's too much goddamn money."

As always, he finished off the bottle and left. As always, a dirtied gold coin was on the counter. It was right then that I came up with the worst idea of my life. Worse than moving out to this fucking desolate place. This dumbass decision is probably my only regret. Given the circumstances, this was a pretty sound idea and very simple in execution. I called on Jimmy Dean and his gang to rough the stranger up a bit. Easy as that. Not to really hurt him, but to serve as an initiation of sorts.

Jimmy Dean was the type of brute that would fit in prison, professional wrestling or driving a truck for a repossession company. The brute, with his shoulder length hair, beard, sharply clad in leather and denim, carried himself with a high enough level of untapped fury that assured me that a show was just on the horizon. His gang lacked the size, and I'd say intelligence, but Jimmy aint exactly a member of Mensa. It was clear that the 6'6" tall Jimmy was the leader of the group. These hours of darkness were going to be something to remember.

"Whiskey." Like clockwork. I couldn't help but crack a smile knowing that this dude was about to get fucked up. "Leave the bottle."

The jukebox in the corner began playing "Here Comes the Sun." Jimmy Dean and his cronies approached the stranger. Unpromisingly, the green pained lights shuttered as the air became stale. Marv sat in the stool to the left of the stranger, the other guy behind him and Jimmy stood to his right. "Who the fuck are you?" Jimmy asked in a slow but forceful tone as he reached for the bottle. He picked it up, unscrewed the cap and took a

swig. He set the bottle down in a violent enough motion to cause the liquid to splash on the bar. The stranger didn't flinch. Hands still clasped around the glass, eyes still looking down. "This isn't the a film noir. Hey asshole, I'm talking to you!"

Jimmy reached out for the stranger's collar. The temperature in the room rose, but I felt cold enough to see my breath. My spine felt severed as I fell back towards the wall behind me. Jimmy now had a fistful of shirt and was close to unleashing a mallet of a fist on this guy, when, in the blink of an eye, it was all over. The stranger threw a swift enough boot to Jimmy's kneecap that created a sound comparable to a thunderclap. As Jimmy doubled over in immense pain, the stranger swung his hand around grabbing the side of Jimmy's head, and, in a fluid motion, flung it down towards the bar. The hard wood surface of the bar gave way to the man's fucking head! The wood splintered around the hole that was now host to a man's head. A second later, the man standing behind the stranger took flight towards the pool tables, slammed into the wall and became one with a pool cue. Marv, the third man, suffered a brutal shot to the throat that sent blood flying out of his mouth. He collapsed to the floor clutching his sunken windpipe and gasping for air. I couldn't move.

The stranger turned his gaze to me. His eyes created black holes amongst the leathery, sandblasted, sun damaged face. His black hair dangled in strands from under his black hat. He reached up, stroked the stubble on his chin and sighed. After surveying the destruction, he nonchalantly picked up his glass, downed it, reached into his pocket and pulled out a coin. His eyes never moved from mine, and then a moment of clarity came upon me. The uneasiness. I froze. I could see flames in the blackness. He stared a hole directly through my soul. The carnage still existed among an eerie peacefulness. He flipped the coin in the air, caught it with his right hand, smiled and placed it on the counter. He then tipped his hat and left. I remember seeing lights.

## Chapter 2

# Brian

By Torgo!

Brian hated the new house. Ever since his family moved in he could tell there was something not right about it. He especially hated his room. It was an old

dusty old room that smelled like death. There were cobwebs in his closet and the room smelled like many years gone by.

The first few nights in the house came and went without any events. On the eighth night though Brian was awoken by a noise emanating from the closet. It sounded like a big dog was trapped inside. All Brian could hear was clawing and low grunts and what sounded like a big dog walking in circles in the closet. Brian cowered under the sheets afraid to peer out. After ten minutes or so the sounds went away. Brian lay awake the entire night.

In the morning Brian told his parents about what had happened. They just told him that it's normal. That old houses have a way of making sounds like that. Brian didn't believe them though. He knew what he heard wasn't just a house. It was something else. Something unnatural.

The next night Brian was awoken to the sounds again. As Brian lay under his sheets he heard what sounded like sniffing and pawing coming from the closet. He also heard something else this time. What sounded like the sharpest fangs tearing apart meat. He also heard chewing. As Brian peered out from under his sheets he saw a pool of blood forming under the door. He quickly leaped out of bed and down the hall to his parent's room. "You've got to come quick to my room and look!" His parents slowly lumbered to his room. "Their, in my closet!" His Dad looked in the room but didn't see anything. He even went to the closet and looked in the door but didn't see anything.

For the next few weeks nothing happened...

Today was Brian's Dad's birthday. Brian and his mom went to the local

mall and picked out some nice presents to give to him. His mom bought him a toolset that had wrenches and screwdrivers and Brian got his dad a nice necklace. While Brian's dad was at work they made him his favorite meal and made a nice cake. Brian's dad really enjoyed his meal and wore the necklace all the time after that.

Brian was a lot happier these days because he hadn't heard anything from the closet for a while.

Another thing that happened is that Brian and his family decided to start raising rabbits. They had started with 5 five rabbits but now they had 9.

One day Brian went outside to feed them and was shocked because there only 3 left. The fence had been broken into and their were large tracks.

Soon after this Brian started hearing noises from his closet again. It was the same as before. All Brian could do was cower under the sheets until the morning light returned.

One dark and wintery night Brian was hiding under the blankets while he heard the rustling from his closet. As Brian shook and shivered the noises were growing louder and more violent. Suddenly he heard the creature burst forth! It shattered through the closet and crashed into the opposing wall. Brian was now paralyzed with fear. He dared not look out from his sheets. He could hear the creature walking towards him, its claws clacking on the floor. He could hear the beast sniff his sheets. Suddenly he felt the creature leap onto his bed. Through the weaving of his sheets he could see glowing red eyes and a large grimacing mouth full of fangs. But the most shocking thing of all is that he could just make out the glimmering of something hanging from the creatures neck in the moonlight. It was the necklace he bought his father!

"You were always my child", the creature snarled to him. "And now I will give you the Dark Gift!" "After all like Father like son!" The creature then bit Brian on the face and the transformation began.



## Chapter 3

# The Horrid Assignment

By Dr. Mulholland

Luke Bavariou walked through the front doors of the police station. He pushed the doors open. Inside was his boss, Johnny Zepeder.

"Bavariou!"

"What do you want Johnny." Bavariou said.

"I have a new assignement for you! I hope you will take this new assignment!"

Luke Bavariou took the new assignment and opened the manilla envelope like a kid ripping apart a Christmas present that the kid had been waiting for. Inside the manilla envelope was a new assignment: Kill the local mafia boss.

Bavariou looked up from his new assignment at his boss. "Johnny."

"What is it, Bavariou?"

"This doesn't sound like-..."

Bavariou keeled over and from his mouth cascaded a river of vomit. His eyes vomited tears too. The tears and vomit he was vomiting pooled on the floor in a horrible cocktail of tears and vomit.

"Bavariou!"

Bavariou could say nothing. The cocktail kept pouring out of his mouth.

"Dear God, I'll get a doc-"

Johnny's neck exploded with blood vomiting out of the veins. Bavariou screamed. He turned around and screamed again. He raised his Baretta (all New York detectives have one.).

Bavariou turned around and looked at his boss. "I'm quite sorry," Bavariou said. Johnny said "you'd b-better b-be" and belched out one last spray of blood stained vomit. Bavariou turned and walked out the doors, pushing the doors aside to get through.

Bavariou looked at his new assignment that he just got. Kill the mob boss. But why? Bavariou was not a killer. He was a good man, a good

Christian man. But he has a Baretta. Baretas are for killing. He must kill the boss. He grabbed his Baretta and loaded it and got in his car and hit the gas.

Bavarious arrived at the mob boss's house. He got out of his car and shut the door behind him and then locked it. He walked to the front door and knocked on it three times. Then he realized. The house had been abandoned since the horrid tragedy that had happened there 50 years ago. He saw it in his mind...

"Hi, Daddy" said the kid. The kid smiled. Kids are so wonderful and carefree in this terrible world.

"Hi there kiddo" said the dad. The dad looked to be about 35 and had a beer gut.

The dad turned around and walked out of the house, pushing the door, opening it, and then pulling it, closing it. The kid turned around and turned on the TV to get out of the horrors of this wretched life. It was 1959. The kid just got the TV as a birthday present. His birthday was yesterday.

The kid heard horrid noises from outside. He got up and opened the door. His dad was lying on the ground with a silhouette on him. He looked up at the man who was casting the silhouette. He had a can of beer in his right hand and a Baretta in the other. Suddenly a semi drove across their front lawn at the speed of fifty five miles an hour, running the man and his dad over at the same time. Blood vomited all over the front of the semi and all over the nice clean green cut grass.

Bavarious woke up. He had fallen asleep. He had dreamed of what happened in the mob bosses house 50 years ago. Then he realized. He was the kid of his dreams. Bavarious let out a scream and turned and ran and went out the front door. He tried to open the door on his Ford Contour but it wouldn't open. Suddenly, a headless corpse with a can of Coors walked across the lawn towards him. Getting closer and closer. Bavarious screamed. He got out his Baretta and fired. And fired again. The bullets punched bulletholes through his rotting stinky flesh but they didn't hurt him.

Bavarious screamed and vomited again. The remainders of his lunch floated around in a blood tinged mess all over his Ford Contour. The Coors holding headless man kept getting closer. Bavarious could only do one thing. This was the only option. His father would have wanted it this way. He stuck the Baretta into his mouth and pulled the trigger. But he had used all of his bullets. He vomited again, pouring vomit down the barrel of his gun. He screamed. Finally the Coors man was two feet away from him...

"Luke Bavarious, why did you hate me?"

"Who, who are you?"

"I am an artist. I am the man who killed your father in a semi."

He screamed.

## Chapter 4

# The Horrid Refraction

By The Iron Fury

*This entry picks up immediately after The Horrid Reflection ends.*

Suddenly, I was sobbing. Once the tears ceased leaping from my blood-drenched sockets, I took a moment to recollect myself. My muscles tensed. I looked down at the dark, mangled body next to me. What the fuck, I thought. I still had glass in my face. My head throbbed. I rolled the corpse onto its back. And vomited. I vomited so hard, so long, that a vessel burst in my eye, coloring it red as Satan's ass. Its body had dissolved into phlegmy puss. The alley stunk of fear and sweat and blood. And now vomit.

The glow of some unspeakable evil hung heavy, looming over the dark corridor. It pulsed. I had to get out of there. I had to think about what just happened.

I got to my lodgings and cleaned up. As I was picking glass out of my shattered skull, a knock sounded. Heavy- angry almost- on the thick wooden door. Inching to the corner of the room, I determined to wait them out. I had darker matters to attend to. What was that thing I had glimpsed in that dim alley? Why did it wear my badge? Why was it-

"Bavarius! I know you're there!" a feminine voice bellowed. I could sense there would be no introspective pondering for me this evening. I edged to the door. Skin standing at attention, hairs all prickly, I passed my hairy appendage over the door knob. Slowly, I creaked it open. Standing before me was a person I had thought, hell, hoped I would never see again.

Nora Fury. A halo of fiery red curls cascaded about her, wild and unrestrained. Just like she was. A single cigarette smouldered in her claw-like grasp. As soon as she was in the dank room, a slap encircled my raw face. Blazed like the fury for which she was aptly named.

"How dare you leave me in Mexico," she sneered. I sneered back at her sneer.

"How dare you shack up with that drug lord," I returned with equal disdain. "Can't we just move on? You're a tough dame. I knew you would come out on top. Here, lemme pour you a drink."

I knew that when Nora was mad, she was a hellcat under the covers. Maybe a nice distraction would ease my beleaguered mind. I turned to the crimson cabinet behind my desk and my hands found their way to two glasses and a bottle of whiskey.

"So what d'ya need from me, Sugar?" I smarmed, holding out the stiff libation. It dropped to the floor, shattering at my feet. There was no one in the room.

## Chapter 5

# The Earache

By bagrada

The night was dark and muggy, the heat weighing down on me like a heavy winter jacket in the spring. The ringing in my dull aching ear was the only sound. I stuck in my pinky and wiggled it, then frowned at the sticky piss-yellow wax left on my finger. Not for the first time, I thought about seeing a doctor. I shook my head. My ear has never been right since that day in the pond, so long ago. Time enough for doctors in the morning. Tonight, I had a girl to save.

"You have to help our friend, Mr. Bavarious!" the kids had said. "She's been kidnapped by some freaky cult!" The cops didn't believe them. Neither did their parents. But I did. I knew the dangers of not listening to kids. My sister... if I'd listened to her she'd still be alive today. I'd told her she was just a kid too, that I didn't have to listen to her, that I could swim where ever I want. I almost died that day. Instead she died, died much too young, died saving me. I loaded my beretta and nodded to them. "Don't worry; I'll bring your sis... I mean your friend back to you." The boy shook his head sadly and looked at me as I left.

As I approached the abandoned warehouse where they said their friend was taken, I glanced to the stars and felt a shiver run down my spine as they seemed to blink in the night sky. A coppery rusty scent floated on the stale breeze. I was close. I walked up to the old wooden door, with my finger on the trigger, and kicked it open. LIGHT. Bright searing light. Red rusty light. Purple smoky light. Spirally yellow light. Grey and black and white colorless light. I didn't hear the broken door clatter to the ground in front of me or the vomit that suddenly projected from my throat, just the constant droning ringing in my ear, louder now.

The lights faded as I tried to blink through the afterimages to look around the room. All around an old stone altar were the cultists, theirs eyes bleeding, their robes coated in glistening puke, their mouths slack in

death. On the altar floated the girl... or parts of her. She was split in two; her eyes still smoking, her hands still raised to the sky in prayer. The left side of her mouth opened in a bright smile, while a few feet away the right side gaped wider as if she were screaming. She was pinned in the air like a butterfly to an insect spreading board. In between her two halves, something moved, then the world ended around me.

The air became thick, muddy and gritty, like I was back beneath the pond again that awful day. The lights returned... rusty red, black and white, vomit green. The horrible spiraling yellow. The girl melted away, her long blonde hair splashing to the floor, and I felt the air shift as something floated towards me. The ringing in my ears was now the tolling of great bells, driving me to my knees as my gut heaved and tried in vain to find something else, anything more, to throw up. I felt something biting cold and scalding hot brush my arm as the colors floated past me, and then my arm wasn't there anymore. It floated off into the lights which were now many bright balloons, all painted with crying faces I could almost recognize. I blinked and the balloons popped revealing a swarm of fireflies, each with a uniquely colored light. So beautiful and horrible as they flew by me towards the door, their lights blinking in a pattern my mind fought not to understand. The tolling of the bells was now a tinkling song that made me want to float along with it, if only I could recognize the tune. The fireflies were floating spiders, then darting fish, then the drowning faces of my dead sister. I staggered to my feet and turned towards the door as the colors wafted through and became dark. I took a few stumbling steps after them but stopped when my foot kicked something metal and heavy... the beretta I'd dropped. Whispers suddenly, in my ear. My little sister. "Breathe, Luke."

I gasped for air, realizing I hadn't taken a breath since kicking the door, and fought my way to the center of the room, kicking the bodies of the cultists aside, and then gathering the messy blonde hair and other unrecognizable bits into a clump in the crook of my remaining arm. "It's okay." I said. "I've got you." With the smell of rusty blood in my nose, the taste of bile and vomit in my mouth, the ghost of my left arm screaming that it's still with me, the afterimages of the wondrous lights seared into the back of my eyes, and the constant and steady ringing in my ears keeping me company, I staggered out into the now starless night. "Don't worry sis. I'll get you home."

## Chapter 6

# The Scarecrow

By Unununium

Luke parked his car at the side of the road. He walked over to the massive corn field and squinted. Somewhere out there was his big break. If the legend held true, he knew he'd have it set. Trying to be silent, Luke pulled apart rows of corn and began to make his way to the center of the field. Looking out, he knew he had a long way to go. His revolver sat snugly in his jean pockets. He wasn't afraid to use it if he was heard.

Luke's sneakers sunk into the moist soil, as he crept through the corn field. He knew something was up. The full moon shined brightly into the center of the corn field. In the center of the field stood a mounted scarecrow. Its eyes beamed like an illuminating light, and the straw covering its bare body poked out through seams on its clothing. Luke was here for a purpose. As an FBI investigator, it was his job to trot through this corn field to investigate the claim that underneath the rugged clothing of this lifeless scarecrow lays a corpse. He barged through a petite opening in the corn field, and reached the scarecrow. The scarecrow was a morbid mass of lifeless straw. A knife was tied into the scarecrows hand with a piece of string. Luke unfastened the rope holding the scarecrow unto the cross. The scarecrow then toppled over, landing on Luke. It was heavier then he imagined. Luke rolled over, getting out from underneath the scarecrow.

Luke looked out into the corn field. It was an infinite abyss of yellow and green plants. From his viewpoint, he couldn't see out of the corn field. Luke turned back, and noticed in shock that the scarecrow was now standing. Luke took a step back, but the scarecrow moved in closer. With one luxurious swipe, the monument of hay and straw sliced through Luke's neck with its knife. Luke vomited wildly through his neck while disturbing and tremendously rust colored blood came out through the same orifice. A stream of strawberry-red blood dripped from the scarecrows metallic and majestic knife, that soon entered into Luke's head. Luke dropped to his

knees. He gurgled like a drowning infant as he struggled to breathe. Luke vomited blood through the hole in his head as bubble-gum colored brain matter and blood exited Luke's head with the scarecrows knife. Luke wasn't quite dead yet, he slowly crawled away from the deadly straw body, but it was too late. A gust of wind and magic picked Luke's body up into the air. Like quills, the scarecrows straw exited his body and pierced into Luke's flesh. Luke let out one final scream, before he died. Luke's lifeless body floated magically to the brown wooden cross. As the lifeless scarecrow soon faded into the ground, Luke's body strapped onto the cross. The scarecrow was now gone, but a new scarecrow has come to take its place.



## Chapter 7

# The Snake Lady

By THE WORST DOCTOR

There was a kid who came up to me one evening after I had left my precinct, sniffing and tugging on the left leg of my pants. He had snot all over his face and I was pretty disgusted. But my job is to help people, not to pass judgment, so I decided to give him the benefit of the doubt. Maybe he had cash on him.

"What's wrong, kid?" I asked. An ominous breeze blew from the south. It was going to rain. I didn't ask him why he was by the bar at such an age. A kid's gotta do what a kid's gotta do.

"Some lady stole my candy," he told me, wiping the snot from his nose and the tears in his eyes in an upward motion. Both bodily fluids ended up on his forehead.

"Well," I said, popping the collar of my Armani jacket. "I can handle that. Stay here, sport."

I gave him a pat on the head, not unlike the pats my father used to give me when I hadn't completely screwed everything up, and went into the building.

There was nothing in there that was particularly special, save for a few local drunks hanging out in the corner. The bartender gave me a nod, a knowing one; he could tell from my hat and flashy badge that I meant business. That's what it is to be a private detective, after all. I sidled up to the bar and took a seat on a rickety barstool, ordering my usual: an appletini. A girl at the bar eyed me. She looked like a bitch. I knew I had found my target.

"Hi," she said once I got my drink. The light leaked from the neon signs that said "PARADISE". I chuckled as I sipped my cocktail gingerly. How ironic.

"What can I do you for," I asked. I didn't mean it the way I made it sound.

"It's not often a man like you comes to town," She said, giggling. I noticed she was wearing a rusty necklace.

"Yes," I said simply. I don't like to waste words. She put her hand on my arm and looked at me with glimmering eyes. I said nothing.

Suddenly she was grabbing onto my arm and digging her horrid nails into my flesh. I cried out. My skin was on fire. She drew blood and laughed like my grandmother used to.

At that moment I knew I hated her.

"You're a thief and a liar!" I yelled, kicking my barstool into her lower half. She fell down and brought my appletini with her as she tried in vain to grab the bar for support. The people around us piled out of the bar while screaming and running. I was glad they knew enough to leave at this moment. It was going to get ugly.

"Bavarioussssss," she quipped, her tongue long and thin like a snake. Her rusty necklace was rusted. Even more rusted than before. She had no legs now. She was like a snake on the bottom. Cruel and unforgiving. She was going to squeeze me. I knew it.

I felt like vomiting. A thin stream spluttered from my mouth. It got all over my new boots. I was blind with seething rage as I dove toward her, knocking over bottles of Jack Daniels. I began to punch and punch and punch. I was screaming though I didn't know why. She fought back feebly. She tried to kick me but she had no legs anymore. I laughed. How unfortunate.

She was bleeding a lot. It got all over me. Luckily I had tucked my tie into my belt. It wouldn't get in my way. She scratched at me again and called me mean things. There was blood, awful blood, leaking from her eyes. It was red. Dark red. The color of a heart after it's been taken out of a body. I was going to take her heart out of her body. Then I thought against it. Too messy.

Finally I drove the rusty necklace into her. She died of rust poisoning. She giggled one last time at me before slumping onto the floor. Then she disappeared in a cloud of smoke.

"Should've gotten your tetanus shot," I commented. I gathered up the kid's candy, colorful wrappers that may as well have contained pure cane sugar, and went outside.

The kid was there, snot dried in his hair. He was wringing his shirt with his grubby little hands when he saw me, fearing the worst. I dropped the candy on the ground in front of him, and lit a cigarette for myself.

"Don't let it happen again, champ," I said. He nodded and understood. As he walked away, munching on his dental problem candy, I was reminded a little bit of myself. Life before I became a detective. A simple, idle life with no worries. But that was all behind me now.

I'm Luke Bavarious, detective extraordinaire.

## Chapter 8

# Dames, they're all the Same - a Luke Bavarious detective story inspired by the works of Ben Biddick.

By Tufty

I'm a private detective. Luke Bavarious is my name. Bavarious by name, Bavarious by nature. I own this city. The feds think they've got this place locked up tight, but the criminal scum of the underworld run rampant through the darkened streets committing crimes and vandalism. This is where I come in. My name is Luke Bavarious, and I'm a private detective.

I'm a man with nothing to live for and nothing to lose, and there's only two things in my life that I wouldn't want to lose, and they're both Berettas. One is a gun, and I keep it locked and loaded in my desk drawer, and the other is my sexy secretary, Gina Beretta. An Italian seductress packing a big chest, tiny waist, and a loaded gun. There's nothing sexier than a woman with a gun.

The phone on my desk rings, I pick it up. It's Gina. "There's someone here to see you." says Gina. "Send them in." I reply. Into my room walks the most gorgeous dame I've ever seen in my life. I'm talking beautiful - tall, brunette, and an ass like a couple of melons. Says she has a job for me - the big one, my ticket out of this hell hole they call a city. She tells me that a couple of big time crooks are planning a heist on the New York City Bank, and she wants me to stop them. "But how do you know this, and why are you telling me?" I ask. "One of those jerks is my ex-boyfriend, and the idiot left the bank's blueprints and a copy of their plan at my place before he dumped me." "Hmmm... that does sound stupid. I'll take the job."

Fast forward to a week later and I'm waiting outside the New York City Bank. According to the plans, the crooks should be here any minute. I lean against a street light and light up a smoke, the wispy trail of smoke rises into the cool night air. I hear a click like the sound of a cockroach being squashed, and I feel a cold, hard object poke against my back. "Don't move, Bavarious" says a rough voice filled with pure and utter hatred. The dame set me up! I knew I never should have trusted her, dames are all the same. With the lightning-quick speed of a cobra I kick my leg backwards and send the gun flying out of my assailant's hand. It lands on the road before skidding down a drain into the sewers. Before my attacker could even react I've drawn my gun and spun around. Suddenly, with shock and disbelief I see that the face of my attacker is actually that of the dame who hired me for this job! She must have been changing her voice to fool me. She looks different this time, her eyes are as red as freshly spilt blood and her skin has a greyish twinge, like a freshly embalmed corpse. "Why did you try to set me up?" I ask her, pressing the gun into her chest. "Because..." I press the gun harder into her chest, impatient for an answer. "Because, Luke... I am your sister." My head reels as my world comes crashing down around me. My sister? I have a sister? I think back to my childhood and don't remember having a sister. Thinking of his troubled past and childhood caused Bavarious to vomit. He did not like to think about his past. As the vomit pooled on the floor, he could see the reflection of the dame, his supposed sister, in the slick surface of the pool of vomit. The sight of her like that brought it all back to me, but in my distracted state, the dame gives me her best right hook right in my jaw, and the world turns black...

## Chapter 9

# The Girl

By leb388

The night was cool and dark, unusual for summer. But then again, it was a night for unusual things. Slashes of rain whipped at my face as I navigated the alley. Fireworks vomited sparks of blue and red into the sky. The booms sounded more like gunshots from Berettas. I should know; I have one. I am a private detective.

My name is Bavarious. Luke Bavarious.

I'd been at the bar, kicking back a few martinis, when I got a call about a noise complaint. I work every night if I have to, even the Fourth of July. The job sounded easy enough, and after all, the people need me. I am their protector. I am Luke Bavarious.

But on this night, I wasn't as alone as I thought. As I walked along, I heard the sound of footsteps. I stopped. "Who's there?" I yelled, raising my Beretta.

No response.

I tensed. "Come out where I can see you," I ordered. "Now."

A child stepped out of the shadows and into the trashy street. I say that because the street was littered with trash. The people there were usually nice.

Most of the time.

I holstered the Beretta, at ease. The girl looked young. Maybe six, could even be seven. Who knows, in this town. Probably lost. She clutched a doll and wore a dark raincoat. Not like that was any help, in this torrential weather.

"Are you okay?" I asked her. "Do you need help?"

"I need to find my mommy," she whimpered. She was crying.

A girl that young shouldn't be alone in an alley off 42nd St. in New York. Especially on a night like tonight. I pulled out my phone to call to see if anyone reported her missing, but something was wrong. I looked up at the

sky. Fireworks still going at it like crazy missiles exploding in the air. That's what they were. Missiles. And that's when I saw it. The creature. The item the girl was holding wasn't a doll after all—it was a monster. It had buttons for eyes. There was no mouth, just stitches. The hair was yarn.

"Get out of here, fiend of hell!" I screamed.

I grabbed it. If you can call it an it. The hands were soft. At least until I flung it into the puddle. Then they were wet. I screamed, shooting at it with my Beretta. I felt a fear no one should ever have to experience, a fear of the worst possible things, a fear of death and everything around it. It was taking hold of me, drowning me, and I kept spinning and spinning in the abyss of its grip. I felt like vomiting. Maybe that was just from the martinis. I shot it again and again, and so on. And then I stopped.

A flash of light made me see its face. Kind. Adorable. Just a doll after all.

Why do I always investigate noise complaints when I'm drunk? Suddenly, the girl was sobbing. And I felt like an asshole.

## Chapter 10

# The Runaway

By scarycactusjunior

Jimbo hawked a giant ball of phlegm between his dangling feet off the boat dock and stared into the murky water as he watched his creation sink to the murky inky depths of the lake. Watching it, he thought long and hard about his current situation with his Pa. Pa was starting to frighten him with his publicly known alcoholism. Every horrible night Pa would sit on the porch of the rustic swamp cabin in the wicker rocking chair by the front door and drink his Coors repeatedly for hours. And then, with his eyes horribly bloodshot he would come stomping back into the cabin and find Jimbo for the nightly beating. Sometimes the beatings were so bad they would leave Jimbo in a sobbing heap, his blood and tears mixing together on his lips. Pa wasn't always like this, Jimbo had vague memories of happier times; the sunshine days of his early childhood when his mother was still alive and Pa hadn't drank so much.

Jimbo heard the front door of the cabin slam, followed by Pa's heavy, booted footfalls. The wicker rocker began to creak. Jimbo noticed that the sun was rapidly sinking, the drinking would begin soon, followed by the almost ritualistic beating.

Jimbo thought to himself. He thought that he didn't have to return to the cabin. He could make Pa come looking for him in the swamp, at night, while drunk. Decided, Jimbo arose and proceeded to make his way deep into the swamp, trying to get as far away from the cabin before full dark made it impossible to find his way through the swamp. He tried not to think of how the cypress trees looked like forlorn entities locked forever in their torment because of the way the fading daylight lit them, or of the stories his friend Benny used to tell about the Swamp Creature.

The Swamp Creature was said to be a being of such hideous countenance that it would drive any who were unfortunate to see its horrible face completely and totally insane. Privately Jimbo thought it was the thing that

had made the crocodile eat his mother all those years ago. Jimbo remembered the sight of all that blood on the water; red blood on black water that boiled and roiled like a vicious tempest. Jimbo shuddered and tried to push those thoughts out of his mind.

Distracted as he was, Jimbo slipped on a patch of slimy mud and slid on his buttocks a little way into the swamp-water. He jumped up quickly and stared wild-eyed around him, looking out for crocs. His heart was pounding; he could feel the blood pounding in his ears. Suddenly, he was very afraid. He fought the sob welling up within him and went on his way. It was too late to turn back.

He saw something then, a glint of gold in the reeds. Bending down to get a closer look, he noticed it was a badge of some sort. Jimbo picked it up and felt a feeling dread wash over him; it was a slightly tarnished police badge. Jimbo read the name on it aloud.

"Bavarius..."

There was a squelching sound behind him, and Jimbo turned around to come face-to-face with a creature straight out of nightmares. It looked like it had been a man once, but now it had no eyes and only one shriveled ear remained. It looked almost half-melted and inhuman.

Jimbo vomited great jets of putrid vomit into the swamp. Some of it landed on the Creature and made it even more horrendous to look at. Jimbo vomited again until he could vomit no more. Tears sprang into his eyes and he sobbed loudly, vainly. The Swamp Creature moved its stumpy arm to catch the paralyzed Jimbo and crush him into the once-chest. It breathed its foul swampy breath into Jimbo's face as it spoke.

"I am Luke Bavarius."

At only thirteen years old, young Jimbo went instantly insane.

Two days later, there was an article in the newspaper about a bizarre murder that had happened out at Old Man James's cabin. Old Man James had been found dead in his wicker rocking chair, a brass police badge shoved into his jugular. He had not even dropped the beer he had been holding. On the cabin walls behind him, written in blood and vomit was a single cryptic word scrawled over and over: "Bavarius". Police searched the cabin and found James's son rocking on his heels in the back room, wearing only urine-stained briefs and giggling softly to himself. He was taken into custody and placed in the State mental hospital, where he remains to this day singing softly to himself over and over.

"Bavarius."



## Chapter 11

# Luke From Payroll

By mboger

I sat down at my desk. The sound had come again. It was my phone ringing. My hand shook slightly with the heavy receiver in my hand. The sleek receiver was transmitting and receiving, ready to take the call. I work in the payroll department. My name is Luke Bavarious. I hate my fucking job.

People had been complaining about discrepancies in their paychecks for about a year now, so I finally decided to execute the plan I had been working on for as long as I can remember. I was assigned to raise the Demon Lord Gol'Sothog from the fiery pits of hell.

I spoke into the phone, "Payroll, this is Bavarious. Luke Bavarious."

On the other end of the line, "Hey, Lou, this is Bill Taylor over in..."

"Luke," I interrupted. "The name is Luke Bavarious."

"Ok, sorry. Whatever. The reason I'm calling is..."

"Say it," I interrupted again.

"What?"

I was starting to lose my cool. "Luke. Bavarious. LUKE! FUCKING! BAVARIOUS!"

"Jesus, Luke! Sorry! Luke Bavarious, Luke Bavarious, Luke Bavarious," Bill sniveled into the phone. He doesn't deserve to live and it was then I made up my mind. "Man, you need to switch to decaf. Listen, -Luke-. I have a problem on my last paycheck. I had 3 hours of overtime last week that I wasn't paid for and Debbie over in HR told me to take it up with you."

Over the last year or so, I, Luke Bavarious, have been slowly syphoning money out of employee paychecks to fund my Demon Lord Gol'Sothog sacrificial altar. Twenty bucks here, fifty bucks there. It adds up.

"Not a problem, Bob," intentionally mistaking his name and then pausing for him to respond. He doesn't. He's so pathetic, he makes me vomit in my mouth a little bit and then I have to force myself to swallow it down. He's

barely worthy of sacrificing to Gol'Thogthog, but he'll do. And because he made me swallow my own vomit, his sacrifice will be slow and painful. "I see the missing hours here. Why don't you come up to my office and I'll square you away."

"Sounds good. I'll be right up!" The phone disconnects.

He's fallen for my ruse. Hook. Line. And Sinker. And Luke Bavarious.

I have about two minutes to prepare, but that's two more minutes than I need. I'm Luke Bavarious, always prepared. I'm hiding behind the door with a syringe full of knock-out serum when Bill enters my office. He doesn't even put up a struggle as I slide the syringe into his neck, the needle vomiting forth sweet slumber into his veins.

Bill doesn't wake up until just after midnight. I had waited until everyone had left the office for the night before loading Bill into the back of my Dodge SRT-4. A lot of people think the SRT-4 is just a Dodge Neon with a turbo, but fuck those guys, I love this car. I drove my totally sweet SRT-4 to the secret location of the Demon Lord Gol'Sahblah sacrificial altar and waited.

Bill's eyes open and he tries to speak, but he can't. Did I mention that my knock-out serum was also a paralyzing toxin? Bavarious! Bill is laying on a solid gold altar, surrounded by dark, fiendish incense burners. Expensive incense. I had to import it from Thailand and everything. This is why I was skimming money from paychecks. Have you ever priced a solid gold sacrificial altar? I mean, it's not like you can just walk into Bed Bath and Beyond and pick one out. This shit is expensive.

I raise the jewel encrusted ceremonial sacrificial dagger over Bill's body. His eyes widen in terror. It's the only movement he's capable of making, thanks to the knock-out/paralyzing toxic serum, which also wasn't cheap, by the way. I can't stress enough how much money this whole thing has set me back.

I began chanting. With each long forgotten word uttered, I can feel the power in the room increasing. A dark mist begins to swirl and in that mist I see another dimension. Closer, closer, two worlds are becoming one. There is only one last thing left to do. I plunge the dagger into Bill's heart and the ever so slowly twist the blade. I lean over and whisper into Bill's hear, "Bavarious."

I'm then instantly thrown to the ground as an interdimensional rift opens, unleashing the Demon Lord Gol'Sobeys from his hellish prison. The Demon Lord smiles at me and I smile back.

"YOU HAVE DONE WELL, LUKE BAVARIOUS. NOW THAT I AM FREE, THERE WILL BE NO STOPPING ME. I WILL RULE THIS WORLD AND EVERYONE WHO INHABITS IT."

"All glory be to Gol'Bladder!," I shout.

"YOU HAVE SHOWN YOURSELF TO BE A FAITHFUL SERVANT. AS SUCH, YOU SHALL BE REWARDED. YOU WILL BE MY RIGHT HAND WHEN I ENSLAVE THIS PUNY WORLD. YOU WILL HOLD THE HIGHEST RANK IN MY ARMY. THE RANK OF PAYROLL ADMINISTRATOR."

I staggered backwards and fell onto a desk that had materialized behind me. A nameplate sparkled on the side of the desk. Bavarius. I picked up the phone and heard a horrible ring tone. Suddenly, I was sobbing.

The moral of the story: Kids should be respected and listened to.



## Chapter 12

# Thursday

By Smokey

### Chapter 1

Luke Bavarious sat on the sidelines feeling completely helpless as he watched his team lose yet another game to their cross town rivals, the Anencephaly High Babies. "That Dan thinks he's soooo good at basketball, but one day I'll show him!" he silently mouthed to a passerby who made the unfortunate mistake of making eye contact with him. He decided he had seen enough and couldn't watch anymore, mainly due to the fact that the game was over. Suddenly, he had to poop.

Luke made his way to the dumpster behind the gymnasium. As he pulled his overalls down to relieve himself, he noticed a pair of girls walking along a path about 25 feet to the right of him. "I must have sex to those girls!" Luke yelled at the birds flying over head. He quickly finished his business and tossed his diaper into a nearby tree.

"Oh, you like those girls do you?" a deep voice boomed from above.

Luke looked up and saw a large, muscular black man sitting in a tree branch directly above him. The man hopped down and immediately began dribbling a basketball with both hands, or "double dribbling" as it's referred to in the NBA.

"Sure, I like those girls and I want to lose my virginity by carefully placing me boner inside of their girl boners, what do you think about that!" answered Luke.

"You know what you'd like better than losing your virginity?" the man coyly asked. "Never having sex, that's what!"

"Wow I never thought about it like that! Heeeey...what's your name anyhow mister?" asked Luke.

"My name is AC Green, and i'm a virgin."

## Chapter 2

The next morning, AC picked Luke up in his light blue 2003 Dodge Caravan. They whistled the theme song to "The Adams Family" in perfect unison as they headed to the karate dojo to learn some much needed self defense.

"You're going to eventually find that women will try and make you do things you don't want to do Luke, and that sometimes the word "NO" just isn't enough to stop them from hassling you." AC said, his eyes searching for a parking spot the entire time. "That's why we're going to learn some self defense moves today".

They spent the next 4 hours rolling around the matt and throwing nasty elbows and flying jump kicks at invisible female assailants, the rest of the class watching in awe and slight confusion as AC and Luke kept yelling "No means no lady!" and "That's my penis! You leave him be woman!"

An hour later, as Luke was exiting the police car, he turned and asked the officer, "What's gonna happen to him? What will you do with AC?"

"He's a dangerous man and we've been after him for a long time. You should thank your lucky stars we caught him before he did anything to you kid!" shouted the policeman back at Luke.

"Well at least he'll stay abstinent in prison!" Luke said.

Their laughter echoed throughout the otherwise quiet neighborhood.

Kids need to be respected too!

**The End**

## Chapter 13

# L.B.; V.H.E. (the extended directors cut, with deleted scenes

By Barometer

Luke sat in the dimly lighted corner of an underused and over-bright bar.

“Almost noon” he thought to himself “they should be fast asleep by now.”

Shifting his considerable bulk, he managed to stand on his one good leg, supporting himself with a hand on the table while his other hand reached for his cane; an old waking cane bought from a dealer in Soho many years past.

“God I’ve really let myself go since the accident” he whispered to no-one “maybe I’ll look into that Pilates shit...or something.”

He rolled his one good eye towards the pretty barmaid, a buxom blonde who was eyeing him suspiciously. His meaty paw fished out a couple of bills and dropped them unceremoniously onto the wet tabletop, next to his three empty glasses.

“Hurr” he spewed “That’ll teach her not to return my flirtations...uppity bitch.” He gave her a smile that would wither a rose, showing his rotten teeth that were green and yellow as vomit.

Lurching forward like some hellish zombie, he headed for the door.

Once outside, on the street, he shielded his eyes from the bright sunshine “Jesus I hate Kansas!” he shouted, and a couple of elderly people strolling by averted their gaze. He snarled at them, like some wild animal that had been too long held in a cage and was only now getting its first taste of sweet freedom. “fuckers” he mumbled.

Luke was an old man now, even though he was only forty. He had seen so much; things that would make your skin crawl right off your body. Things that could curdle milk by just being discussed. Luke was a Vampire hunter, in the classical sense. Luke was very, very good at his job. Checking the swordcane with a swift motion, and satisfying himself that it was still good and sharp and made of the finest ebony, he trundled down the street towards the old Biddick Mansion looking like some undead pimp, rolling towards his best girl.

"Those goddamn Vampires'll be vomiting blood from their throats, ere this day is finished" he vowed to heaven above "Or my name's not; Luke Bavarius, Vampire Hunter Extraordinaire!"

A boy of about 12 happened to be standing nearby, and when he heard this his eyes sparkled with a devilish glee.

"Hey, mister...you goin' up to the ol Biddick place?"

"So what if I am, you little shit?" Luke gnashed his rotten teeth

"Better not, I hear them folks is crazy...and they got some kinda dawg that wanders the grounds during the daytime. Never see 'em lessen it's nighttime."

Bavarius gave the tyke a once-over, and answered "Izzat right...well, guess it's a good thing I have this Beretta then, huh?" as he spoke, Luke eased his brown courdory overcoat aside, showing off a holstered Beretta 9mm, worn gunslinger style, with the butt facing forward. "I imagine THIS will take care of that old DAWG" he imitated the boys thick accent. He swooned a bit from the heat, and sweating copiously, continued his roll down the street. Following at a short distance, the boy followed, shoeless and dressed only in blue coveralls, worn from use and neglect. His bare feet were covered in sores and wounds garnered from his time playing in the dirt and rocks surrounding the little no-name town they were in. His eyes were wide, and full of anticipation. He had never before seen a man this grossly overweight, and was intrigued.

After a few minutes, Luke felt as if the eyes of Satan himself were upon him, so he swung around fiercely, whipping out his sidearm "WHO DAT?!" he cried his good eye searching and looking crazily around until it alighted on the small figure in front of him.

The boy jumped from fright, and for a moment he felt as if his heart was going to burst from his chest, spewing crimson blood across the dusty sidewalk "IT'S JUST ME MISTER" he shouted, thinking the geezer must be hard of hearing if he had not noticed him following by then "I WANNA HELP, MISTER!"

"HELP?" Shouted Luke, unconsciously imitating the boy and shouting back; "I DON'T-" he suddenly realised he was shouting, and dropped his voice seeing that another couple across the street were watching, intently "I Don't need your help, kid...now, buzz off...get lost...scram. Comprende?"

The nameless waif wondered what the hell "Comprende" meant, but the rest of the message was clear enough. "Fine, you ol' bastard...go on, get yourself killed, see if I care!" and with that, he ran off.



It took Luke another ten minutes of lurching to gain the front gate of the fenced in yard surrounding the mansion. "HmMMM, I don't SEE any big dog" He continued to roll his single, jaundiced eye back and forth, looking in vain for any sign of a guard dog. Satisfied that there was no sign of such a beast, he opened the gate and hobbled up the front path to the stairs leading onto the porch. He unintentionally farted. Once in front of the massive oak double-doors, he swung his eye around for another look. Again, there was nothing to challenge him, and as he considered knocking, the doors parted of their own accord, affording him access to the darkened foyer of the seemingly uninhabited mansion.

"CREEEEEEEEAK" went the doors, and when they were fully apart, L.B. (As his one and only friend called him) took stock of the room revealed before his eye.

It was a small room, comfortable and sparsely decorated. There were a couple cameos on the wall, and a small desk, covered in what looked to be unopened mail. L.B. knew there were Vampires in this place, he could smell the stink of hell itself in this place and he figured that like all of their ilk, they would be holed up in the basement, sleeping their undead sleep in coffins filled with the dirt of their original resting places.

He shifted his weight "God-DAMN it I gotta lose some poundage" he cursed. After a cursory search of the downstairs, he found what appeared to be a locked door to the basement, and he put his left ear up to it and listened.

"HmMMM, sounds like a heart beating...that's odd" He tried the door, but as he had surmised; it was locked!

Suddenly the door came crashing in on him, and the portal vomited forth a huge, black dog...some kind of mutant Great Dane he thought fleetingly, as it quickly bit into his neck, tearing out his windpipe and causing Luke to make the most horrid sounds even he, in his long career of monster slaying, had ever heard.

Somehow, his fat right hand had reacted instinctively and the Beretta was alive in his hand! Bullets tore through the monstrous dogs body, knocking it backwards and slamming it against the wall. As it writhed in its death throes, Luke attempted to staunch his wound, but he knew it was too late his plump hands could find no purchase, and the wound was surely a mortal one. His vision was blurring to the point that he could barely make out the small shape coming up from the basement.

"You shoulda listened to me, mister" Said the boy in a quiet tone "I woulda showed you the cellar door, and then ol Blackwood there woulda never bit ya!"

"Gurgle..cough, spit" was all Luke could get out, and as the life ebbed from him, laying on that dirty linoleum kitchen floor, all he could think was; "Shit, why didn't I listen to that kid?" The boy crouched down in front of him, and just as his eye glazed over he caught sight of a family portrait on the wall...some cheesy mall photobooth picture, enlarged, of the boy...with the name "Ben" in faux spraypaint letters and some other bling he couldn't

quite make out, before the Angel of Death took him.

“Ma and Pa are gonna be SO PISSED that you killed Blackwood...” said the boy to the corpse, glancing over to the lifeless dog “Maybe ma will raise ya, so they can punish ya!” again his eyes filled with an evil gleam.

With that, he gave a shrill laugh, and ran as fast as he could back down the stairs, anticipation bubbling forth like boiling coffee.

## Chapter 14

# The Painter

By Hamelin

The boy who wanted to be a painter stared at his canvas. His canvas was blank and it stared back at him. He had many other blank canvasses and they also stared at him. All the big squares of white were empty like his mind. He could think of nothing to paint onto the canvas. It drove him crazy. He would never be popular if he had nothing but blank canvasses! All of his friends told him that he would never be a painter. He knew he would show them.

Since there were no ideas in his head the wannabe painter put on his jacket and went to the art museum. There were a lot of paintings at the art museum. The difference between these paintings and his were that these paintings existed and his didn't.

"I wish I could paint paintings like these!" The boy said out loud to no one.

"Paintings like these huh?" A tall shadow suddenly appeared over the boy's head.

"Would you like to have paintings like these in this museum?" The shadow continued.

The boy spun around and standing there blocking light was a tall gentleman. He was wearing a black overcoat over a black suit. The gentleman smiled.

"Yes! Yes I would! Can you help?" The desperate wanna be painter clapped his hands together with joy.

From the gentleman's overcoat the gentleman grabbed a small wooden box and handed it over. The box was made of dark wood and was very smooth.

"Take this box home, what is in it will help you put everything onto your canvas."

"Really? Thank you sir!" The boy jumped up and down with joy.

The tall gentleman walked away without another word.

Before he knew it the boy was home again. He locked the door and excitedly opened the box. Inside the box was a paintbrush. The boy took the paintbrush into his hand and it gave him an idea. He started to paint. He painted and painted. The sun went down while he painted, the sun came up and he was still painting. He painted on every single canvas in his home until he could paint no more.

Days passed and no one heard anything from the painter. He didn't show up to school. No one saw him at the park. After a week a group of his friends broke into his house. They wanted to know if the boy was ok. What they saw when they broke down the door were hundreds of canvasses in an empty house. Paintings of furniture, paintings of household objects, paintings of carpets, paintings of his parents. Paintings of everything that would be in a house but none of those things. As they dug through house they found the painter's last painting sitting on his easel. It was a painting of the painter himself.

Most of the paintings were put in the art museum. Everyone in the town was impressed by the paintings. Everyone wanted to meet the boy who painted all the amazing paintings. They would ask the museum employees about him. They would only say that no one knew where he was. They only found his paintings in his house.

## Chapter 15

# What Went Wrong

By gigz

There is blood everywhere. My clothes are drenched with it, my hands slippery. I look down at the dead body of Mrs. Trencher, her throat still gurgling as she gasps for a final breath. The pencil in my hand is a dark crimson. Slowly beads of her blood fall to the already massive pool of blood on the floor. I look up and see that everyone is staring in horror. It then occurs to me that I am laughing harder than I ever have in my life.

Flash.

I wake up with a start, scared out of my mind. I am gripping my pencil so hard I can hear the cheap wood start to splinter. It was a dream. That's all it was. Hell of a dream though. My name is Luke Bavarious. I am seventeen years old, and a senior in high school. I am not shut-in, I am not excluded by my peers, and I am not ridiculed and mocked. Frankly, people just like me and I get along with everybody. I think something has happened to me. I just have no idea what.

Mrs. Trencher is my English Literature professor. I have never harbored any sort of ill-will towards her. Her tests can be a bitch, but she is not a disagreeable person. Her classroom habits don't evoke the anger of any student. She is all-around well liked and respected. She gives us candy when we study for tests as a class. She gives us candy when we aren't studying.

There is no reason that dream should have happened. I got plenty of sleep last night. I wasn't up late, and I fell asleep right away. I woke up on time, I had a bowl of cereal and a glass of orange juice, and I made it to school without being rushed.

It's 11:32. Class is continuing as normal, and Mrs. Trencher didn't notice me sleeping. Then again, she is the type of professor that continues on with her lesson with, or without, your participation. If you miss the material, it is your own fault. I shake my head and continue copying her lecture notes into my notebook. At this point, I have zoned out and am copying the notes

without paying any attention to what they are. I'll read them over lunch, so I at least know what she is talking about.

"The elements of gothic fiction are easy to identify. In almost all of them, a woman is trapped in a circumstance she cannot escape from. This is usually a house. She has little time before she suffers 'a fate worse than death.' There is something or someone keeping her in the house, by means of force or obligation. Somewhere in the text, her savior will enter the house, learn of the situation and save her from that Hellish fate."

Flash.

I look up from my notebook, and see the blonde pony-tail of the classmate in front of me. With my face torn in a bloodthirsty rage, I reach forward and grab a hold of it. I yank it back towards me, her face now staring at the ceiling in pain and confusion. Without a word, I lunge forward and plunge my pencil deep into her left eye. She screams. I scream. She is screaming from the pain, I am screaming because I am delighted. I twist the pencil deeper into her eye-socket. She convulses, and I hold fast. I stand up, leaving Jenny to writhe in her chair. I look at my hand. I slowly drag my tongue across my middle finger, savoring the taste of her blood.

I laugh harder than I have ever laughed in my life.

Flash.

I wake up on the floor next to my desk, tears stinging my eyes. Everyone is crowded around me; Mrs. Trencher has sent Jenny off for the nurse. Her eye is fine. I look up at the concerned faces hovering over me.

"I'm fine; really...I've just been feeling a little ill. That's all." The words have to be choked out through the tears. I try to stand, only to find a hand on my shoulder, keeping me at my position on the ground.

"Francis, are you sure you're okay? You shouldn't try to move. Jenny went to get the nurse, just sit tight." Mrs. Trencher's voice is thick with worry. She was one of the few who cared about her students. For a split second, at the mention of Jenny's name, I had the image of my pencil twisted deep into her cornea. I almost throw-up.

"N-no, I'm okay, really..." I pull myself to my feet, using my desk as a crutch. I'm not really okay as I say I am. I am unsure on my feet, and my vision is blurry. Everything is swimming, but at least there isn't any blood. I look around at my classmates; every one of them is staring at me horrified. I'm not the first person to faint in class. Melissa did two weeks ago in Biology. We were dissecting frogs, and she is squeamish. As it turns out, I had screamed in absolute terror, fallen out of my desk, and laid on the floor convulsing in tears.

Jenny walks through the classroom door, a very scared looking Ms. Surough, the school nurse, in tow. I look up at Jenny, tears still fresh in my eyes. Ms. Surough sets an arm around my shoulders and leads me out of the room. I numbly follow her direction towards the nurse's office. Something is wrong with me, and I don't know what.

Ms. Surough tells me to lie down on the couch in her office. I happily oblige.

"So, what happened, Francis? Are you okay?" Her voice stays level, but you can tell she is concerned. You can see it in her eyes. The only thing I can think of when I look at her is the image of my brutally attacking Jenny. What the fuck is happening?

"I'm fine, really. I just think I'm overtired...I didn't eat this morning. I think that's it. Just overtired and a little stressed from work. Really, I'm okay." I'm trying to convince myself more so than Ms. Surough.

That's it, really. I'm just stressed from work. I guess I did go to bed too late, and didn't eat enough for breakfast. I'm okay. Really, I'm O.K.

I am O.K.





## Chapter 16

# The Ninjas

By KryonikMessiah

Luke Bavariious was walking through a busy street, the landscape riddled with urban decay. A building here, windows shattered, foul smoke emitting from it's fetid chimney. A rusted out car there, looking as if it had been sitting there for a good decade or five. And all around was the constant buzz of midday traffic. Bavariious, however, had other plans on his mind, as he walked into a building. The building was tall...too tall.

"This building is tall...TOO tall", Bavariious thought to himself, one hand clutched to a Smith and Wesson .44 in his pants and the other holding a beer. Suddenly, out of the corner of his eyes, Bavariious saw a flash! As he turned around to investigate, a ninja appeared! "Come on, you commie scum!" said Bavariious, as he fired at the ninja. But the ninja cut the bullet in half! Bavariious jumped back and stared the ninja straight in the face as they began circling each other in this old, decrepit factory.

Bavariious narrowed his eyes. These ninjas were a tricky sort. Just as he narrowed his eyes, a board broke over the back of his head. Turning around, Luke Bavariious glared at another ninja in anger, who was shivering with fear, a wet spot covering the crotch of his costume as he held the piece of a broken board. Bavariious snatched the pants right off the ninja, and turned around just in time as the other ninja was leaping at him with a karate kick. Bavariious wrapped the pants around his face, and he fell to the ground choking, but then the other ninja made his move!

Bavariious found a knife in his shoulder, which began spraying green vomit and blood all over the Ninja, and he pulled it out and turned around, only to duck the broken board. He stabbed the knife into the ninja's hand, nailing it to the ground, and picked up the broken piece of board, driving it through the Ninja's head in one fell swoop, and it exploded into a spray of brains and blood! Luke Bavariious was on the lookout for more ninjas, when suddenly he saw two children, a little boy and a little girl, standing

maybe ten feet away from him. A dead ninja was on the ground, and the two kids were happily tearing his eyeballs out of his skull. Luke Bavariious grimaced at this, when suddenly, he realized his gun was missing just as another ninja burst through the wall.

That, however, was fine. The little girl picked up a pistol off the ground, which went un-noticed by the ninja, who sworded out his katana at great attack. Taking a chop at the little boy, he was stopped in his tracks as Luke Bavariious tossed a vomit covered pillow at him, which struck him in the face, and the little girl accidentally pulled the trigger, shooting the ninja square between his legs.

The next day, all ninjas fled the city. Their three brothers in arms had fallen, and no ninja was mighty enough to stand up to Luke Bavariious. Children the world over rejoiced.

The End.

## Chapter 17

# The School

By IShallRiseAgain

John Jones was your average every-day student at Livingston Middle School. He was also very late. He hurried into his classroom for the gifted students of which he was the smartest and coolest. He hated his teacher, Miss Diablocious, she was always giving them homework and pop quizzes. "Your late, John Jones! You get a detention!" shrieked Miss Diablocious. "Third one this week" thought John as he sat down with a smirk.

When school was over he headed over to Miss Diablocious's room. Another student, George Smith, was already there. "You boys have been behaving badly, and we can't have that can we?" proclaimed Miss Diablocious. Suddenly her face started stretching and contorting, and she grew ghastly fangs. George was screaming and vomiting at the same time. Her jaws stretched, and she bit off the head of George. His arteries started spewing copious amounts of blood all over the place. Licking the blood off her face, Miss Diablocious shouted "Your next!" John was ready though and pulled out his berretta. "Pop Quiz time, what happens when I shoot a bullet through your brain?", he exclaimed and then unleashed a hail of bullets into her head.

A police officer rushed in to see what was going on. Upon seeing the grotesque body of Miss Diablocious, he turned to John. Expecting praise for killing the abomination of nature, he was surprised when the officer unloaded a full clip into him with his own berretta. Sighing the officer stated, "Damn public schools!".



## Chapter 18

# The Smile

By Paracetamol Boy

*Narrated by Luke Bavarius*

I woke to a darkened room. The streetlights outside my window cast eerie shadows onto the floor. My mouth tasted carpet. My entire body was immobilised with searing pain. I managed, with great difficulty, to turn my swollen face toward my left. The living area was littered with broken furniture.

So it had come to this. My wife had taken the kids and left me for dead in what was once our family apartment in the central hub of New York City. Blood seeped out the open wounds of my trunk and saturated my dark blue clothing with an even darker sheen. There the knife lay still, blade digging into the carpet in front of my face. My own knife, that my own wife had turned on me.

I could hear the soft wails of the police sirens from the streets below. That was the least of my worries. Despite my dizzied state, my thoughts drifted to my lovely kids, Johnny and Sasha. I wondered if I would see them again, if they were safe. The steadily loudening sirens registered faintly in the back of my mind...

Suddenly, I had a flash of mental clarity. It was the insight of a dying man. I could not fight to live. I had lost too much blood, the evidence of this mixing with the contents of my voided bladder and slowly pooling around me like a seeping fountain of death. I was a broken man. There was the chance an arterial bypass would keep me alive, but even if I lived there was nothing to live for. I didn't want to let anyone else think otherwise for me.

The knife was only inches from my face. My good arm, my left arm, could move but only with mind-numbing pain. Slowly, agonizingly, I brought the arm closer and closer toward the knife. I grasped its handle and lifted it from the carpet. Each action was excruciating. But pain is only temporary, for in death there is the ultimate release. My thoughts drifted again to

Johnny and Sasha, as I used every ounce of my remaining strength to roll onto my back. I positioned the knife in front of my chest and closed my eyes...

"Daddy." I recognised the voice and opened my eyes. In the dark, I could see two small silhouettes sitting cross-legged beside me.

"Johnny?"

The silhouette on the left nodded at me and smiled. The smile had no lips, only teeth. I shook.

"Daddy, what are you doing?" the shadow on the right enquired meekly. Sasha?

"Daddy...daddy's going away for a while," I whispered. The knife was still in my hand, in front of my chest, frozen in place.

"Look...daddy can't be with you guys for very long anymore. I won't be alive for long...I must go."

"But you can't go, Daddy." The silhouette on the left was still smiling, the white of his teeth glowing eerily in the darkness. "If you go...I'll eat Sasha." The teeth spread to a grin.

"Johnny..." I gasped. As I looked on, Johnny's grin seemed to grow wider and wider. The rows of teeth separated to form a hole between them, and the hole widened to a yawning chasm of unfathomable darkness. A different voice emanated from the hole. "Daddy," it drawled. "If you go...I'll eat Sasha."

Still in immense pain, I balked, speechless, at the two shadows in front of me, one sitting silently, the other leering at me, teeth as far apart as a basketball, face torn apart by a chasm.

My vision blurred and it became increasingly difficult to breathe. The knife dropped from my hand. Between ragged breaths, I gasped weakly. "Johnny...you have your mother's smile."

Then, as suddenly as they had appeared, the silhouettes were gone, leaving only the space they had occupied.

I wept bitterly.

## Chapter 19

# The Dock

By ack!

This lake seemed ordinary enough. The drive to this lake seemed also ordinary enough, though the road was windy and tedious. The unfortunate youngest child of the Bavarius family, Luke, endured riding in the very back seat of the Buick station wagon. With each twist on the windy road to the lake, Luke suppressed his twisting stomachs urge to purge and vomit due to the car sickness his seat on this ride caused him. "I hate this drive and I told them we shouldn't go this year. I hate being the youngest. I always have to sit back here and get car sick, but that doesn't matter to anyone, especially my dad who never listens to me", Luke thought while feeling the bile raise to his throat. "This ride better end soon" he wished, but the ride was really just beginning.

Upon reaching the cabin at the lake they drove to, Luke's family unpacked for a week's vacation during the summer break from school. Luke ran to catch up to his older siblings who were faster than him as they each ran to claim their bunks in the cabin. The ride left him more nauseas than ever and he had no hope of getting a bunk in the main room. As usual, his bunk would be the one in the back room at the back of the house. Once again he found himself at the back of it all in the most uncomfortable place and anything he said about it would go unnoticed and uncared about. Needing fresh air to clear his head and most importantly, his churning stomach of suppressed oral violence which was nearing critical mass, Luke ventured outside, alone. He knew this trip would be bad and the start was proving it.

Behind the cabin was a trail. Dreary and barren, this trail had seen no visitors all year. Vines grew across its misshapen cobblestones. He tried to skip as children do, but the uneven stones reached up to trip him. Even the ground he walked on tried to make his life miserable. Luke pressed on.

At the end of the trail, which led from the house to the lake, a dock that rivaled an elderly woman's wrinkled and cracked skin wound its way above

the lake's depths. No one knew the origins of the dock, but it had endured every frigid winter and every scorching summer since its birth. Neglected and uncared without a repairman's hands to repair it, the dock barely held together with each board twisting and splintering.

Creeping like a silent cat on the hunt for its prey, Luke crept onto the dock. Engulfed in the mist of the lake which surrounded him like a funeral curtain, he made his way to the end where he sat on the end of the dock and put his feet into the water. The coolness felt good to him and made his stomach settle and no more churn like a vile popcorn machine ready to spew forth a vomit of undigested cheese and crackers that was his only meal for the day.

Peering into the waters, Luke was surprised at the stillness and the clearness of the lake. As the cruel world spun around him, he could see through the very depths to the bottom which shimmered. He could see his reflection coming in and out of shape. As he stared, it seems time froze and the world stopped turning. His face became without a shape and disappeared entirely. The faces of his siblings floated by instead, pushing him out of the way. Then after that, the faces of his parents, who never listened or cared for their youngest child mocked him in his place.

Feeling colder than ever before, Luke felt a fiery fury explode in his blood boiling heart. His mind spun deeper and darker than the largest tornados in Kansas. His eyes bulged, each vain throbbing and pumping their purple liquid to increase his vision. The real picture began to form. This lake was a mirror, a portal, a crystal ball to show his life, show his future.

The water's blue gave way to rust as each body flowed by while blood drained from within. "This is my life", Luke realized, "this is my work. Whoever won't listen, whoever won't get out of the way, this is where I must put them, this is where they will pay".

Snapping awake, Luke glared at his aged reflection in the window lighted by the moonlight in the night sky. His thoughts settled as his memory cleared and the pain rose burning and bright like the devouring flares of the Sun.

"No!! This was not me!j'

"You did this, Horace Manslasher. You took my family that day while I was at the dock and no one would join me. Now I'm coming for you."



## Chapter 20

# The Mansion of Horror

By rinski

Luke Bavarius stood before the haunted mansion of GhostRaven Mansion. Black bats circled above, haloing the yellow moon. Luke reached into his pocket. The cold steel of his Baretta reassured him.

Legend had it the mansion contained untold riches. Luke liked the sound of that.

Earlier that day a local kid had tried to stop Luke.

"Don't go to the haunted mansion. It's too dangerous. It kills people. It never loses."

"I think I can handle myself, kid." Luke said, smirking.

THUD! Luke kicked the mansion's heavy wooden doors open. He was in a large living room, 50 feet wide. All the furniture was covered with ghostly white sheets and a chandelier hung ominously overhead. There were lit torches on the walls.

Suddenly, all of the furniture exploded. Luke shielded his face with his arms. Splinters tore at his leather jacket. The splinters reformed into a giant wood golem. The golem surged to life. It's eyes glowed with arcane evil.

Luke smirked.

He grabbed a torch from the wall. He threw it. The wooden giant burst into blue flames. It burned as though it were made of tinder and lighter fluid. The giant fell to its knees in wooden agony and then unexploded back into furniture. The haunted white sheets flew back to again cover the furniture.

"Getting the treasure from this haunted mansion will be a breeze." Luke asserted, smirking.

The next room was a gigantic ball room with chandeliers and a wooden floor. One wall was covered in old oil paintings. The other wall was a gigantic window with giant red curtains. He could see the garden. The

hedges looked ominous. "Probably plant monsters." Luke murmured. He took a step into the room. Suddenly, zombies were clawing their way out of the wooden floor. Their empty eye sockets were slick with green rot. It glinted sickly in the moon light. Luke's nostrils were attacked by the zombie's horrid stench.

Then Luke was attacked by the zombies themselves.

Luke pulled out his Baretta. He emptied a few bullets into the mushy heads of the advancing undead army. The bullet wounds oozed blood and pus but the zombies just kept coming.

"They just keep coming!" Luke joked, smirking.

He had to act fast. He ran around the zombies and their zombie holes so he wouldn't trip. Zombies dove at him. Luke dodged the deft attacks. Zombies dove left and right. Barely, Luke made it to the other side of the room. As soon as he stepped out of the room there was a flash. All the zombies disappeared and the floor grew back. The room looked exactly as it did initially. Luke was astonished. He stepped back into the room. Zombies poured from the floor like oozing pus. Luke stepped back. The zombies disappeared. Luke chuckled. He did this for one minute then moved to the next room.

The next room was the kitchen. Immediately, all of the knives flew out of the drawers. The knives hovered lazily in the air. Then the knives flew at him. They cut through the air. Literally. Blood droplets condensed out of the air. Luke dodged out of the way of the knives attack. The knives flew past him into the meat locker, killing the monster that was hiding inside. The knives made quick work of the monster, then turned to attack Luke once again. Luke simply shut the meat locker's door. The knives clattered against the solid iron door. Luke smirked.

Luke entered the hallway out of the kitchen and was immediately attacked by a giant spider monster. "What the!" Luke uttered. But before he'd even finished uttering, the spider lurched forward. Its poison jaws opened. They tried to clamp closed on Luke's arm. Luke dodged backwards as the jaws clamped shut. The jaws etched a wound in Luke's arm, but were unable to deliver their venomous payload. In one fluid motion Luke drew his Baretta. He shot two bullets into the spider's bulging bug eyes. Two bullet casings clattered on the floor. The wound belched forth a thick green blood. The blood hissed as it hit the floor, dissolving it. The spider recoiled. Its insectoid brain was riddled with pain and fear and two bullets. But it was too late. Luke grabbed a sword from the wall. He brought it down on the spider monster's neck. The head was cleanly sliced off of the twitching body. The spider collapsed in a heap of bloody legs. The wounds vomited their acidic syrup and the floor kept dissolving.

"I'd better get out of here." Luke intoned, smirking.

As Luke was escaping down the hall, he saw a room filled to the brim with treasure. He stood there, mouth agape. He was going to be rich. He ran into the room. Suddenly, the room shimmered and disappeared. Luke fell into a void. He screamed. At the bottom of the void, as far as the eye

could see in every direction, was an unspeakably horrid beast. It was made of mouths and eyestalks and tentacles. It covered the entire floor in every direction.

Luke retched a scream. He tumbled towards the gaping maw of the horrible creature. There was no escape. As Luke fell, a figure appeared in front of him. It was the boy from before.

"The mansion never loses." The boy said, watching Luke fall.

Luke choked on a sob. It was the last sound he ever made. As Luke fell into the giant open mouth, the monster started biting him lightning fast. The bites were so fast that the teeth broke the sound barrier. Luke was dead before he knew it. He exploded into bloody slices that fell down into the beast's stomach acid.

"The mansion never loses." The boy repeated. He smirked. Then he disappeared.



## Chapter 21

# What Lurks Behind Our Eyes The Horrid Reflection Revisited

By Syphilicious!

Thursday night, and everything is quiet. Unusual for me, but in my current settings it should be expected; instead of walking my beat in the thug-infested alleys of our dear city, I am far out in the country, at Old Woman McCannshire's place, engaged in a staring contest with the termites that crawl in and out of the floor of her porch as I wait for her to answer the door. The middle of nowhere does not properly describe my location; I'd been driving so long that I'm probably already halfway out. My name is Luke Bavarius, and I'm a detective, but tonight I appear to be the guy that drives around checking under old biddies' beds for monsters.

Even the pranks get men sent out these days. A prank is what I would have thought this would be, if I didn't know the old woman calling was too addled to even have a teenager's sense of humor. McCannshire thinks her house is haunted by spirits, and wants one of us "wonderful young men you have working down there" to come check it out. I'm almost glad I forgot to bring my spare ammunition for my Beretta out here; I've used that thing enough today considering my nerves are just about as shot as those three bank robbers, and if this goose chase got any more boring I'd probably put it in my mouth and make brain gumbo.

The unlatching of bolts awakens me from my reverie, and my head snaps back up into the proper position. "You win this time, termites," I mutter, wiping a thin string of drool from my chin. Slowly, the door creaks open, and

I am treated to the sight of Mrs. McCannshire in a wispy white nightgown. Perhaps in the prime of her youth this might have been something I could have tolerated or even enjoyed, but the broad has long been in her more tender years of age, her face has more wrinkles than the wandering Jew's underwear, and her nightgown is greasy with the mysterious secretions of the elderly. I try to focus on the mangy grey poodle she cradles in one arm, a dirty little mutt that she probably pampers like nobody's business. She really fits the picture of an old bag of bones, and as soon as she opens her mouth I can tell how far gone she really is.

"Are you the detective Officer Dent sent over to help with the spirits in my house?" She speaks slowly and clearly, her eyes twin moons of gawkish innocence. I don't know which kind of dementia would be worse: the flavor Mrs. McCannshire possesses where one is magically returned to the age of nine or the other one where you think the walls are talking to you. Although, considering why I was here, it's possible she suffered from the latter too.

"Uh...yes. Yes, ma'am. Officer Dent is my, uh, superior." I stepped past her and walked inside, trying to ignore the subdued growl the mutt in her hands had started up upon sight of me. The place was clean to a point; there were numerous tables and shelves bedecked with pictures and family heirlooms, all meticulously dusted, but the carpet was smeared with dirty pawprints and general dust and filth, it's frayed and ragged material likely not blessed by the gentle touch of a vacuum cleaner for years. The carpet and walls were an ugly matching beige and all the miscellaneous objects, despite constant care, had lost their luster. The only sign of real color came from the bathroom behind the door opposite the one I had come in, wherein an even more hideous bright lime green covered the small amount of wall I could see around the door.

I turned to face her, reaching into the folds of my trenchcoat and drawing out a pack of cigarettes and my lighter. "Now, what seems to be the problem here?" A lazy puff of smoke floated serenely past my raised eyebrow from my now lit cigarette.

"Well," she said, setting the dog down onto the carpet where it did an annoying little dance around our legs, barking and whining, "I've been noticing things for several days now, but only this morning did it get really bad. You see, every time I use the bathroom I feel someone is watching me."

"How can you tell?"

"Well, at first it was just an uneasy feeling. But then I started hearing voices that would say things that I couldn't make out. Then I started seeing faces out of the corner of my eye or in a reflection. And this is happening quite often, mind you. It's happened every time I go in there, and these days I tend to... oh, how should I say it... do my business more often, mostly because my—"

"I understand, I understand," I said hurriedly. "Please, continue."

"Well, uh, this morning, I saw a face in the mirror behind me. And I didn't just see it, either; it was directly behind me, an entire person, and he

didn't go away until I turned round."

My eyebrow, which had just started to head home for the day, turned right back around and marched up my forehead. This sounded legitimately interesting. Whatever had actually happened, seeing a person plain as day was a lot better than imaginary sounds or tricks of light that even happened to people who weren't sitting outside Death's doorstep in motorized wheelchairs. There was really only one thing to do.

"Well, I guess you'll have to show me the bathroom then, Mrs. McCannshire."

"Right you are, dear." She seems to notice that my gaze had strayed to the pictures on the small table next to the front door, and as she hobbles past me towards the bathroom she begins to talk about her dead husband. Half listening to her talk about the dangers of late term prostate cancer and wincing at the intimate descriptions she gives of the times she went with him for his checkups, I search for an ashtray and find one nestled in between boxes of tissue and stack of gardening books. I rub the flame out and leave the stub, resolving not to smoke any more until I leave the house. The old woman doesn't need all that smoke.

As I join her in the bathroom, I see that her poodle has the same idea. It flies past me and sits whining at her feet until she relents and picks it up again. I stand next to her and look around the room. The mirror is old but clean, and the porcelain throne in the corner is the same. I look into the sink, and from the short, curly gray hairs lining the rim I deduce that she washes the dog in it; either that or she's more up on the trends of women of today than you'd think of a gal her age.

The horror of the thought further distracts me, and I begin to develop that thousand yard stare as she tells me about the various scary encounters she has experienced while voiding her bowels, unnecessarily clueing me in on the second part in her stories too. Technically I am looking at the hot water handle, but I am miles away, back on a real cop's beat or in the arms of a good woman, whichever one does a better job of distracting me from her current tale of a mysterious voice whispering in what she thinks is Latin and the effects of the creamed corn she had with lunch two days ago. Suddenly I spy in the reflection from the mirror that the dog has the same idea. The yappy little thing now sits silent and unmoving in her arms, staring intently into the eyes of its reflection.

At first I am grateful for the relative silence that its new object of interest has provided, but after a minute it begins to make my skin go all goosey. I've never seen a dog sit that still for anything. I slowly move my hand in front of its face, nodding to show Mrs. McCannshire I am listening at a pause in her latest story involving the cupboard swinging open and almost hitting her in the head and how the fright really helped "loosen things, down there". I pass my hand back in forth in front of the dog's vision to no effect. In a moment of clarity I drudge up the dog's name out of its owner's ramblings.

"Jasper! Hey, Jasper!" At once the dog is a flurry of motion, leaping out of her hands and latching onto the watch around my wrist with its teeth.

I stumble backwards into the main room and fall to the floor, frantically batting at the hideous ball of fur as it growls like a recently castrated bear. Instinct takes over; my mind recognizes when I am in a fight for my life even when the opponent is a 15-pound owl pellet. Without thinking I wrap the palm of the hand it grips around its head and bash it repeatedly against the edge of a bookshelf next to me, then stagger to my feet and swing it around the room, screaming to match its rabid cries. All of a sudden it flies free with a high pitched yelp and collides with the table on which the ashtray rested and the table and its contents tumble to the ground.

I approach cautiously, waiting for my opponent to make some sign of life. At once the small pile of picture frames and knickknacks erupts as Jasper flies straight towards my face.

I have anticipated it; it passes fruitlessly over my head as I lean backwards almost parallel to the floor, and I hear its frenzied growling suddenly muffled. I push my spine back into place with one hand and spin around only to see Jasper hanging from the ledge of a desk, his jaw wrapped around it and his teeth grinding into it as if he imagined it to be my arm. I act quickly, sparing no mercy. With several steps I come upon the helpless creature and I lift a booted foot to hover a foot away from the back of its skull.

"Chew on this, pooch."

There is a loud, wet crack as its skull explodes like a balloon filled with bones and blood. Its corpse falls silently to the floor, followed by the lower half of his jaw and head. The top half rests on top of the desk, firmly embedded into the wood. I curse silently to myself and wipe my foot off on the carpet, leaving behind a red smear flecked with hair and bits of bone.

All at once I come to my senses, and I turn to see Mrs. McCannshire standing at the bathroom door. For a second we both stand staring wordlessly at each other, then she utters a soft cry and flees back into the bathroom. I hear a soft click as she locks the door behind her.

I sigh and walk over, knocking on the door. "Mrs. McCannshire, I'm sorry about Jasper, okay? I shouldn't have...done that, but he was, I mean he was attacking me. There was nothing else I could do."

I continued to apologize while I listened to her sobs, trying to look anywhere but back at that head, or that part of it, those sightless eyes silently judging me. I've killed people before in my line of work, and I see their faces when I close my eyes, but now this mutt was getting to me more than any of them ever did. It was an irritable little thing, but why did it up and attack me like that? What did it see in that mirror?

I notice that the crying on the other side of the door has stopped, and for a moment I feel relief. "Mrs. McCannshire, if you can just come out here we can talk about this. Again, I'm sorry about your dog, but--"

I am interrupted by the click of the lock, and as the door slowly comes ajar I help her open it. She stands there, head down, and she looks so depressed that I can't help but resume my apologies. "If there's anything I can do to pay you back for what I did, you name it. I really can't tell you how sorry I am, I'll get you a new dog, whatever you want. I'm sure



I...could...uh..."

The look in her eyes when she raises her head is different than what you'd think a hysterical old woman would have. They're more intelligent than they were before, those eyes, and they seem to possess more menace than I assume an old lady like that would be able to muster.

One bony hand wraps around my throat with otherworldly strength, choking off the rest of the sentence. She lifts me off my feet, pulls back, and for a brief moment everything is serene.

Then I hit the wall. I slide down next to the open front door, and after my eyes uncross and the black in front of my eyes goes away I use the knob to pull myself up. I check for broken bones and don't find good news in the ribs area, but other than that I am fine, if bruised.

"Well, you've got a good arm, I have to give you that." I think over my options, running my tongue over my teeth. I can't hurt her; she's obviously just possessed by whatever possessed that dog in the mirror. I have to get the spirit out of her, or incapacitate her, but I don't know how to perform exorcisms and at her age a gust of wind could kill her. Although if she's able to throw like that maybe she's a lot stronger in other ways too. What if I tied her up?

Something makes my train of thought come to a screeching halt. It hasn't reached the station, it's gone straight off the tracks. There were no survivors.

My brain is receiving messages my tongue shouldn't be sending. It's not finding something that should be there. I grab a polished silver cup off a table and flash my teeth at my reflection. There's a black square where there should be a nice little white one.

I've lost a tooth.

This bitch is going to die.

I toss the cup and pull my piece, my finger already on the trigger. Worse men talk about how their guns sing songs that only ever have a few notes; that's played out, and anyway my Beretta never saw the appeal in singing. It yells, and it only ever needs to raise its voice once to win an argument with someone.

As I aim down the sights at the old girl now barrelling towards me from across the room with a horrifying screech, I recall something about not having ammunition, and I anticipate the empty little click. Cursing wildly, I hurl the gun at her, and it bounces off her forehead ineffectively. I reach for the knife strapped to my leg down at my ankle, but it is too late; she knocks it out of my hand with one swift strike just as I am bringing it up and it clatters against the wall. She slams me up against the same patch of wall that I'd said hello to twenty seconds ago and holds me at arm's length against the wall, my head more than two feet higher than hers and my feet off the ground clattering against the wall. Both hands are wrapped around my neck and I am rapidly losing oxygen. You need to do something now, I think. Or you're done, Luke. You're done.

Frantically my hands search for something, anything, to fight her off

with, finding nothing. I'm simply too far off the ground to reach anything. I turn my head as much as her steel fingers allow, and through my darkening vision I can barely see an umbrella stand with one large black umbrella in it. In vain I stretch my left hand towards the handle, my fingers finding air and then brushing the handle. I strain as hard as I can as the pain advances and my sight blackens, and suddenly I have a grip, I grasp it with the very tips of my fingers, bring it up to my hand. She is laughing now, piercing and mocking, delighting in her triumph. She doesn't keep it up for long. I raise the umbrella high above my head then stab it down into her open mouth and throat, pushing it into her esophagus as she spits and gurgles, her hands clutching even tighter at my neck. The handle is just past her teeth, my hand gripping it firmly even as she bites into my wrist. I use my thumb to find the release and push it up.

The umbrella is spring operated, the fabric edged with sharp metal. Her neck evaporates in a cloud of blood and her head shoots up into the air, twirling in the air like a basketball and falling to the ground with I and the rest of her body.

After a while, coughing and wheezing, I push her corpse off of me and use the blood-soaked umbrella to stand up. As soon as I try to walk towards the nearest chair, I stumble and trip over her head. Standing up again, I look back down at the bloody mess on the carpet and on me. I feel bile rising in my throat, and I turn to run to the bathroom.

I push past the door and stagger to the sink, where I vomit noisily and stand for a while, staring into this puddle of my own sick. After what seems like forever I look up and into my reflection in the mirror. I am hunched over the sink, my hands still grasping the sides, my mouth hanging open and a thin trail of vomit hanging from my lower lip. My eyes are wet with tears from the choking and the vomiting.

Truly I am a pitiful sight. I give myself a weak smile, as if it will cheer me up. I can't help but notice that something is off in my reflection, but I can't think what. Then I tongue the gap where my tooth used to be. My reflection does not. It still has the full set.

The reflection straightens its back and wipes the vomit away, dries its eyes with the sleeve of its shirt, and all I can do is stare in dumb incomprehension. It is the same short black hair, the same baby blue eyes, the same trenchcoat, the same man, yet it moves of its own free will. It is me and yet it is not me.

It has an almost condescending look in its eyes as it reaches down below the sink, to its ankle. It comes back up, my knife in its hands, its knife, and I cannot move a muscle.

There is a flash of metal. He cuts through my throat like cheesecake. The arterial spray gives a good portion of the shitty green paint job a new coat from the opposite side of the color wheel. There is a brief sense of motion, and I taste ceramic, my body thudding to the bathroom floor. I move my mouth wordlessly as red begins to creep along the grout in between the white tiles. I hear a shuffle of fabric as my other self steps through the

mirror and lowers himself from the sink to the floor. He steps over my body, taking care to not step in the advancing pool of blood.

My vision begins to cloud for the last time as he casts the knife absent-mindedly down in front me. It slides to a halt next to my forehead. He begins to walk towards the front door, then stops, turns around. He walks coolly back to me, crouches in front of me, grimacing at the blood that is in danger of soiling the knee of his pants. He looks me in the eyes, and begins to say something, then thinks better of it. He does nothing for a second, simply watches me dying, then reaches over, placing an index and middle finger on my eyelids, and then he slides them shut.

“Good night, Luke.”



## Chapter 22

# Nebulous Cupboard

By Rummanging

This city is my mistress; it is my wife; it is my secretary. All that one can feel about a city, I feel it about this one, and more. My best friend. I watch the public stream past my window, like a river flowing past rocks, the rocks being my small 1 bedroom apartment, which was by now dirty and neglected.

When I leave for my patrol, I do not check for my gun. It is as much a part of me as my toenails are of me. I am forced to bring as well, my cellular phone. In an ideal world, I could never talk to anybody, and all would be good, but it is not so I must. As the rickety door rickets behind me as I leave, I cycle through my address book.

*ABE*

*CYNTHIA*

*MOM*

*PIZZA HUT*

*DIRECTORIES*

*INFO HOTLINE*

I ring for "Abe", as I am accustomed to doing. A gruff New York accent shrieks in my ear.

"Bavarious! Thank Christ you rang, something's not right, need your help immediately! It's coming for me Luke, it's COMIII — ". I interrupt him. "Abe, what is this? Where are You?". I can tell from the tone of his voice something isn't right. "Why didn't you phone ME if something's wrong!" I said.

"Dammit Bavarious, I ran out of credit, now get your ass over here!". I slapped the phone shut like the jaws of an overprotective crocodile, and sprinted for Abe's hut. It would be a long run from here, but I can tell he needed me.

His wooden hut was hidden deep in the forest, the outside seemed normal, well as normal as it could seem, Abe being an unconventional character to say the least. In one slick simultaneous motion, I kicked the door forcefully, sending the thing flying inwards, and swept my Beretta up from my ankle holster, a task made significantly more difficult from the kick. The lights were all not on, leaving the place shrouded in darkness. I heard a noise from a closet, and rushed to meet the source. The thin door was locked, so I shot 6 holes in it, allowing me to see inside. There was nothing inside but my bullets. I carried on with my sweep.

The lounge: empty. The kitchen: empty. The bathroom: empty, save for one poo in the bowl. The Stench was fresh, and strong. Whatever left this vile gift was still here. I turn my head to check my countenance in the mirror. I am entranced, until I hear a scream from upstairs, distinctly Abe. I dart out of the room, and it lumbers after me, slowly and scarily. I find Abe's shrouded figure huddled in the corner of a blackened room. "Abe, is that you, have you been drinking again? You said you'd quit..." I enquired. He looked me in the eye, and raised his other hand. The light was so poor, I could not tell what was in it. Until he flicked the lighter on. The small light illuminated his tear soaked face, running down his cheeks, carving streams through the dirt caked on his face. The dirty rag of material hanging from the bottle neck became visible. "I'm sorry Bavarious" he whimpered, and before I had the time to react, to light the rag and tossed the bottle high in the air, shattering on the ceiling above him. Shards of glass and licks of flame fell down like hell fire onto his crumpled body. The house was wooden, and the fire spread like wildfire. "AAAAABBBBEEEEEEEE" I cried, crying for the loss of a friend. I was forced to vacate the house as fast as I could, the flames consuming the hut like the mouth of Lucifer. Just as I was maybe 20 feet from the hut, it exploded, sending shrapnel every which way. Something rock hard struck my head, I hit the floor like a rock, out cold.

Some unknown time later, the black mist tentatively receded from my vision, allowing me to see. It took moments before I recalled where I was, and I quickly looked back behind me. Nought but a single cupboard stood. I crawled to it, my legs too burned to work. Scrambling through the debris, I reached the un-charred doors, pock-marked by 6 familiar bullet holes. I tried the doors, now inexplicably unlocked. As the doors swung open, the bloodied corpse of a small child fell outwards onto me, still clutching his teddy-bear. I held the child as he held the bear, desperate for solace in our final moments. I jerked my head back and screamed to the heavens, and the skies opened.

## Chapter 23

# The Unexpected Shocking Surprise

By antiloquax

Luke Bavarious didn't know why he was called to an abandoned church. But he had been called. By the man who had killed his father. And it was the church where his father was murdered.

As he approached the crumbling iron gates of the church, a pale white boy with black eyes from out of nowhere tugged at his tan rain jacket.

"Do not go in there, mister," said the young boy.

"Nonsense!" laughed Luke Bavarious haughtily.

"What is in there will destroy you!" said the young boy.

Luke Bavarious pulled out his Colt Python and pointed it at the boys pale white head that was now sweaty with perspiration and fear. "I said nonsense," said Luke Bavarious.

But fear and bile clung to Luke's throat as he entered the church. He plunged through the rusty wooden oak doors and reached for his gun. Then he remembered he was already holding his gun. Then he crept along the church.

As he tiptoed quietly through the rotting, crumbling church, he saw that everything was black except for places that were illuminated by the pale blue light of the moon. It was a full moon. A full moon just like the night his father died.

At the altar of the church there was a shadow. Luke Bavarious cocked his pistol and pointed it at the figure. The figure was tall and intimidating and terrifying. But Luke Bavarious had seen worse in his time.

"Stop! Show yourself!" said Luke Bavarious. But the shadowy figure did not show itself. It was still a shadow.

Blam. That was the sound of Luke Bavarius' gun as he shot the shadow and killed it. Even in the moonlight, he could see the glistening red blood shimmer in the moonlight as it spewed upward and outward and everywhere else and covered the old and rotting crucifix with gore and rust colored blood.

Luke Bavarius wanted to vomit, but not because of the head that had exploded and the brains that were on his clothes, but because he had finally killed the man who had killed his father. The man who had killed his father had never been caught.

Until that night.

But suddenly the echoing sound of the gunshot was interrupted by clapping. Clapping hands. Clapping hands of the man who had really killed Luke Bavarius' father. Luke Bavarius had shot the wrong man.

"Well done," said a voice that belonged to the rough clapping hands. "You have passed the test, Luke Bavarius. I have been waiting for you."

As Luke Bavarius began to feel the enormity of what he had just done, the walls begin to spin. Madness and insanity tried to clasp their hands on Luke's soul and he fell to his knees and vomited sickly sweet bile and whiskey. His eyes blurred with rage and tears. And the tears of rage too. And he didn't know what he could do.

"Luke Bavarius, I killed your father!" said a mocking voice.

Blam.

This was not Luke Bavarius' gun. It was the gun of the man he had just killed.

"What!?" screamed the voice in the dark.

The man Luke Bavarius thought he had killed was still alive and had been waiting to shoot the third man who was the man in the dark.

"No!" cried the voice in the dark. Luke could see now and saw that it was the body of his old friend from school who had grown up with him. Now he was dead. The man who had killed his father was dead. And so was the other man, who had succumbed to his injuries.

"Well," said Luke Bavarius to no one in particular, "I should go home."

As he left, Luke Bavarius again met the pale white boy. But now the pale white boy was covered in urine and feces because he was terrified. But what was this? He was also smiling. Smiling the smiling smile of a child who had lost a battle but won a different battle.

"Such nonsense you little children believe," laughed Luke Bavarius mockingly.

And Luke left the church forever. But as he left he could feel someone watching him. It was the eyes of a third man. The man who had really killed his father.



## Chapter 24

# The Beginning

By benitocereno

Minutes later, to the sound of gunshots, Rogue Davix awoke from his horrible dream. The lumps, all of the lumps, were nothing more than a satanic vision. The dreams were always the same. Aliens, darkness, another world. If he didn't have amnesia maybe he would have had some clue as to why he was haunted every night. But it was a dark and dangerous secret, only willing to unlock itself when he proved himself worthy.

He brushed it off because he was not sleeping well. There were strange noises outside of his apartment at night. Evil noises. Noises so black they could snuff out the light of decency in the strongest of men. He complained several times but no one would take care of it. That is why he decided to hire Luke Bavarius, PI.

Rogue jumped out of bed and ran to his window. Luke Bavarius had unloaded his Beretta into a stumbling ghoul, but the ghoul would not stop. Luke struggled but was not able to stop the monsters advances. They were coming towards Rogue's window!

*Crash!* The window splintered into a thousand fragments and flew everywhere. The muscular fighters traded blows. Blood and vile fluid splattered everywhere. After minutes of fighting it finally seemed that Luke was the winner- the ghoul fell to the ground and cocked his head to the side, his bile vomited across the floor. Luke collapsed to the floor and began to sob, his face disfigured by the shattered glass and powerful blows delivered by the now fallen ghoul, the evil merchant of pain. Rogue ran over to help him up.

"Luke, it's okay, you won." Rogue said, trying to comfort him.

"No, it's just... no, I'm one of them!" Luke screamed as he looked into a mirrored fragment.

"No you're not, it's not what you have on the outside that matters Luke; it's what's on the inside. And we both know what you are. You're Luke

Bavarious."

"You... you're right. But we can't stay here." He pulled himself together and stood up, triumphantly, defying the gods trying to keep him down.

Luke was right, outside more sounds began to stir. The ghouls could smell the evil cocktail of blood and vomit through the broken window, and they were hungry. Luke handed Rogue his spare Beretta.

"I hope you know how to use this thing," he snarled through his clenched teeth. Rogue popped the safety off.

The ghouls poured in through the window. Luke kicked open the apartment door and they both ran to the fire escape. "We're gonna have to go up!" Rogue said as he saw the advancing horde of darkness.

"What's causing this!? Why is this happening?" Rogue panicked as he fired into the ghouls while climbing the stairs. His bullets landed in their limbs, barely slowing them down.

"I don't know, but some people say it's the Ozone! Without it, people are transforming into these... things! More and more lately! Either that or you just *really* pissed someone off!" Luke unloaded a clip into the closest ghoul's skull; brains flew out of the back of its head like a playdoh press. Images of the horrible dream flashed through Rogue's head.

They circled the top of the fire escape and stepped onto the rooftop. Once there Luke turned his trusted Beretta onto the fire escape itself. *Bam, bam, bam*, he shot the retaining bolts loose. With one swift kick he dislodged the staircase, sending it and its undead inhabitants to the ground stories below. It was then that they observed their situation.

The rooftops across the horizon, hundreds of them, were covered in ghouls. It wouldn't be long until they found a way onto their roof. The blood red sun rose in the distance, casting the shadows of the ghouls across the rooftops, giving them an intangible bridge to their goal. The flesh of Luke Bavarious and Rogue Davix.

Rogue admired his gun with a thousand yard stare.

"Two bullets left... I guess we're lucky," Rogue sighed.

"That's two more than we're going to need," Luke smirked.

"What do you mean?"

"You saved my life back there when I was ready to throw in the towel. Now it's time I save yours. You don't remember a thing, do you?" Luke paused... "we're getting off of this planet." Luke shot his Beretta into the air, but the bullet stopped inches from where it left the barrel and resonated with a metallic thud.

Luke's ship appeared from the naked air, the bullet held in place by its force field, an impressive blue craft from the stars.

"Is this... the end of Earth?" Rogue asked.

"No, no son. This is only the beginning."

Basking in the clarity of the moment, the fog lifted, Rogue grabbed onto his father's hand as he pulled him into the ship. Luke hit the burners just as the monsters made their way onto the roof, turning them into clouds of flying pink mist, their screams silent against the engines' roar.

They had a lot of zombies to kill, it was time to get to work.



## Chapter 25

# Yellow Eyes

By A Child's Letter

"I'm not lying, Daddy!" whimpered Kaitilin Axelplax, a six-year old girl with an admittedly active imagination. "I promise you—*promise* you—that I saw it again! Saw *them* again!"

Hubert Axelplax smiled his sick and twisted smile while nonchalantly wiping the rust-colored tobacco drippings oozing down his chin. Delicately, he set his Coors on an Igloo cooler doubling as an end table.

"Kai, what've I told you 'bout *lyin'*, you little *bitch!*" Without warning—though she knew it was coming—Hubert, with speed belying his significantly overweight frame, backhanded Kaitilin, sending her flying into the wall. She collapsed in a heap, knocking over a floor lamp in the process.

She stood, fought to find her balance, then, reeling from the blow, vomited profusely all over the threadbare couch. Rust-colored blood seeped wistfully from her gashed eyebrow.

"I *swear*, Daddy! I saw the thing with yellow eyes! It was in the mirror!" Again, she threw up. Hubert took three long strides towards his daughter's trembling form and unbuckled his belt in one fluid motion.

"You're *just* like her, you know that? Just like that *whore* of a mother of yours!"

He raised the heavy leather strap above his wickedly grinning head and—  
\* \* \*

Luke Bavarious' radio cackled to life: *All units, we've got a 10-34 near Forty-second and somewhere near Dyer. Possible 10-45; 10-52.*

Distractedly, Bavarious holstered his Beretta, taking a moment to admire its clean lines, its intoxicating heaviness.

Suicide would have to wait.

He took one last, long drag on his cigarette, then tossed the remainder out the window of his car. Bavarious picked up his radio and responded, "Dispatch, this is Bavarious. I'm in the vicinity; 10-76. I'll check it out. Over."

*10-4, Bavarious. Out.*

For the first time in a long time, Bavarious smiled. Nothing like an old fashioned assault with possibly fatalities to enliven the night. He had to admit it: he liked this work.

Within minutes, Bavarious arrived at his destination. He parked in an alley and realized he must be the first officer on the scene. Everything seemed eerily quiet—especially for New York. Like liquid, with practiced movement, he unholstered his sidearm and kicked in the door.

The apartment building's lobby was empty. Bavarious involuntarily shivered, then made his way up the first flight of stairs. As he walked gingerly through the halls, when he was just outside of apartment 209, he thought he heard muffled giggling. He realized it was the only sound he'd heard since entering the structure. Adopting a professional demeanor, he knocked.

No one answered.

He knocked again and followed with: "Police! Open up!"

He thought he could faintly make out the sounds of a children's program, probably coming from a television. The giggling subsided, replaced with whispered commands. Something ponderous within the apartment dragged—or was dragged—across the floor.

Then, silence.

Bavarious was about to knock again when, suddenly, the door opened, and a little girl—no more than six or seven, answered.

"Hello, Officer!" she giggled. Bavarious surveyed her quizzically, noted the poorly bandaged laceration above her eye, then looked past her into the depths of the apartment's foyer. He thought he glimpsed something twist subtly in the shadows. He blinked.

"Uh, good evening, Miss. Are your parents home?"

"I don't h—I mean, no, officer, they're not. My mama died when I was little, and my daddy, he's...um...he's—"

She seemed to cock her head, as though hearing an inaudible voice.

"—he's out buying more beer." She suppressed a laugh.

"Is he?" mused Bavarious. "Miss, what happened to your forehead?"

Suddenly, the girl's demeanor changed, plunging from sunny to downright icy.

"Officer, it's past my bedtime. I need to—you need to leave."

"Mi—"

"*Right now.*"

Though he couldn't explain it, Bavarious sensed an impossible authority in her voice. An authority that hadn't been there moments ago. He glanced at her again and thought for a moment her eyes were glowing, yellow, bending his will to hers. He shook his head and looked back into the apartment—anything to get away from that jaundiced gaze! That's when he noticed what appeared to be a rust-colored trail leading from an overturned Igloo cooler toward another room in the apartment.

"I'm afraid I can't do that, Miss," he intoned as he brushed past her, intently avoiding her piercing eyes.

Curiously, she said nothing.

His Beretta held out before him, a talisman against the darkness, he followed the trail into a bathroom. There, in the tub and amid the stink of beer and feces, lay the body of what Bavarious assumed was the little girl's father. The man's belt was still clutched in his hand.

The man's hand was resting on the countertop, a good seven or eight feet away from the rest of him.

Unable to control his emotions, Bavarious puked all over the fetid corpse, displacing several flies. As the chunks rolled slowly down the disemboweled form, giggling erupted from behind him. He jumped.

"I told you you needed to leave," breathed the little girl, whose eyes had ceased glowing and now positively *surged* with wicked yellow light. He noticed for the first time that her hands were the color of rust.

Bewitched, Bavarious could do nothing as her arms shimmered and became a writhing mass of tentacles. He told his brain to send an impulse to his trigger finger, but it wouldn't obey him. It had a new master now.

*Good night, Officer Bavarious.* projected the little gi—

*Her name is Kaitilin. How do I know that? How d—*

*I—yes, good night, Kaitilin. I'll...be...going...now. If...if that's all right...*

\* \* \*

Luke Bavarious awoke outside of an apartment building somewhere near Forty-second Street and Dyer Avenue, sprawled across the hood of his car. The sun had just begun to rise above the tangled mass of skyscrapers all around him. His mouth tasted like vinegar, and he smelled like a slaughterhouse.

"What am I doing here," he wondered aloud.

The sun thrust a glinting beam of radiance through a break in the buildings; it fell with purpose on a second-story window of the apartments in front him. Following its path, he thought for a moment he saw two points of yellow light blink, then vanish.

"Weird," he muttered.





## Chapter 26

# The Last Night of Luke Bavarious

By Decatur Fist

Check the machine. No missed calls. No word from Davix. Nothing. With a sigh that poured from his mouth with a torrent of non-amused frustration

Luke Bavarious pulled a small slip of paper from his pocket and wadded it up and tossed it into the waste receptacle with the precision of a black man that shoots basketball in a Lakers jersey. As a fan of black culture Bavarious was known for his hoop skills. They had even saved his life once and then again on another separate occasion.

Davix was dead, and that was that. There was no sugar coating any longer. It must have been brutal. When you're surrounded by a cacophony of death you think about death a lot. Davix had even said during a haunting and stormy night that he hoped that he would go in his sleep.

It didn't happen like that. Luke Bavarious could envision in his head a vision of Davix dying by the hands of that beast. Bavarious could see the hand of the beast smashing into Davix' face terribly powerful. It was a bodacious site. One to be remembered for an eternity of doomsdays.

You need a drink. Clear your mind. Stay on guard.

Something strange had happened earlier today, it was why Luke Bavarious now had the small piece of paper that he had just wadded up and thrown away just moments ago before the ticking sounds of the clock hauntingly swept its hand across the face of the clock bringing time forward to this moment.

The boy had told him that Davix would die, and Bavarious too if he didn't listen. Bavarious had laughed a laugh and chortled a chuckle at the thought of him and Davix going out on the same day. However, it looked like the boy was batting half of a perfect batting average now.

He had shown up on Market Street and followed him all the way down Pine, up West, and finally had the courage to talk to him once stopping on Center. He was wearing a grey hoodie and seemed to be no more than 13. He had dark stormy and haunting eyes, and you could tell he wanted to be taken seriously.

He had a pension for horror and a knack for stories. He claimed to be the creator and destructor. His name was Biddick. He was to be taken seriously by all accounts.

Bavarious had told the boy that he didn't have time for him, and that he needed to leave, but there was a thirst that needed to be quenched that longed for the answer of why the boy would show up after following him and then having the balls that were big enough to make him say such nonsense to him.

The boy told Bavarious he would be sorry. Bavarious ignored him and ordered a tuna on wheat.

Alone.

The sounds came slowly at first, but then with a quickening of rapid speed. Claws clawing razor sharp against banana peel soft skin. There was a sound of terrible nursing. Like wounds being cauterized by the flame of a thousand dying invalids.

They were here for Bavarious. He laughed a strange giggling laugh that sounded like a maniac pumping gas into a Ford Fairlane. He opened the window and let them vomit into the window and take him.

They took him with a great brutality.

## Chapter 27

# Mac

By Brolita

This morning, I woke up to find myself dead.

I don't know how it happened, or why. That's why I'm here. Easy G's, a dive on the bad side of town. Mac, the guy who runs the place, is a good friend of mine. Always around to lend an ear. Tonight, I hope he has two.

My name is Luke. Luke "Lucky" Bavarious. I'm a private dick. At least, I was, before I died. My dad was a cop. A cop that didn't play by the rules. That's how he died. He broke the rules. Then the rules broke him.

My dad died when I was 13. He didn't listen to me. I knew the streets. He thought, because he was old, because he was experienced, that he knew more about the dark realities of the city than I did. I tried to warn him. He didn't listen to me.

It was a night just like tonight. Except both of us were still alive. At least, for now. My dad was called in to investigate a shooting. Prescott Avenue. The worst street in the worst neighborhood in the worst city. I remember him drinking when he got the call. He didn't always drink. Only when he *knew*. When he knew something was going down. When he knew he would be cheating Death. When he knew that one drink may be his last. He *knew*. And *I knew*.

I've blamed myself for my father's death. I've blamed him. I've blamed the alcohol. I've blamed it all. But the one thing I can't blame is the person who killed him. I can't do that, because I don't know who it is. I've spent my life searching for him. I became a cop, because I thought I could find him. I couldn't. I was fired for using excessive force on a drunk one day. Served him right, the swine.

Tonight, maybe, I'll find who I'm looking for.

I breeze into the bar like a shadow. That's pretty much all I am now. A shadow. A shadow to my father, who is now a shadow himself. The world is full of shadows, shadows that we don't see until it's too late. I've been

through a lot of crap in my time, seen a lot of things a sane man would be better off without seeing. Luckily for me, I'm not a sane man. I guess that's why they call me Lucky.

Mac's behind the bar. I slam some money down. "I'll need a strong one tonight, Mac. Gimme a Screwdriver." I wince at the sound of the word. I killed a man once. Stabbed him through the head with a screwdriver. Phillips head. Poor Phillip.

Mac pours me a stiff one. "Rough day?" He asks. "I'm just getting started," I say, lighting up a cigarette. Red Apples. Menthol. It stings like fibreglass, and I almost want to vomit. I take a drink to cool down my throat. "Mac," I say, my hands shaking, "I'm dead."

Mac looks up at me. To my astonishment, he's not surprised. He knows. "I know," he says. "I'm the one that killed you."

My shaking hands curl into shaking fists. Mac. My friend. My brother. My killer. I lunge across the bar. "You ROTTEN MURDERER!" I scream at him. I can't think. I can't breathe. My cigarette falls out of my mouth.

I grab his neck. From my holster, I pull my baretta.

I don't even hear him laughing as I pull the trigger.

## Chapter 28

# The Horrid in the Arcade

By nmg

Bavarius woke with a startle. He had a hangover from the 3 Coors beers he drank last night to help him relax and his head was horrific with vomit and pain. Suddenly he remembered what happened yesterday. It was his worse case yet ever.

It all started yesterday when he got a telephone call from the Chief. "Bavarius I need you to go down to the arcade to investigate a noise complaint" he said. "OK" said Bavarius.

His head and heart pounding like a drill, Bavarius loaded a clip into his Barretta and fingered the safety. Nervously he went to his Chevy Camero and hit the ignition. He punched the gas then realized his car needed more gas. "That's fine" he thought. I have enough gas to make it to the arcade.

He peeled out of his driveway and sped down the street doing 55 miles per hour. Suddenly he arrived at the arcade. He opened the door and went inside expecting what he did not find. Instead he found what he did not expect to find. What he found was a horrific site.

Blood and vomit and tears streaked the walls and the Space Invaders. There were kids bodies laying everywhere, torn apart and still bleeding blood. "Who could do this." thought Bavarius. "I am going to catch who did this and find out how he could do this." So he looked around.

Suddenly he heard a movement. It sounded like wet vomit scraping on sand paper. In a flash he drew his Baratta and loaded a clip. Then he spun around to face the noise. "Whoever you are, I have a Bereta and know how to use it, scum." he said.

Suddenly he saw movement. A man or what was once a man or woman came dashing out from behind Missile Command. "OUT.. OF.. CREDITS..!!!" it screeched in a slow southern drawl. "No monster, you're out of life" said Bavarius as he squeezed the trigger rapidly and deliberately.

One shot to the head, two in each hand, and one in the heart for good measure. Also he shot the thing in the legs and nose.

The woman howled and fell back then started licking up blood and vomit. It seemed to give him strength. So Bavarius emptied the rest of his clip into the thing's head then reloaded. He blew out her brains so bad that it exploded in a cloud of vomit and regret. She's not coming back from that, he thought to himself. Frozen with guilt, the man slowly began to run.

Then he called the Chief and said "cased closed." as he walked out to his Camarro. He tried to start it but it was out of gas so he walked to the gas station and bought some gas and put it in a gas can then walked back and filled up his car with gas.

## Chapter 29

# Invisible Monsters

By Ghost Hat

Nobody could see! Nobody could see! It was a nightmare. Abby ran for her life, as hard as she possibly could. What else was there to do when a monster was chasing you? Her lungs gasped for air already and her limbs burned with exhaustion, but that thing didn't even breath hard.

It wasn't the monster chasing her that frightened her the most though. It was the fact that she was the only one who could see it.

Lurking about the corners. Hiding in the shadows. She thought it was her imagination. She thought she had been going insane. They said you showed the first signs of schizophrenia when you became a teenager. But then, it must have slipped up, for she had seen it squarely, with both eyes. What's more, it knew.

And then it gave chase.

Down the sidewalks, across the streets despite the busy roads. She must have been nearly killed five times by squealing cars. She barely kept herself from tripping several times down the steep hills. And still it chased her, it seemed to like watching her run. Enjoying itself perhaps. It loped in plain sight.

But only she saw! Only Abby saw the monster. Everybody else saw a crazed girl running through the streets, no thought for her own or others' safety. How did Abby know this? Nobody had believed her when she said she was seeing things. Nobody screamed and ran despite the fact a monster ran loose upon the same streets. Maybe she *was* crazy, but she wasn't going to stop long enough to find out.

How she had wished she had paid better attention! Though even if she had spotted the creature earlier she would not have known how to defend herself against it. It had been following her for weeks though. Weeks in which some shadowy thing had been watching her, plotting against her...

No time! Abby ran.

"You stupid kid!" some guy screamed as Abby swerved past him. The streets were full of people, making it hard for Abby to run at full speed. She had to slow to dive and jump between and around them. And there were carts everywhere. The beast! The beast was catching up! Run! Run!

An alleyway. Not a place she would normally go. That's where drug addicts and homeless people hung out, but it meant there would be no people. No people meant no obstacles. Abby ran! She ran down the alleyway.

It took a moment for Abby to realize her mistakes. People might have noticed if the monster had jumped her in front of them. Even if they couldn't see it, they would see that something was wrong with her. With no people around, it could kill her in privacy. That was her first mistake. The other was that this alley ended with a brick wall. 10 feet high.

Oh no, Abby thought, gasping for breath so hard she couldn't speak. She had enough to scream however. She felt the wind rushing by as the monster swooped in on wings of black. So close now that she could see purple in those leathery wings. So close she could see its gleaming yellow eyes. No pupils. Just shimmering metallic yellow.

It swooped in and landed with a great gust of wind on the cement ground. It stood on two legs, like a man. But it was no man. Abby was suddenly trapped between the brick wall and it. And then it opened its mouth wide and inside it were hundreds of sharp, silver teeth. It hissed and Abby screamed as it bent forth to devour her.

Another rush of air, but from behind the creature. A sudden blur and then the creature was on the ground, wings spread flat. It screamed a terrible scream and Abby covered her ears in terror. Animal instincts took over and she hid behind a dumpster, eyes squeezed shut, hands clamped over ears. She would never leave this place. She would stay, stay and hide forever.

She did not see what had overcome the creature. All a blur. She did not see the man who had saved her until he tapped her on the shoulder, and then pulled her out much to her horror. It had to be that creature! That awful creature!

"Aggggh!" she screamed as loudly as she could. Abby writhed and tried to break free, still blind. Still crazy. Still insane with fear.

"Stop crying. You've been saved," said a voice. Abby looked up, blinking heavy tears from her eyes, and found a man. An ordinary man.

Abby was silent, just staring in disbelief. Just a man. And behind him. Nothing. The creature was suddenly gone. As if it had never been there in the first place. She panted, sweating, hair a mess, skin as white as snow. Just a man. And yet. "You saw it? You saw it?" she hissed, horrified for what the answer could be.

"Of course I did," the man said in a voice as soothing as butter. "And it's gone now. It will never bother you again."

Abby gave a choke of laughter and could not help but hug the man, her entire body trembling. The ordinary man reciprocated with one arm, his other sliding towards his back pocket. He thought, in a distant sort of way,



that the child in his arms was warm. But the blood from her throat would be warmer.



## Chapter 30

# Bavarious Reasons

By SummerGlaucoma

I am stuck here, in this place of must and yellowed paper. The place holds over my face a page, a urine-stained billow. My mouth, a tool of evil and destruction, vomits bile, blood and giggles.

*Who am I?* I thought, trying to hug the thought as hard as humanly possible.

*Who am I? Who am I? whoami?whoamiwhoam–*

My name is Luke Bavarious. I'm a cop. I like the work.

I have a barrette. I keep it with me in case I've got to put up my 1990s supercop hockey mullet and think real hard.

I'm thinking now. What kind of name is Bavarious? It is the steam, the steam from the Fatherland's best beer region? And why Luke? Cool hands, warm heart? Or do I walk in the sky, over to GRAN-ND-PA's arms, my left leg caught, with my seven-league boots, in The Barn?

I know we all in this book live in a library basement. Our book is next to some new kind of backwards comic book from Japan.

When it rains, The Artists' ink runs and lets us visit, and let me tell you, it's nice to get a furlough – Okay, fine, that kid who made us didn't specify breaks. I'm AWOL most of the time. So sue me! – in the more – ahem! – adult, of those comics. That kid didn't make any single dames.

Bavarious. Hmf. I don't even know what continent my people live on. Maybe it's a cover name.

Bavarious.

Bavarious.

Bavarious.

An idea sneaks into my head, slashing its way in through my waxy ear canal.

I am emitting an evil smirk.

I need to borrow something from Ken-wa over there in Samurai Land.

**NEXT WEEK, IRAQ, BEN'S P.O.V.**

My name is Ben Biddick. I'm a soldier. Do I like my work? Well, that depends. I don't like gritty food. I don't like being away from my parents (they're great – I'll have to tell you some time when we get a weekend pass about the time I wrote a book of crappy, embarrassing stories, and they got it published with this vanity press! Nope. No shit. None here, anyway). But I am proud of what I'm doing here, for the Iraqi people, and for the freedoms I love.

Besides, you guys are the tightest buds I could ever wish for. Shut up, Johnston! Yeah, well, you too!

Oh, rad! Mail call!

It's a package from that Internet forum that told me about how they loved my stories. Yeah! I'll show you guys later. It's rad.

Weird. Oh, well. I guess the only copy that Abe dude could find was this soggy thing. I guess it'll dry out pretty fast here once I take off the bubble wrap.

Why do I feel so – uneasy?

What was that flicker – did Abe put some confetti in with this? Awesome!

*But confetti doesn't wear its hair in a blond, barretted ponytail.*

*Good Christ– (he thought)*

No, Johnston! Only *your* mom sends nudes. My mom is a saint.

*Yeah? Well, you'd look worried, too. If–*

[a small figure darts towards me, swinging the hundred-times-folded Kyoto steel with maniacal glee]

Luke Bavarious?

"Why yes...!"

But, Luke: How– Why do you even own a katana?

"For Bavarious Reasons!"

Look there! *I am pointing to the page. A – How did a he-she from Japan get there? A he-she with a Samurai House's medallion–?!*

Luke says some magic words in some prehistoric Asian language, pointing the sword at me.

I started to shrink and grow more illustrationlike.

I am drawn to the page, as much as I was when I was a kid. But for not the same reasons. The child walks towards the page. I am little. I am dressed in the same faux-b-ballershit I dressed in as a little kid. I am a G.I. Joe-sized High-Topped Son of a Bitch.

Bavarious is full size now and god is he ugly as a real human. "I'm Luke Bavarious," he says to my buddies, "and I'm a cop. Now, let's see about this noise disturbance – Where's this horrid Al Q. Aida?"

Amid the predictable laughter, I hear the Simoom begin to blow. The book slams shut.

My name is Ben Biddick. I'm a cop. I like my work.

Suddenly, I was sobbing.

## Chapter 31

# Dream Hyena: A Bavarius Tale

By LesterGroans

Luke Bavarius checked his watch and rolled his eyes as the radio vomited some Stones track that the kids listened to these days. He tapped his foot mindlessly on the gas pedal and honked his horn again.

"Dammit, woman," he mumbled to himself. His ex-wife had promised to have their kid waiting for them when he got there. It would be the first time he'd see the little brat in weeks. It was hard being a cop, even harder having a home life when you were one.

Bavarius grunted like an ape and got out of his Camaro, rounding it to the suburban sidewalk and up the stone walkway to Carrie Bavarius's bungalow. He knocked on the door.

"Let's go, champ. Kids who are late don't get ice cream," Bavarius called through the door. Still no answer.

A thick, meaty thumping came from inside, like a pudding-stuffed side of beef was being smacked against a milk bag. Bavarius furrowed his expansive brow and rubbed his chin, stubbled and gritty like the streets he swore to protect.

He kicked the door in, it splintered against the far wall. His Baretta was out faster than a synapse as he lunged into the foyer.

There were smears of body ketchup leading down the hall. Bavarius's eyes narrowed, he started to sweat.

"Carrie?! Lukie Junior?!" He called out, steadying his firing hand as he moved down the hall. The walls were streaked with scratch marks. There were gouges in the wall up to an inch deep – two inches in some places. Three inches in others.

As he passed a four inch deep scratch mark he rounded the corner and there, at the end of the hall, was a thing that could only be described as a

dream hyena. It was on two legs, a scorpion tail jutting from its distended, mangy belly, wiggling towards Bavarius. Its jaw hung loose, almost broken, vomiting sickly metal smelling saliva onto the floor, ruining the hardwood. Its eyes were gone, in their place were throbbing boils of pus, what looked like a cockroach had been stuck in the festering eye-wound, its leg twitching out the side of it.

The sharp scorpion tail had made fast work of Carrie, dicing her body into so many pieces. Her entrails hung from sconces, the dream hyena was wearing her hands on the top of its heads like the horns of Pan.

Bavarius gulped, his adam's apple bobbing. He took a stance and made sure his voice was steady before calling out, "You're under arrest!"

The dream hyena didn't respond. It lurched forward, its legs moving awkwardly, its clawed hands dicking gouges into the wall, the pads of its feet squeaking on the glugging, bubbling blood bile that spewed from Carrie's severed throat. It was already scabbing in gobs around her neck... not the kind of necklace she used to pester Luke for, that's for sure.

"Where's Lukie?" Bavarius asked, holding his ground as the thing lurched again, the umbilical scorpion tail wiggling hypnotically. Bavarius smirked, "You don't scare me... bringing in punks like you is my Baretta and butta!"

He opened fire, ripping apart the dream hyena's belly. It hissed as it vomited disgusting, rotten entrails and a thick gaseous smell like someone had run over a dead raccoon in a lawnmower.

The dream hyena fell to the floor and darkness flooded over Bavarius. He blinked, stepping back, dropping his gun. What was going on?

When he opened his eyes he looked at the floor in front of him. Little Lukie Bavarius lay holding in his guts as they tried to snake out of his grasp like loose Swedish sausages.

Bavarius's neck was thick with corded veins, his eyes so wide they almost blew out of their sockets. He dropped down beside Lukie, cradling him in his arms, hearing the plopping splash of more guts tumbling from Lukie's belly.

"Daddy?" Lukie looked up, his pale face round and innocent. He looked so wise now. "I just wanted to see you more, daddy? Y-You always said you were too busy finding the bad men... I-I thought maybe you'd come if you had one to find here..."

Lukie's lower half tore off like wet tissue as Bavarius tried to pick him up. He held his son's top half like a broken pinata and sobbed into his son's collar.

This was a helluva thing.

## Chapter 32

# The One Act Remaining To Me In This World

By murdered by owls

I'm not sure how it is possible for me to sit here, outwardly so calm, while a tornado is whipping around inside my brain, flinging emotions about like bits of debris left over from an explosion in a sex shop. The definition of surreal: digging dildo shards out of your ears... if only metaphorically.

I glance out the window of the break room of the factory where I work, and notice that the moon is full, gravid with cold purple-white light. Why does it seem to be calling me? I want to understand what it is trying to tell me. I know it's telling me something, if only I could hear it through the endless, soundless muttering of a million dying souls. They're everywhere. Their sighs fill my head like a swarm of crocheted bees.

My coffee is very hot, and tastes of metal, or perhaps the tears of molested children. I'm not sure why that comes to mind. How would I know what molested child tears taste like? A trivial mystery to which I am unlikely ever to find an answer...

There is a part of me, deep inside, that is like a tiger with foot-long blades for claws, and it wants to attack and rip and destroy this violent feeling of whirligig that raves and rages and rapes the rest of my brain like a lunatic conquistador. But the tiger cannot fight an opponent so vague and ephemeral. It's like trying to grapple with a fart, or wage war against a cloud of gnats armed only with a Beretta or a bag of tulips.

A solemn fog has grown out of the river just to the north of us, and it is as though someone has thrown a gray blanket across the fields surrounding the factory. The moon looks down on all this, benign, but also wild and terrible, the face of a pagan goddess with a cold and clear eye. This is somehow comforting.

Two of my fellow night shift machine operators walk in the room, get their coffee and candy bars, and sit down at the other side of the room, not speaking a word. We ignore each other testily. The silence between us is a sacred bond, unrelenting, immutable. It is more than just mute testimony to our deep and abiding wariness, it is a black and shapeless ocean, seeming to drown the words we do not speak.

It is all right; I have grown indifferent.

As I pick up the sports page from the table, I feel a sudden surge of terror, coming from nowhere and everywhere, as if I had been shaving in front of the bathroom mirror and seen a reflection of the tiger streaking towards the back of my neck with deadly, fluid speed, claws outstretched to rend and destroy.

Outside, I show nothing.

I sip my coffee.

My cock is hard as steel.

Ten minutes later, I am once again at the controls of my machine. It vomits polyurethane airmail envelopes in an endless stream. The stink of burning hot melt has settled into my clothing, and can be sensed faintly anywhere I go, like the ghost of cheap aftershave on a shirt the day after a date. Here, in the factory, the odor is strong and almost palpable, with a kind of chewy, yellow resonance.

My bagger stands at the far end of the monolithic, hissing metal apparition and collects the envelopes as they are expectorated by the machine onto a small table. He executes a kind of dance, the steps repeating every thirty seconds or so. He watches the counter over the cutter bar, and when it reaches 100, he snatches the pile out from under the next envelope with greedy, clutching fingers and slams it into the cardboard flat he has prepared. He folds the top over, slaps a strip of tape over the seam, and stamps the side with the date and shift, all in one long, fluid movement. He bends and twirls, deftly slipping the flat into a bigger box on a pallet. Then he returns to the table at the end of the machine and prepares another flat with economical, practiced motions, and places it before him, ready to enshroud the next stack of the machine's ejecta. Waiting the next few seconds for the next stack to be ready, he waits completely motionless, head down, his hands spread out before him on the table.

I watch him carefully out of the corner of my eye as I run my machine, and I wonder if he knows he is dancing. Could his insensate eyes, half-closed and empty, simply be looking within, seeing himself on some shadowy stage upon which he turns and leaps?

Actually, I think he's dead, and like a freshly decapitated chicken, he just hasn't noticed it yet. He's dancing, all right, but it's the same kind of dance a fresh corpse executes at the end of a rope after dropping through the trap door. The ballet of the damned.

When the sun comes up outside, near the end of the shift, it always seems to me like the whole factory and the buildings and fields that surround it have been cruising all night through another dimension, like a spaceship



that goes through some kind of time warp and then reemerges, unharmed and unchanged, at the exact moment from which it departed. Nothing has changed in the world of our origin, nothing has changed in our isolated pocket of reality, but we have gone somewhere and come back nonetheless.

I know that when I leave the factory and drive home in my car, I will feel like an unknown astronaut quietly and without fanfare returning home after spending years alone in my ship. I will listen to the sound of no crowds cheering and watch as no tickertape falls to celebrate my arrival as I drive through still-slumbering streets.

I am home, but I am still isolated and alone.

When I walk out the front door, the fog is still there. It writhes its way down the length of the river, enclosing and concealing it entirely. I idly speculate that there could be some strange things going on in there, and nobody would ever know.

Anything could be hiding down there.

There's nothing there, of course. It's just idle speculation.

I throw a rock down there as I walk past, just to be sure.

Nothing happens. I stand for a moment, listening, and then laugh nervously and walk on.

I can feel the moon up there, smiling at me, even though it has disappeared behind the trees. That's one thing about the moon; you can count on it being there, even if you can't see it.

If you saw me now, a nondescript man calmly walking to his nondescript car at the end of another day at his nondescript job, you would never guess that I'm going insane.

The impending death of my rationality is overtaking me like the approach of a black hole, and within days, hours... minutes, maybe, I'm going to cross the event horizon and succumb to the raging storm of gravitation spinning like a top within that infinite silken darkness.

But before the dissonance of that crazy awakening reaches its crescendo, I'm going to perform the one act remaining for me in this world.

I'm going to wear a pair of Jessica Alba's panties.

Then I can finally die.



## Chapter 33

### Untitled

By fishguzzler

Son of a bitch, there's a storm on — no lightning, so I do this little dance between the light switch and the bed, partly because my room is just too dark, no light leaking in through the levelors, and partly because I can't let my mom see the light on when she trundles past for another batch of rainbow cookies — six neat little rows by five in the box, and four at a time carefully arranged on a little white saucer-plate, and about a box and a half gone by the end of the night, which means at least eleven trips down the hall past my room to the kitchen on a night when she's watching HBO in bed, pretty much every night — but mostly because there's a mad badger in my closet, an evil monster with beady little eyes glowing faintly green. Actually, I don't really know what 'beady' means. But I know what a monster is, even if, come to think of it, I actually don't know what a badger looks like. But I imagine it looks just like this little bastard in the closet. Maybe not so mean.

I can hear the television from the next room, though the walls are ancient and incredibly thick — I once put my fist into one, broke through the new plaster, and then through something brittle and white, until I sliced my whole hand open on a rough mixture of sand and antique horse-hair that exploded into powder even as it broke my left pinky and the knuckle of my pointer finger. I can hear the television because of the heating vent on the wall between the closet and my bureau, which conducts the voices from the television with perfect clarity into my room and provides me with fair warning every time there's a commercial break. That's when I make my move. I'm fifteen, and I may be a little pudgy, or maybe a little more than a little, but I'm extremely light-footed, so I leap down from the bed and tip-toe sprint to the door as my mother's clomping footsteps reverberate back and forth in my little acoustic capsule — it's not because she's monstrously overweight, though she must have gained over two-hundred pounds in the

last three years, it's just that she's such a hard stepper. I fly barefoot across mathematically smooth and cold wood flooring that, I know, I wouldn't feel if I could really fly. I keep my eyes trained on the door of the closet and flick off the light, crouching with my left hand poised on the light switch and my right hand gripping the doorknob, white-knuckled, the scar where I split the shit open standing out whitest, crisp even in the near-blackness as I glare past it into that shadowed crevice with the mad chittering sounds coming from inside. But it always quiets as she passes my door, as though it doesn't want to be heard; I still don't know how she doesn't hear it through the walls when she's in her room. Stupid old cow.

But tonight she's doing alright, I think, because she's only made three trips down the hall to the kitchen, three trips lasting three to five minutes each over the course of three hours, which is a real record-low for her since things got bad, like maybe now she's finally getting over it — or maybe she's just gotten too fat to walk and decided to start bringing the box with her from now on. Either way, I've still had to squat here three times so far in the dark, smelling that musty yellow odor like rotten tomatoes mixed with, I don't know, curry or something, listening to that thing cackle and scratch at the back of the closet door, swinging it open millimeter by millimeter, because I never dare to leave it closed — I'm too scared not to try and hear what he's doing in there, plus I know perfectly well that he knows we both know that he can open the fucking door if he wants to. I've seen him do it, not in minute, scratching increments, but fast.

Tonight the door has stayed put, and I haven't heard a sound from the little monster. Even his stink, the one everyone else can't smell, seems to be receding. Normally it hits me at odd points during the day because it's burned into my fucking skin, but tonight it seems to be clearing away, the dissipating pestilential fog.

I hear my mother put down her dish in the kitchen, but the cupboard does not creak open. The sink splashes on instead, a sound I hear more through the pipes in the walls than through the air. Is she washing the dish already, packing it in, with so much less than a box consumed? Maybe she is getting over it, at least realizing that a box and a half of delicious rainbow cookies per evening won't help — but more likely, she's probably just got a stomach virus or something. I hear her stomp into the bathroom, even whistling the tune we all used to sing, "Your Face is All over the Place", which is sung to the tune of "Your Kiss is what I Miss". I smile in the dark, no fear now, thinking it's gone, and maybe this will be the time it doesn't come back.

There is a muffled thud from the bathroom, and a short, sharp cry from mom. It brings to mind an image of my mother, beached, prone in her fuzzy white robe on the bathroom floor, writhing in pain and as-yet half-realized fear, the muscles in her neck bulging, showing clearly for the first time in almost two years, as that little fucker chews through cotton and into her chest. Blood spattering. Chimp-like, upright badger-monster body, head like a nasty little dog, Chihuahua or something, only with a serrated nose

like an alligator, or one of those colorful baboon-things. Snarling bubbles into the blood welling through the shorn muscle and cracked bone of her left breast like a child with his chocolate milk... Chittering. Laughing at us. Oh my god her heart.

Instead of flinging the door open and running to the bathroom, I smack the light on and sprint to the closet door, throw it open and freeze, staring right into those unforgiving dog-black but compassionless spheres. So it rears before me, wipes it's dripping chin with a bony little wrist. Cackles. Now you're mother is dead too. First him, now her. First him, now her.



## Chapter 34

# In the Mirror

By TheElectronicOne

Out of the darkness came Rothard Mavalero. Grunting and thumping, he was the city undertaker. It was not a job many would like but he had kept it for fifty years. Some people thought that was unnatural but they did not know the half of it. And if they knew the whole of it they would have run in terror. Bodies interested him. He liked the way they looked. He liked the way they felt. But most of all he liked the way they tasted.

Today it was Mavalero's favorite kind of body. A floater from the river. It was still fresh, like a recently caught fish. The coroner wasn't at work yet. Nobody would know what he was doing. He dragged the bloated corpse and looked into its eyes. Suddenly, he began to pry the eyeball from its socket. A sweet "snap" sound happened as the elastic snapped. He licked the slimy eyeball, savoring the salty taste. Then, as the deceased's other eye seemed to watch him, he bit into the juicy retina. It tasted chewy and meaty, just like he had expected.

Mavalero looked down at the body tauntingly. Blood was oozing from the empty socket. He liked that it was helpless. He stabbed at the face to make more blood come out, then dipped his finger into the blood-filled socket and tested the quality of the victim. When he was done with the little game, he started to pry at the other eye. This one did not come out so easily. It felt like it was glued into the socket, and he had to tug and tug. But finally, with the help of his pocket knife, it came loose. The eye stared Mavalero in the face. He did not care. Rothard Mavalero was a very bad man. He downed the second eye with pride, smacking his lips as he smiled in his conquest.

But as he began to ponder what he would eat next he saw something in the corner of his eye. He didn't know what it was. His heart raced like a galloping horse. He turned slowly towards what he had seen. Then he sighed with relief, because it was just the mirror. He had seen his own reflection.

*...or did he?*

He looked at the reflection, but his face looked unfamiliar. He turned his head, and his mirror self seemed to delay a little bit before copying him. With a piercing, inhuman scream, Rothard Mavalero realized what he was seeing. It was not a mirror, but a window into a room that had been cleverly copied to resemble his evil laboratory in every respect. The man was not his reflection, but the young but hardened detective Luke Bavarius in disguise. Bavarius had seen everything: the body, the eye eating, the blood.

He felt a nervousness arise in his throat. He struggled to hold his posture as he waited for his certain death at the hands of the private eye. Vomit dribbled out the mouth of Rothard Mavalero. Then, as he watched, Bavarius reached through the glass and strangled him alive.



## Chapter 35

# The Horrid Lighter

By WhereTheFishLives

This is a long story about Luke Bavarius when he saw the shadows in the world when he was younger in 7th grade. Bavarius is me. I saw the them, the shadows. And it has turned my brain into darkness. I was walking with my best friend Victor and Praeton when we found the terrible thing. A sickly sparkle flashed the corner of my eye and caused me to turn instinctively towards it. It was a silver lighter, but not any silver lighter you've ever seen. It has a skull on it with a eye made of ruby pressed into it. "Cool" said Victor as he brushed the dust and soil from the lighter that was buried centuries ago. It had a certain look that cut to my soul and made my stomach tighten on its contents.

Victor shifted it open and his expression changed to one of evil. My teeth clenched as I could feel scaredness take me over. Praeton began to tremor in delirium as sickly vomit shot from his mouth like a giant waterfall. Once the vomit was spent, a terrible white cloud came from the eyes and from his face. The cloud had Praeton's face. Praeton's face had a certain shocked and unhappy expression. It would be soon be too late for Praeton. The soul was sucked into the lighter like an evil waterfall. And the lighter's fire was switched out for a red indescribable flame as the soul went in into it.

"Praeton, No!" I shouted from fear. It was too late, though. I could tell. He was already changed in a certain way. So I ran away from the evil duo.

My fearful brain didn't know what else to do. It told my rubbery legs to run and they did run. The shock of the pounding of my feet on the ground went up through me. Up through my knees and then my legs. Then my chest and my soul and then into my brain with a terrible power. The power shot through me like an jackhammer. My adreniline squeezed my jaw tighter and yet tighter to fight back my morning breakfast. Which was prevented from being vomited out by my teeth. The wind felt strongly

against my face. Blinding me. But I didn't have time to notice. I only had time to run.

All of a sudden I was already at the door of my house when i burst through it. "Grand-nd dad? Help!" I shouted! As I shot slowly like a bullet from a gun through a sea of adrenaline. But there was no Grandad, only Praeton who was already there. The silence was deafening. The only sound was the horrid lighter clicking deafeningly. I was in an abundance of shock.

"Where's my grandad fiend?!"

"He's in here with us" Praton made a grand gesture to the lighter in his hand.

"N-N-No," I stammered as I went to the closet and got out the Baretta. The black gun metal was cool against the palm of my hand. The blackness of the gun matched my heart's darkness as I aimed at Praeton.

"I'm gonna take you out!"

"Ha Ha Ha Ha ha" he laughed. "Bullets can't hurt me!" he said smirkingly. I knew I only had one clip with which to dispatch this wretched thing. To back to wherever it came from. I fired and a bullet went directly between his eyes but didn't stop him. Again I fired, and again, and again I fired a total of 14 times.

"Looks like someone's out of bullets!" He cackled devilishly. Now it was my turn to laugh

"Hahahaha! Looks like someone doesn't know anything about the Beretta M9!" I triumphantly shouted. With my last bullet I fired. The 9mm bullet slickly exploded from the barrel and into the demonic lighter which was still in his hand. While the bullet struck, metal on metal, the souls were vomited all out of the it.

"Nooooo!" cried the thing as he turned to rust. "It's all over now." While the Beretta fell to the ground in slow motion I was instantly *insane*.

## Chapter 36

# The Playground

By on time for once

When I awoke I was tied up in a dark basement and the little boy was standing over me. The first time I saw him I had laughed at him because he was constantly vomiting, the putrid liquid pouring out of his mouth and nose as if he were a water fountain of vomit. It didn't seem so funny now.

Now that I was tied up, he seemed much more threatening. He stepped closer. His warm vomit was now hitting me in the crotch. Where was it all coming from, anyway? There was so much of it I couldn't believe it could possibly have all been inside this small child. Was his face a portal to a parallel dimension? A parallel dimension of vomit?

As he pistol whipped me with my own Beretta I choked and giggled and thought about how I, Luke Bavarius, private detective, had ended up in this situation.

It had started because the children's playground was always covered in blood and vomit. Every day it would be cleaned, but every morning it would be covered in blood and vomit again. This had been going on for several years now and we had finally decided to see what was going on. I was assigned to stop the blood and vomit.

I went to the playground one evening and hid under a slide with my Beretta and my night vision goggles. It wasn't quite dark yet and there were a few children still playing. One of them was the vomiting boy, which explained the vomit. Oh, how I laughed. Hopefully there would be an equally mundane explanation for the blood. Perhaps the boy had a beautiful blood-vomiting mother. I would have to talk to her and ask them to clean the playground themselves after they were finished using it so the city would not have to pay so many cleaners. I would offer to help her clean the playground, and maybe we would end up doing sex on a swing. I like swings.

I was distracted by my fantasy and forgot to watch the playground for a few minutes. When I looked up again the blood was there and the children were gone. I got out from under the slide and glanced around. What had happened? Where was the beautiful woman? Suddenly something hit me in the back and vomit sprayed over my head. The boy! The vomiting boy! He must have been on the slide I was hiding under, and now he had jumped off it onto my back! I tried to get him off me but he held a urine stained pillow over my face until I passed out.

And now here I was, in this basement. I could see now that under the vomit the boy's face and clothes were covered in blood. And so were his teeth, his sharp horrible teeth. I knew then that he had eaten the other children. Now he was going to eat me. Suddenly, I was sobbing.

A man in a lab coat ran in. He was also vomiting.

"Daddy!" vomited the boy excitedly.

"Son!" the man vomited, running over to his son, "Stop! This one is not like the others!"

He injected me with something. Suddenly, I was vomiting. The man collected some of my vomit in a beaker then poured it into a machine. Writing in a language I couldn't read appeared on the machine's screen.

"See, son?" vomited the man, pointing at the screen, "This one is not like the others. It will not grow up to be evil. The strange results you got were not because it will be even worse than the others but because it is already too old for your tests to be accurate!"

"You're right, daddy!" the boy vomited, "Let's put it back!" He injected me with something else and I passed out. As I lost consciousness I heard him vomit "We should try another playground, they seem to have noticed what we are doing here."

The next morning I woke up under the slide in a puddle of vomit, with a bad headache and no memory of what had happened. For some reason, though, I felt certain that this playground would remain clean from now on.

## Chapter 37

# The Exploding Curse

By overnighmike

A dark night filled with trial and unrestiness was ahead. The bar tender said unimportant things which I heard. A vague feeling was consuming me like I was consuming alcoholic beverages. When? When will the signs come again and would they let me live? Being a gritty person himself the bartender did not question my long drinking mainly because I am a very mature person. I could not shake the vague feeling. It was everywhere.

I felt like vomiting but did not. Instead I was glad I had a large-caliber handgun.

The door to the tavern burst open, but the bartender never saw who walked into the door because he had died of fright. I saw his rusty blood. He was the lucky one of the two of us, who were the only two people in the bar. Besides the signs, which had arrived. At least I didn't have to wonder anymore. My legs burst open in a liquid explosion.

My whole being was pain. Excruciating on the floor of a bad bar in a skid-row section of town. The signs had left but their work was completed. For now.

I passed out from the pain of having exploded legs. But I woke up sometime later and poured some booze on them to make the pain stop, I could not walk, so I wrapped them in dirty, booze soaked bar towels, which were plentiful behind the bar. I was left to lay in the bar with the dead bartender who was putrid with corpse-stink. That was My Fate. My Punishment. My Own Prison.

Everything was quiet. The dead bartender said, "What's your name, cursed one?"

"Burke Dreadnought," I said, quivering in fear at the talking abomination from hell.

"Do you know why you are here at this time, do you know what pain really is?" the corpse hissed at me, spraying me and everything with green

putrid goo while the words garbled out.

"My legs exploded so I think I can talk about pain," I wiped the blood off of my gratuitous chin stubble while saying.

"Oh yeah, not yet you can't!" The corpse began levitating and suddenly I remembered. Bavarius! The curse all of a sudden made sense!

Summer 1967. I'm a rookie cop, green and not jaded at all and Luke Bavarius is showing me the ropes of the hard, rain-slicked streets of Miami. The Haunted House Murder Case. Fourteen people dead in the span of one night. Bavarius wasn't assigned to the case but he was the first one to the scene with me in tow. He growled out instructions, brazenly brandishing his large-caliber handgun like he always did. We found a kid. Left at the scene. Not murdered thankfully.

"The Haunting will follow you unless you put an end to the cure," the kid said while shaking because he had vomited so much. "The curse must be lifted by giving the bones in the basement a proper burial. There were ritual murders here back in prohibition times by an evil bootlegger. Now he haunts the house by killing everyone in it all the time!"

Bavarius growled, "You make me want to puke! I'm here to get to the bottom of this!"

After we left the scene I said meekly to the scowling Bavarius, "I think we should give those bones a proper burial because kids should be listened to."

"Ha! Let's go catch some scumbags!" Bavarius put on his sunglasses and went back to his squad car. Six years later I quit the force and started drinking. That was when the signs came to the bar to remind me of the curse and the kid I should have listened to.

My legs were spewing gore trails all over and I finally remember that I always carry a large-caliber handgun. I shot the curse-zombie bartender right between his red devilish eyes. His last words were, "Soon, soon you will know the horrible depths of hell as I know them, Burke Dreadnought!"

I am in the bar still. I will die here but if I could walk I would go into a basement in Miami, and dig up the remains of the mad bootlegger's victims and give them a proper burial. I would dig them out of the same basement they found Luke Bavarius in last year, raving about curses to this day in a mental asylum.

The End?

**Part II**

**You're no Hakan**





## Chapter 38

# The Death Hamsters

By Part of Everything

Luke Bavarious strolled calmly through the mall, one hand absentmindedly stroking the cold metal of the trusty Baretta in his pocket. "I need a pet," he thought, and he made a beeline for the pet store at the end of the strip.

Suddenly a little boy sitting on a mall bench yelled out. "Hey mister! I don't think you should go in there," he hollered.

Luke squinted at the boy and drew closer. "Why not?" he inquired.

The boy looked all around and then whispered in a hoarse voice, "I saw a man go in there earlier. He looked insane. He had a bag full of something lumpy. I didn't trust him. He came out without the bag. Nobody has come out since."

Luke laughed. "Balderdash," he chuckled, and strolled off towards the pet store. The boy slumped in his seat with a frown.

Luke walked in through the door and the door chime beeped to signal that a person had entered. He looked around and there was no one but he didn't really care. He knew someone would come up when he needed to make a purchase.

He tried to decide what kind of pet to get. There were dozens of animals. He looked at some fish and then sadly shook his head. "Too watery," he muttered to himself, and moved on. There were some green lizards there. They stuck to the glass with their toes and he was fascinated at this miracle of God. But he decided against it because they might decide to stick to him and then what would he do.

He saw puppies and kittens that were so cute that Luke choked back a sob of joy. He had had a puppy when he was a little boy but one day a burglar was running through his backyard where the puppy was playing. The burglar was evil and the puppy was in his way. He picked up the puppy and twisted it in half and then threw the bottom half against Luke's window

while he was sleeping. Luke woke up screaming and barfed. He had never forgotten that day. He wiped away tears thinking about it.

He decided he wanted a hamster. They were so cute. The clerk had not shown up yet and he began to wonder. He looked all around but couldn't find her. Then he saw the door at the back was open a bit. So he went there and when he looked he saw a sight that made him scream very loudly.

The mangled corpse of the clerk was lying on the floor. There was guts everywhere. She was covered with bloody hamsters. They were evil hamsters and they were eating her like piranhas not in water.

With shaking hands Luke drew his Baretta. He was ready to shoot but then something soft landed on him. "What the" he said and looked over his shoulder and he saw what he thought was a pom pom. But it wasn't. It was a hamster. Then another one landed on his other shoulder and 2 more on his head. Then they hissed and lunged. "Hhh," Luke screamed as they ate his face.

A superhuman strength came over him then and he flung all of them off. He shot some but there were too many. He could hardly see because his eyes were full of blood. He tripped over a bag of dog food and then he got an idea. He pulled his lighter out of his pocket and lit the bag of food. It went up in flames and blocked the hamsters. The hamsters shrieked and burned. Luke took his chance and ran out.

The boy was waiting there, still on his bench. "I told you," he yelled at Luke. "Something was weird. You should have listened!"

Luke stumbled over to the boy. "I'm so sorry," he choked. "I should have respected you. Listened to you. I didn't because you're only 10 years old. I was wrong." He pulled a chocolate bar out of his pocket and gave it to the boy. The boy looked at him with a big smile and shining eyes and was happy.

By then the police were there. One of them pinned a medal on Luke's chest. "You're a hero, son," he said in a deep voice with emotion. "There was an insane man who put evil hamsters in the store. He's in jail now. You stopped them from killing us all."

Luke was proud. That night he was in the paper.

The End

## Chapter 39

# Son Of Bavarious

By Madcosby

Luke had walked these streets so many times, yet tonight they seemed so unfamiliar. Clouds gathered ahead, and made the dark even darker. Alleys were so dark - black as culture - and the constant scurrying of rats and big cockroaches seemed to come from everywhere.

Maybe it was all in my head, Luke Bavarious thought. Maybe I've had enough of this job. For tonight was his last night as a cop, and he was going to retire. He was the age of three third graders on summer vacation.

Each alley he passed reminded him of his past here on East Dark Chill Street. He remembered the time he saved that elderly lady who turned out to have a swamp tentacle that attacked him and killed his first partner, Jack Dynasty. He saw the mirror store that had burned down after his reflection tried to burn down the neighborhood.

Then he saw an alley he had never seen. Or had he? He had walked these streets so many times he was shocked. The cold grasp of surprise gripped his spine like the stickyness of masking tape on soft paper. A figure, cloaked in darkness, stood at the end of the alley. He pointed at Luke.

"Walk away..." it said, in a voice that made Luke's heart skip a beat like a record player in the back of an off-road van. Luke's adam's apple swung like a vertical pendulum, "Come out and let me see you."

The shadow screamed, "You'll have to kill me first!", and reached into his long trenchcoat that he had been wearing all this time and pulled out a Colt 45 Shotgun.

Luke didn't hesitate. Chill Street had taught him wasting a second could mean your life. So he pulled out his Beretta, which was also retiring tonight. He pulled the trigger so fast, and six bullets vomitted from the barrel.

One struck the shadowy figure in the arm, by the elbow. But the creepy shadow did not fall.

"Nice try. But you can't kill what isn't there!" And with that, the shadowy figure was gone.

Suddenly, it was raining. And more suddenly, Luke felt a wound in his arm, right where he shot the creature. Blood oozed from his arm like mucus from a child with a cold from too many snowball fights. Luke fell to the ground, clutching the wound.

The shadow emerged once again, and stood above Bavarious. In the light, Luke could see clearly that the monster had the same features as he: tall, well built like he worked out at a gym twice a week, and a moustache. A dark moustache. But his murderer was younger, like a child who was probably a fourth grader. It was like looking in the mirror. A mirror of pain and agony, a place where no one should see their reflection without remembering the pain of losing a puppy or maybe a grandfather if you're older.

Now, without the echo of the alley, the doppelganger's voice was not muddled by the darkness and sewers of the alley. "I can't let you retire, Luke. I'm taking your job." It sounded to Luke like he was listening to his own message on an answering machine. It was his voice.

Luke turned cold. This was the end. He knew it. He wished he could hold his wife one more time; he wished he could scream at the top of his lungs and make the monster go away. But instead, he grabbed his badge, and his trusty Berreta, and handed them to his killer. It was time to pass the torch to a younger generation of cops. That's what tonight was all about, Luke finally understood. The future of law enforcement was children.

"Thank you, father." And with that, the apparition disappeared. Suddenly, Luke was sobbing.

Then he was dead. East Dark Chill Street was his tomb.

## Chapter 40

# The Long Finger of the Law

By Dr Scoofles

"Listen sweetheart..." I lean back in my chair and slide my feet onto my desk as I light the cigarette that hangs between my lips "thats the fee, flat rate, take it or leave it!" I squint my flinty eye at the dame sat across the desk from me. Not bad looking, blonde wig slightly off centre and a few gaps in her kisser but a man like me can't afford to be picky. A man like me takes what he can get in this hard cold world.

"Mr Bavarious, you know I'm desperate to get my hands on those pictures!" she whispers breathily. She leans forward and as I catch a waft of her breath I lean back. I bet she wants these pictures, and bad. I took them last week as she slipped out of her lovers bed. Her husband would pay to see these. The question is will this broad pay more? My name is Luke Bavarious and I'm a P.I. I don't deal in honour and justice, I deal in the truth and the truth is a mean cold hearted son of a bitch. The truth ruins lives and tears families apart. I open my desk draw, the envelope with the pictures sits nestled between my gun and my bourbon. I take out the bottle and pour two drinks. She takes a drag on the cigarettes and continues

"I have no money, but I'll do whatever it takes."

I think about it for a second. I know what she means, women with no money have one currency that is valuable to a rouge like me. My eyes take her in, her yellow fingers, scrawny neck and sagging bust. I decide a man like me can afford to be picky after all.

"Sorry sweetheart, you better leave." I slam back the bourbon and cock my finger towards the door "don't let it hit you on the way out, lady."

I finish up the second drink and decide I better get around to the dear husbands house before it gets too dark. No time like the present to finish this dirty job and get my money. I slip on my trusty overcoat, pocket the pictures and my gun then slip out the back door.

Night drew in fast, wrapping itself around me like a dark cape. I walk quickly, partly to keep the cold out and partly to give myself some distance. I knew that broad would follow me. Women ain't smart. I turned to look behind me, let her know I'm onto her game. That's when it comes upon me, so damn fast I don't get a chance to pull my gun. I feel a hiss of breath in my face, I recognize the foul stench from earlier as yellow fingers scrabble at my neck! I drop down and kick out, I feel her knee snap and the bone saws its way raggedly through her meaty flesh. Blood spatters onto my face and pours into my mouth. I swallow it then vomit gushes from my mouth, bloody vomit and bile gushes all over my coat and all over the crazy broad as she scrambles on top of me. Her fingers seem to grow longer, longer as they feel about my coat. My God, I look in horror as I see her writhing about, her fingers several meters long as they feel around inside my coat, searching for the pictures. Her hands are now two elongated nightmares, the bones snapping and crackling as they bend and scrape around my fighting body. Revulsion overwhelms me, I gag and cough as I feel her bony fingers scraping into my pocket. They withdraw the pictures and in a moment tears them to shreds. As I black out the last sight I see is her jaw unhinging as she leans in towards me, to deliver the final deadly kiss.

Edit - Yeah I just realized I have omitted entirely the disrespecting of the kids. I can only hold up the feeble defence that the woman is most certainly being disrespected by our dashing P.I and is also young (ahem). That'll teach Luke to respect those slightly younger than him... Ahh sorry

## Chapter 41

# The King

By Peas and Rice

It was a slow week. Sometimes life is like that for a private eye. I sat at my desk drinking whisky from a bottle, taking big gulps. The Yankees were on TV. I love the Yankees. It was already dark outside.

A noise at the door distracted me. A letter fell noisily through the letter slot. Intrigued I stood up. It was addressed to me: Luke Bavariious, Private Detective. But no return address.

I opened the envelope and read the typed note inside. "Mr. Bavariious, I need your help. My daughter was kidnapped and taken to the Service Room at Times Square Subway Station. I need her back. I can't tell you any more than this. Please help."

An assignment. I picked up my new Colt .45 although I liked my trusty Baretta too. I made sure all eleven bullets were in the clip. I might need them. Then I finished the bottle of whisky and walked out into the New York night, lighting a cigarette.

I walked to Times Square Station. It was mostly empty. Piles of garbage sat waiting to be collected. The whole place stank like rancid meat and decaying flesh.

I drew my Colt .45 and opened the door to the Service Room. It was dark inside but I heard a strange high-pitched sound. It sounded like a rat. I fumbled for the light switch and a single dull 40-watt bulb lit the room with a sickly yellow color.

It wasn't just one rat, it was a hundred rats! They looked at me with vacant, black rat eyes. "Where's the girl!?" I demanded but they didn't answer. Then the rats moved aside and a giant rat waddled into the room. It was the biggest rat I've ever seen, the size of a Labrador Retriever. It looked at me and then it spoke!

"You'll never see the girl again. Don't you know she ran away from home? If only her mother had listened to her! You have only come for

your doom!" And then it laughed a high pitched ratty laugh.

"I know who you are!" I said, and I did. It was the King Rat of New York! I'd heard stories but never seen it until now. I drew my Colt .45 and aimed it at the King Rat's head. "I'll take you down fast!"

I fired one bullet, then another, then all of them into the King Rat. The first one pierced his flesh and tore a jagged wound, and blood pumped out onto the floor making it slick with red paste. Then the others hit him and his body started exploding from the force of the bullets. He was like a fountain in Las Vegas spewing blood instead of water. Finally he fell down, dying. "Now where's the girl!" I demanded.

"Get him... my minions..." the dying King Rat said. I turned around just in time to see the army of rodents descending on me. Their tiny teeth bit into me, giving me diseases as I tried to fight them off. I used all my bullets on the King Rat so my Colt .45 was useless. I hit one but another jumped on my head and tore my scalp with its claws. I blacked out from the pain as I crumpled to the floor, covered in rats as they slowly but surely tore my flesh from my body. I screamed and a rat crawled in my mouth, and I finally succumbed to the horror of the King Rat.

Edited slightly to better match theme.

By reasonable form

### **The Six Sides of Evil**

Barney Flann woke up with a start. With a cube in his mind. A cube he had never seen before. Looking at his leg he saw his leg hair barely coming in, because he was 8 years old and his age was between 5 and 10.

"Barney it's time to stop dreaming!" Barney's father, Aragorn, laboriously squeaked.

And then he saw the rectangle that he would instantly recognize in any situation. Any situation where he was not terrified. And since Barney was never terrified, any situation.

But now, Barney had become terrified.

Instantly, he sprung into action to repair the rectangular hole in the sewer under his house.

"Not now father I love you too much!" Barney suggested to his father whose veins in his right arm were solidifying into vomit. He pulled out his auxyacetylene welding torch that he kept on him so he could weld, and used it to burn the blood that was coming through the pipe into a solid mass that would fix the pipe.

"That was my mothers blood!" he yelled to nobody in particular except for himself he realized in a sudden realization of *deja vu*.

As he ran up the stairs to confirm his suspicions that his mother's body had deflated as the blood poured down the drain. He noticed another rectangle, but he quickly put it out of his mind and soon he didn't notice it again. Now that he was in his mothers room he could see he was correct, and he saw her lifeless body scream with anguish as it realized its plight.



"THE HORROR!" he yelped.

But then he noticed something else...

"THE HORROR!" he yelped as he saw that there was a rectangular sized hole in her jugular.

Could it be that the 3 rectangles he had seen were part of something bigger? Could it be that they would form... the CUBE? Barney would soon find out that this was the correct case. He rushed back to see his dying father and discovered him infused with life energy.

"Father, why are you so energized?" Barney gulped.

"BECAUSE I HAVE SEEN THE MOUNTAIN TOP AND UPON IS ARE RECTANGLES!" His father, Aragorn, who was named Aragorn after a particular event led his father to read Animal Farm, babbled incessantly.

"No it doesn't have to be this way!" Barney said as Barney pulled out his Ferrari branded knife and slashed a triangle into his father's heart so that all of the rectangular juices could flow safely out. "thank you son i love you" his father said as his last dying words.

And then, his father died.

"What shall I do now? How can I stop this infection of rectangles!"

But quickly Barney remembered his grandmother, who they had locked up in their basement ever since her death. He recalled the basements location and ran to the door. But there was an evil thing on the door, a rectangle! He ripped out his Saigo auto shotgun loaded with fourty four magnum cartridges and prepared to fight the fight.

"This is the most powerful 'handgun' in the world hehe" he muttered as he fired the shotgun one handed in the direction of the door. Instantly, kidney stones rolled out of the door, but the kidney stones were in the shape of rectangles. It too was horrid. Too horrid to imagine was possible. But it was that horrid.

And as the millions of rectangles combined to form cubes he knew that his evil grandmother was the source of it all!

"Who could have created these cubes?" he recoiled from the vomit flowing from his mouth and left ear as he realized it was his grandmother.

And he realized he could not stop the cubes, that he too would be lost in the face of ev-

"BECAUSE I HAVE SEEN THE MOUNTAIN TOP AND UPON IS ARE RECTANGLES!"

edited because I can, and because I only want a few misspellings in my masterpiece.

By Smeef

### **The Old Child**

The chill of the night crept through the streets. I wasn't even in the Big Apple anymore. I was way uptown.

"I ain't goin' nowhere tonight, Bavarious," my partner had said back in the car, stuffing a donut in his mouth. "That ain't even our jurisdiction."

If the creeps out there don't follow jurisdiction, then neither do I. And I'd been tracking this creep for hours, following on foot block my block.

He was one of those rich creeps. The worst kind. Nice suit but grey, fat, and scummy. He had a cold sweat running on his face.

At about 110th Street a kid had stopped me and said "Don't go after her. She's weird, man!" Sometimes kids have the blackest hearts.

When he turned and waddled into an alleyway, I could see that the girl was still alright. She was right in front of him, his stiff hands touching right at her shoulder blades. She was wearing a schoolgirl outfit. It didn't take a judge and a jury to know that he was guilty. It sure wasn't gonna take an executioner to finish the rest.

I stepped into the alley and could see the silhouette of her feet between his.

"Dead end, pal! No way out! Let her go!" I drew my Beretta, and the tactical flashlight illuminated his face as he swung around.

"It's not me!" he screamed. "Thank god... Help me!"

"You have the right to remain silent, and I suggest you do it! Let the girl go!" I shouted.

"Get out of here!" he grabbed the girl and started flinging her violently.

"Let her go, scumbag!"

He crashed into a dumpster with her, and I saw his head clearly for a millisecond. I might not get another chance. I might not get another clear shot.

The flash of my Beretta lit up the alley, red blood sprayed into the air, and the fat man flopped down like he was deflating.

I ran over to check his vitals. Dead. I looked over to see if the girl was fine. She was cowered in the corner, crying. I put the flashlight back on the dead man... his guts were torn open like his torso had vomited all over the place like.

I didn't shoot him in the guts.

No, she wasn't crying. She was laughing. Her awful laugh sounded like styrofoam on styrofoam. I put the flashlight on her face. I backed up. She had a face like a ninety-year-old old woman, a few jagged teeth and black eyes. She had big, bloody hands with long fingernails. Blood and guts were coming out of her mouth. She kept laughing.

I shoulda listened to that damn kid.

I aimed again, and she came at me like a spider.

By jidohanbaiki

### **The Ocean**

The abrasive ocean waters lapped dangerously at his flippered feet. Luke Bavarious was a marine biologist who took his job seriously. He set his rusty bucket of herring into the sand with a crepitating flatulence. In the distance, gray blades pierced the ocean, coming closer and closer. There was a

portentous whirring and clicking, growing ever louder and more frantic, interrupted only sporadically by the crash of waves.

Bavarious took fistfulls of herring in his fists. The herring were slimy and slippery, so he squeezed the herring hard to keep them in his grip. The bodily fluids from the herring leaked between his fingers. He proceeded towards the malicious noise of the ocean, slowly but determined, holding his fists of herring up to the sky, as if in defiance to God. He stopped once the ocean reached his hip. The gray blades swarmed around him. Luke smiled bitterly. "Come and get it," he intoned.

Gray beaks poked out of the water, searching, wanting, smiling. But those smiling mouths opened to reveal long rows of tiny, but sharp, brilliant white teeth. Luke tossed the disgusting, smashed herring into the waiting maws. "Eat," Bavarious said, almost cursing. "Eat!" he commanded.

The dolphins splashed around him, taking their fill of the herring, letting the herrings' slimy bodies slide down whole into their stomachs. Bavarious began to laugh, at first just a chuckle. Then he threw his fists covered in herring eyes and herring guts into the air and erupted with demented revelry. "Yes! Eat! Eat!" he screamed, his voice shrill with hysteria.

Luke Bavarious was a marine biologist who took his job seriously. He was also a marine biologist who would leave no slight unavenged. Little did the dolphins know that the herring was poisoned.

---

Donny had no legs ever since he could remember. A long time ago when he was a child, he had lost them in a car accident, or so he was told. He was also told that he also lost his parents. Every day after school, his aunt would drive him out to the ocean so he could swim with the dolphins as therapy. "You're thirteen now," she said bitterly as she drove him towards the sea. "Don't you think it's time you stopped swimming with those stupid fish?"

"They're not fish, and they're definitely not stupid." Donny said, folding his arms over his stumps.

Once at the dock, his aunt rolled him in his wheelchair over the wooden planks and tipped him into the waters below. "I'll be back in an hour," she shouted down to him. "I've got to go to a meeting at the bank."

Donny floated, belly up in the ocean, his horrid little stumps flailing uselessly. Soon, he felt something slippery slide underneath him. It was his friend, Moon Dancer the dolphin. Donny petted Moon Dancer's nose as he dreamed of the freedom he would have if only he could become a dolphin. Then he sensed distress from Moon Dancer. Donny grabbed the dolphin's head and pressed his face to it. "Take me there," said Donny.

He grabbed onto Moon Dancer's fin and they sped towards the horizon. It was a wonderful feeling to move so fast and freely, but the ride did not last. They approached a contorted figure in the waters. Donny swam over to the struggling dolphin. "Star Wave! What's wrong?" Donny asked.

Green bile and rust colored blood vomited from Star Wave's blow hole. Star Wave opened his mouth and vomited out the poisoned herring bones.

Donny screamed and then vomited himself, and soon, vomit mixed with tears in the ocean water. Attracted by the blood, a shark appeared and landed a killing blow on Star Wave, putting him out of his horrid misery and spreading violent red blood through the ocean.

"Take me to who did this." Donny thought at Moon Dancer.

—  
Miles away, Luke Bavarious dropped another bucket of herring onto the sand with a squelch. He took fistfulls of poisoned herring, and entered the ocean. In the distance, dolphins schooled. "Come!" Bavarious commanded, his powerful fists dripping with poisoned herring entrails.

"You think you're so smart!" he spat. "But you won't ruin my scientific research any longer! I was going to prove that you only had fish intelligence, but you ruined my data and now I'm the laughing stock of marine biologists!"

The dolphins did not come, but lingered on the horizon tauntingly. He pounded the water with his herring fist, making a horrid squelching noise. He then went farther and farther into the ocean, until the water was up to his neck. The dolphins then swarmed around him. "Eat!" He said, scattering the herring.

He laughed and laughed. Then he burbled as bitter, salty water flowed into his mouth and nostrils. Moon Dancer swam up to him and spat a poisoned herring in his face. Bavarious grabbed the herring and beat Moon Dancer with it. "Eat you stupid fish!"

Then a different dolphin swam by Luke's legs, then around his body. It came out of the water and faced Bavarious. Bavarious screamed. The dolphin had a human face; it was Donny. Bavarious fainted and drowned.

Years later Luke Bavarious' bones were found washed up on shore, but no one ever found Donny's. His aunt was thrown in jail for his murder. From behind bars, she would mutter about dolphins with human faces endlessly until one day her cellmate couldn't take it anymore and strangled her to death.

By Knuc If U Buck

### **The Horrific Release**

I inhaled the forbidden smoke of my favourite Marlboro Reds cigarettes wistfully. Before I can reflect on the delicious but deadly flavours of Virginia's finest I begin coughing. Violently. Shuddering as I pull away the tissue that covered my mouth to reveal bits of lung meat and black blood. The realisation that I have lost control of my bowels and bladder hits me as hard as the foul stench. My face reddens and tears burst from my bulging eye sockets while I struggle for air. I begin sobbing. My name is Luke Barvarious and I am a cancer patient and former NYC private detective. I am about to die.

Recently, there have been rumours of children with terminal cancer wandering out of the hospital, never to return. I have been asked to use

my detective skills to solve this case on special request from the Chief of Medicine, Dr. Wolfgang Smith MD. I dutifully accept.

Night falls after an entire day of a vicious experimental chemotherapy combined with top secret military radiation. I am also given an additional cocktail of drugs that enable me to walk under my own power without doubling over into vividly horrific, sweat-soaked nightmares. I set off towards the paediatric cancer ward. Opening the cold sterile doors of ward 42, I immediately recognise the soft footsteps of a wandering child.

"You there, turn around!" I shouted down the corridor.

The silhouette disappears into the darkness.

I feared it would come to this.

I instinctively move my hand down to my trusty Beretta forgetting momentarily that there is no place to holster it on my backless hospital gown. Armed only with my wits I slink into the shadows past the nurses station and follow the dark, impish figure through the hospital and into the woods behind the main building.

Once into the woods I have to use all of my detective instincts to keep up with my target. I track the child for what seems to be an eternity, weaving between the thick trunks that guard the forest, stopping against one every so often to catch my breath and wipe the fresh bile from my stubble. As we reach a clearing I try to yell once more, I begin to gasp for air desperately as the drug cocktail begins to wear off. I grit my teeth to keep the cascade of bloody lung chunks at bay. Looking up after containing myself I see a ring of children.

The child I was following is being welcomed into the group. I notice at this stage the children are just rotting husks in varying states of decay. They begin moving in a kind of reverie cadence. Mesmerised, I pull myself up from the stump that I had collapsed on and notice that the boy that I followed is beckoning me to the zombie circle. Despite their gaunt, putrid features, my detective instincts recognise them as the missing cancer patients. As I make my way into the group I hear the sound of a dead man coughing. Turning back, I see my own, fresh, urine stained corpse slumped over a tree stump with the last remnants of my lungs spread over a puddle of vomit lying next to me. What really caught my eye though, was the smile on my crumpled lips. Suddenly, I was free.

End.

By henpod

I really did have a great time writing this. I hope you all read it, especially Mr Biddick. I could have gone on for hours but I had to make sure it wasn't too long.

We see Bavarius in a new light, tortured by what he saw in the alley. Only one thing is keeping him alive. The final case. Enjoy.

quote:

The last case.

Detective Luke Bavariou woke with a snort. Today was the day, the case to end all cases. This case would be the biggest one he had ever undertaken and the thought made him nauseous. It had to be done, It will be done.

He staggered off the urine stained mattress, his foot stepping in something soft and rust coloured but he didn't care. He was thirsty, but not thirsty for water, he walked over to his table and grabbed the bottle of whiskey. He spun the top and swallowed the horrid cocktail of whiskey and cigarette butts; he began to choke but welcomed the sensation. It was good to feel something for once.

His bloodshot eye saw something glint under an old T-bone. He picked it up and wiped off the grease. It was his badge. It read "Detective".

"More like defective" he muttered to himself and began a horrible, scratchy giggle which began to get louder and louder, like a washing machine in a dank, dirty laundrette. His laughter stopped when he saw his reflection in the dusty mirror. What was once a handsome chiselled face looked back at him with empty eyes and a patchy beard like that of a rapist. He began to cry, the tears ejected from his eyes like the cartridges from his berretta. The berretta! He grabbed it, and put it to his head, pulling the trigger. An empty click echoed through the empty room.

"No, not yet. One last case. The Mad Cannibal is still out there, eating children, I must stop him."

Ever since the incident in the alley, he was a changed man. He wanted to die, and had been ready to, but then the Mad Cannibal began his horrid campaign of terror and only him, Luke Bavariou, could take him.

Slipping on his stained trenchcoat, loading his Berettas and taking another horrid swig of brown whiskey, he staggered out like a scarecrow into the night. He knew where the cannibal was, he had been following him for weeks to an old warehouse where he would take his victims and begin the ghastly practice. The sky was dark, and the rain ran down his face like the bloody tears of the cannibals victims. Lightning flashed, followed by thunder but Bavariou wasn't scared, he was ready.

He crept up to the warehouse, and sure enough The Mad Cannibal was there, towering over his latest victim, a young boy wearing a hoodie and sweatpants. It was now or never. He kissed his Berettas and dived head first through the glass window. He landed in a shower of glass and blood, his eyes scanning the warehouse for the horrid ghoul, but didn't see him. Suddenly a butchers knife flew out of the darkness and struck his shoulder, colouring it with an all too familiar rust. Out of the darkness, a figure emerged, running towards him with a knife in each hand and murderous red eyes. Suddenly he fell, the kid had tripped him up!

"Thanks kid, now get outta here" Bavariou growled, spitting blood onto the floor.

"But I can help mister, I want to help"

"GET OUT" Bavariou snarled, raising his Berettas to scan the darkness.

Suddenly, a horrid scream filled the warehouse and the cannibal rushed out of the darkness again. Bavariou fired his pistols with lightning speed,

his Berettas vomiting bullet casings. The first shot hit the cannibal in the stomach and he instantly spewed a mixture of blood and human fingers. The second ripped through his eyes, puncturing them like grotesque bicycle tyres. He was still coming though, and Bavarius needed to reload. With lightning speed he replaced the spent magazines, but the ghoul was gone again. Following the trail of blood he found the madman sitting behind some crates. He was wheezing and giggling in a pool of vomit, blood pouring out of his eyes like a horrid waterfall.

"Im not going to arrest you" Bavarius snarled, "but I am going to kill you. Prepare to die you sick bastard"

"Luke..." wheezed the rusty figure below. "You wouldn't kill your brother would you?"

A lightning flash filled the room, and it was only then that Bavarius saw the face of the cannibal in front of him. It was his brother. An immense pressure of hatred and horror welled up inside him. He staggered back holding his stomach, his eyes bloating like a horrid fish. He howled upwards into the night, the vomit exploding from his tortured innards like a revolting fountain of misery. Behind him, The Mad Cannibal was gone.

By Mortonic

### **The Very Hungry Luke Bavarius**

In the light of the moon, a little egg lay on a leaf.

One sunday morning the warm sun came up and pop! Out of the egg came a tiny and very hungry private detective, Luke Bavarius.

He started to look for some food.

On Monday he ate through some black culture . But he was still hungry.

On Tuesday he ate through two Berettas. But he was still hungry.

On Wednesday he ate through three piles of vomit. But he was still hungry.

On Thursday he ate through four sparkly Bavarius badges. But he was still hungry.

On Friday he ate through five gooooooold rings. But he was still hungry.

On Saturday he ate through an entire Baconator! That night he had stomach-ache!

The next day was Sunday again. Luke ate through one nice green leaf, and after that he felt much better.

Now he wasn't hungry anymore - and he wasn't a little private detective any more. He was a big fat private detective.

He built a small house, called a cocoon, around himself. He stayed inside for more than two weeks. The he nibbled a hole in the cocoon and pushed his way out ...

He was a horrid reflection!

He then began to read approximately 500 words of the Bible:

Genesis

1 First God made heaven & earth 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. 3 And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. 4 And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. 5 God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. 6 And God said, "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters." 7 And God made the firmament and separated the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament. And it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. 9 And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. 11 And God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, upon the earth." And it was so. 12 The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening and there was morning, a third day. 14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so. 16 And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also. 17 And God set them in the firmament of the heavens to give light upon the earth, 18 to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day. 20 And God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the firmament of the heavens." 21 So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth." 23 And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day. 24 And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so. 25 And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the cattle according to their kinds, and everything that creeps upon the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good. 26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of



God he created him; male and female he created them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." 29 And God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. 31 And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.

By Oatgan

### **The Screaming Night**

The woman's shouting screams shattered the dark silence like a broken bone after a high fall. "Help meeee!", she screamed. There was no answering from the good citizens. At the moment at least. Luke Bavarius, was not exactly a good citizen. He was less than good, and rushed towards the attack at fast speeds.

Earlier in the day, Luke was at a tavern. Drinking margaritas and eating submarine sandwiches at the pool as he always does. Luke's informant Manitoba approaches.

"Care for a light, B?" Manitoba holds out a lighter, literally vomiting fire.

"No way, Manitoba. I don't smoke after the accident. You know that. Remember?" Luke responded.

"Oh yeah" said Manitoba. "Look, I came here to tell ya bout all these attacking that happened recently. Word is some kind of half-man half-monster half-dog is wandering around in the night and killing people in the dark alleys." Luke finishes his drink and puts the sandwich in his pocket. He got up and got another drink. This time it is a scotch on the rocks. Cheap just the way he likes it.

As Luke is quickly racing towards the female screams he hears a distant rumbling coming from the same direction as the female screams are coming from. He thought time was running short. Wind swept through his windswept hair as the cries drifted closer and closer. He then heard a sound that sounded like a sharp object tearing into flesh. The girl screamed no more. She was killed before she was saved.

Luke continued to give chase. He ran until he was tired from running to much. He ran more and followed the rumbling through the alleys as the monster left strewn garbage and blood streaks in the ground. He passes a homeless boy looking through a trash dumpster. He stops and asks him if he has seen anything suspicious. The boy replies negatively. He has seen nothing. His mind might change if he gave him the sandwich sticking out of his dark flowing powerful trench coat though. Luke says no. He continues chasing.

Luke came to a dead end. DAMMIT! What is that? A sewer? Luke heads down into the city sewer system. The stench is bad. Like rotting meat from last Thursday. He marches onward. Along the way he finds spare body limbs. Owner, unknown. He also sees the homeless boy again. This time the kid gives Luke a warning.

"You will not catch him. And you will not defeat him. He is too evil."

"What the hell do you know, kid." He says. "You're just a freakin' homeless kid."

Luke pushes the boy down as he sloshes through the filth. The boy falls face-first into the sewage. As Luke wades he sees a door at the end of the tunnel he took. The door has a sign on it that reads THIS IS THE LAIR A MONSTER FAREWELL TO ALL WHOM ENTER. Luke pays no heed and barges through. He sees the homeless kid again.

"How did you get here, poop-head? I thought I ran past you and I did!"

"Inconsequential," said the homeless boy. The boy then shape shifted into a monster that looks kind of like a dog. Luke drew his Beretta and fired wildly into the dog-monster. The monster showed no signs of being affected like bleeding or flinching. In frustration Luke threw the Beretta at the monster.

"I warned you more than once, human! Now you pay for not listening to me and not giving me a sandwich!" The monster lunged at Luke and pinned Luke to the wet slimy ground. Luke could not move. He could only struggle. Luke's face was peeled off. The monster ate his face.

The End?

Writing this was actually quite fun. Thank you, Mr Biddick!

By Lynxifer

### **Luke Bavariou and the Orchestra of Nothing.**

I pulled my trenchcoat closer to my body, as the cruel autumn winds flicked and bashed against my weary frame.

"Some night for a job." I announced to myself in my head. Like every true pee aye, I felt it required that I narrate my life, to the voices in my head, the voices that guided me and kept me safe from the others.

The run down dreary doors passed me in a blur as I walked swiftly down a street with eyes peering out of every window, my gun shivering under my layers, eager to spill out and deal in its holy cleansing.

I wasn't an angel, I wasn't some holy pariah. I was the encapsulation of a human devil, ready to pass my judgement on you. All of you who thought I was the ripe target of abuse and of mocking, all of you who thought you were better, my gun and I are always ready to knock you down a peg.

The street twisted into another and then, another as the wind raced around me, the howling growing like a hungry wolf on the hunt. My target was the old opera house off 3rd and 29th. In it's day, it was probably a beacon of talent and beauty, but the sands and ebbs of time had reduced it

to a third rate nothing, its former glory haunting it, the same as the drug dealers and scum that hound its bricks and mortar.

The streets finally moulded into a conclusion as the opera house came into view. Somehow I didn't expect it to be as clean and fresh as it was. I rubbed the base of my gun's magazine as I approached my goal, taking tentative steps. Although hired by the manager of the house, I didn't trust the guy, he oozed a slimy confidence that put me off base when he called me and enlisted my services, his voice full of practised bravado and false compassion.

The doors stood between my fate and me, I took hold of one of the weathered brass handles and tugged with considerable force, which yielded entrance to me. Taking the opportunity, I dashed into the poorly lit entrance foyer and out of the harsh winds that had led me here.

Inside, the manager was waiting for me. He was as grimy as I had imagined, his hair slicked back like a funeral director and his suit oddly positioned.

"Well har there, bud! You must be thar Private Investigator." He said to me, his hand outstretched to shake mine.

I did things my way. I looked at his hand, wrinkled my lips at it and left my hands firmly at my coat.

"Hello." I said calmly.

He seemed genuinely upset at my refusal to meet him half way as he retracted his hand. I felt vindicated as he ran his fingers through his hair and wiped the oily residue on the back of his trousers.

"Ahm sure I made myself clear on the telephones." He said to me, fingering his top pocket slightly. "Ah just need you to find mah missing Orchestra."

I sneered slightly. The fact that he claimed ownership of such a beautiful thing when he himself had none, was sickening.

"I'll find them, don't worry." I replied, offering no form of comfort in my voice.

Seeing that his snake oil charms would get him nowhere with me, He slinked away, his greasy smell following him as he slinked into the pitiful box he undoubtedly called an office.

I loosened my coat somewhat as I began my quest inside the house; my first stop was the pit, as that was usually the location of an Orchestra.

The corridors I found myself in were full of regal decoration and warm lighting. I had to stop myself from examining my surroundings. I had a job to do and I was going to do it.

The corridor gave way to the auditorium as I breached the unlocked doors with my trenchcoat flapping in the slight wind coming from the stage, the entire room dark and lit for a performance. I walked with my chest puffed outwards as I approached the pit, my right hand firmly on my gun, its cold metal serving to keep me attentive.

I twisted my head as I peered into the foreboding pit and saw nothing but empty seats and scores strewn around the floor. I was about to stand up and abandon this line of inquiry, until the wind from the stage picked up

to a whistle. This was a break I needed as I grabbed my gun and cocked it with deliberate action to put fear into whatever was playing this game with me.

I walked towards the steps with army style stealth and crept up them, peering towards the undecorated back of the stage.

As I slinked across the stage, I felt the wind intensify, until all of a sudden the stage lights erupted into a ball of white-hot light and illuminated the entire stage from its murky prison.

I twisted around with precise movement, my gun raised and ready shoot, but became filled with horror as I surveyed the scene presented to me.

Although the lights on the stage were blinding and piercing, my new tormentor had left a small channel for me to survey my audience. Ghouls. Zombies, Rotting Corpses. Call them what you will, they were now watching my every move, their rotting flesh falling off, and congealed blood spilling to the floor like rancid rain.

Whatever was going on, I wanted no part of it. This was not my gig, I hadn't signed up for this, and it was my time to leave.

Fate had conspired against my quick escape and had removed the steps to my freedom, leaving only an expanse of nothing.

"AAAAAAAnd now!" A voice rang out from behind me. I twisted and saw a twisted figure of bone and seared flesh holding a wireless microphone, wearing the same greasy suit as the manager.

"The one, the ONLY. Luke. Bavarious!" He announced to the deathly audience.

I raised my gun to his head, and lined up the sights to his head. I didn't like his style and thought he needed to learn of justice, Bavarious style.

A noise, stopped me from enacting his punishment. A deathly clatter of strings and pipes, arranged in a screech and howl. I spun around, my gun ready to deal with this new nemesis as the source of this new sound became apparent.

An orchestra of 12, probably the very orchestra I had been sent to find, were there. Each in dirty and torn tuxedo's, they're appearance was no better than the crowd of demons watching this harrowing event unfold. Some were missing jaws, eyes, some even missing limbs, but each player managing to play their instrument of death in the symphony of horror.

I'd had enough of this game, the rules weren't to my liking and the umpire was bent.

Like a holy angel, I raised my pistol to the Tuba player. Obviously gluttonous in his previous life, I decided he was the first to experience cleansing. I aimed for the largest portion of his head, held my breath and squeezed the trigger.

The bang of the gun had silenced the approaching orchestra as the round rippled through the air and smashed into the players head, but bounced off like a ball on a wall.

I shook off my surprise and aimed for another, this time it was a violin player. A once cute broad, but her new bandmates had corrupted her into

join the legion of the dead. Again, aiming for the head as the band started playing their deathly march and advancing faster this time, I peered down the sights and squeezed.

Another veil of silence enveloped the house as the same happened again, the round bouncing off harmlessly.

I could have fired the rest of my chamber on the advancing horde, but I didn't think my metal protector deserved that fate.

As the band approached, I heard the crowd moan and scream. I guessed that this was the undead version of a cheer as the players came closer and closer to me, closer to whatever endgame they had decided for me.

I wasn't about to grant them this, I never planned to go out this way and I had a long way to go yet.

As I considered the situation, the pieces of the puzzle fit into place. I'd worked out why the orchestra had gone missing, why they had turned into the grisly afterimage and why the audience had joined them in the ranks of the undead.

Grasping my angel, I placed the barrel under my chin, aiming for my precious grey matter and I squeezed.

The round screamed through my head and smashed through my skull.

As I fell to the ground, I saw the orchestra scream out in pain and begin to disintegrate, as if the blinding gleam of the stage lights were holy light, coming the cleanse them.

The Audience was sharing the same fate, as they melted into a gloop and started to run towards the stage area.

With my last breath, I placed my gun back in its holster, my job done.

Two days later I woke up in the hospital. I could feel a bandage wrapped around my head, holding my essence in.

"Well done." The cute nurse said, seeing I was awake. "You found the orchestra."

Like the Mounties, I always get my man.

By Cheesus Christ

I pray to god I'm the first person to think of this... I haven't had time to read the entirety of the other thread.

Also, I just wanted to say that one might appreciate this story a bit more when they compare it side by side with The Horrid Reflection, as I put in a lot of effort in preserving the original structure and tone.

With that said... may I present...

### **The Horrid Erection**

I stepped into the stall. The urge had come again. I was in the 4th floor men's room of the Tri-County Technical College library. The sleek basin of water in the toilet bowl beckoned for my cock like a lost lover. I am a chronic masturbator. My name is Luke Bavariou. I like to masturbate.

Sure, people had been complaining about weird noises coming from the campus restrooms for about a year now, ever since I enrolled last spring.

Signs were placed on all the bulletin boards and restroom entrances: "RESTROOMS MONITORED BY SECURITY."

I edged my swollen crotch closer to the rim. Suddenly, I noticed I was not alone. Peeking under the stall I saw a dark pair of legs occupying the stall next to mine—the handicapped stall. I thought I heard the faint sound of sobbing. No matter, I lowered my fly and gripped my quivering organ.

"Keep it down, buddy," I shouted through the stall divider.

"(Sniffle... sob)".

"KEEP IT DOWN!" I shouted again.

"(Sniff)... beggin' your... (sob)... pardon," said the legs.

I began to pull on my delicate member, but found it impossible to concentrate thanks to my weeping accomplice. Now, I've wanked it co-op before; never bothered me. Hell, I've even wanked it with people crying (Grandma Packard's funeral, 'natch), but this time? This time I just couldn't even raise a chubby.

A breeze trickled over my wagglng dick as I slapped the divider. The sobs had grown louder, though now they were mixed with a deep grunting sound. "Shut the fuck up man, I can't even think!" I cried, though the noises only responded with renewed intensity.

Enough is enough. After one last bang I knelt to the floor and peered up at my discourteous neighbor.

"SHUT THE FU-" and I could say no more. The occupant twisted its convulsing body toward me. First its reverberating forearms. Then its jiggling ball sack. Then its penis. If you call it a penis. Its texture was horrid. There was an abundance of purple scars. There was blood leaking from open sores along the shaft and from its urethra. There was no hair. Only pulsating veins.

I banged my head on the bottom of the stall in astonishment. I gritted my teeth but spurts of vomit flew from my mouth—Quiznos. He took a step towards my defenseless head and I saw his Johnson glisten with lubricant in the dim florescent light.

He screamed and arched his pelvis toward me. His stub of a hand was flying furiously across his pole, which I could tell was ready to commence its brutality. Then, he pulled the trigger.

His body recoiled as he loosed an animalistic scream. I heard a splatter hit the floor beside my head and looked up just as his One-Eyed Snake sprayed my gaping mouth with a wad of jizz. It kept cumming with the assistance of his adrenaline. Only a split second passed before he squeezed off another round onto my neck.

His Thing was inches away when it fired point-blank into my throat. He slapped my head with his dick terribly powerful. I could see its strained muscles as my head jerked to the side, smashing into the floor. Dazed, I felt him fire again and again into my nose, eyes, ears. I felt his recoil pushing back rhythmically. Man-juice hitting the pavement, showering me. I felt my own cock fall limp again the floor. He kept firing, but his magazine was

empty. He staggered. I tasted his semen and blood mixed into a horrid cock tail. He stepped over me. A library card dropped the floor. Bavarius.

I looked down at my hands and saw a horrid erection. Suddenly, I was sobbing.





## Chapter 42

# The Creature / Dying

By brylcreem

### **The creature. From the sewers.**

This wasn't going to happen. Again. Gene Beaver pulled off his light suede jacket and sighed. Then he sighed again. He had started as a trainee sewer inspector three months ago and immediately heard the rumors. Rumors of a creature in the sewers.

Three years ago he had been happy. With a kid and another on the way. Wife at home, making dinner. The whole nine yards. Then he came to town. The kid. The prodigy they called him. Gene hated him. Hated him enough to kill him? Perhaps. Or perhaps not. Either way, Gene hated him.

Two and half months later, his wife left him. With the kid. The kid from out of town. Gene hated him, but he couldn't do anything about it.

It was Christmas, but Gene didn't feel jolly. Didn't feel jolly at all. His wife was gone with the kids, and the kid and Gene was alone. Alone at Christmas. The worst time of year to be alone. It was sad. Suddenly, Gene sobbed.

No, this isn't right! He thought. Gene decided to change his life, to make it better. A new life, in a new town.

Three years later, here he was. In the sewer, with a creature that didn't show up.

Suddenly, Gene heard a sound. A sound from behind! Suddenly he turned and came face to face with it! The creature! The rumors were real! The creature was real!

Gene died quickly. In the sewers.

200 miles away, Louise shuddered in her sleep. The man next to her woke and looked at her. And smiled!

## Dying. Of arsenik!

"Mommy? Where's Daddy?" The questions kept penetrating Louise's skull like a rusty icepick that had been left outside too long. Long enough to develop rust. Cancer for metal, Louise's father had always said in his father-voice. Now he was dead. Like Gene.

"Daddy isn't here, sweetheart! We live with Tolkien now, remember?" Louise had left Gene for Tolkien three years ago. It had been the best years of her life. Until now. The kids made it that way. The kids with their kid questions and their kid faces. Why were they like that? They were kids, that's why.

Louise turned around. Suddenly! The kid winced. Louise slapped it with her hand. Blood poured out of the mark left by her wedding ring. Tolkien had bought it. On a Sunday.

They had visited Tolkien's parents. They lived in a small farmhouse just off Route 66 in the desert. Miles to the nearest neighbor. They had horses, and Louise loved to ride them. Tolkien's parents were rich. But it didn't show in the way they dressed. Tolkien's dad wore shirts and blue jeans. Tolkien's mom wore shirts and blue jeans. Tolkien had picked up the habit. He wore shirts and blue jeans too. Soon, Louise were wearing shirts and blue jeans.

It was Sunday. Louise and Tolkien rode to town on a mighty steed. They stopped at a jewellery store. Tolkien and Louise went inside the jewellery store. Inside, the owner of the jewellery store looked them up and down. She was the owner of the jewellery store, and she didn't like poor people in her jewellery store, of which she was the owner.

"Get out of my jewellery store!" She said. "We don't like poor people in this jewellery store! I own this jewellery store!" The owner said.

"I have money!" Tolkien said. He showed his money.

"Oh." The owner of the jewellery store said. "Oh. Please shop. This is my jewellery store".

"Thank you." Tolkien said. "I will" he said.

Tolkien picked out a ring. He gave the money to the owner of the jewellery store.

"Keep the change" Tolkien said to the owner of the jewellery store.

"Thank you very much" the owner of the jewellery store said. Now she could retire and buy a boat. Tolkien had been the 10,000th customer and she had enough money to buy a boat and retire. So she did, the next day.

In the meantime, Louise was happy with Tolkien. Tolkien wore shirts and blue jeans. Louise wore shirts and blue jeans. The kids wore pajamas. This was why Louise hated them.

She had been giving them arsenik for dinner every night. Her high school biology teacher had taught her to make it in exchange for sex. Louise had been 14 years old and she loved it. So did the teacher. Louise told everything to the principal and he was fired. Then he committed suicide. Louise didn't care.

Louise gave arsenik to her children. But what she didn't know, was that the kids vomited from it. They vomited into the air ducts of the house. And there the dust became infested with arsenik. Then Louise and Tolkien breathed it and then they died.

The End.



## Chapter 43

# The Child

By taurapo

Luke Bavarius stared into the barrel of his Beretta, if only he had the guts to pull the trigger of his Beretta, He nearly got erection thinking about how the bullet from his Beretta would tear his brain in half and a shower of blood would vomit from the back off his head into the wall.

Suddenly he heard a scream come from the apartment above him, without hesitation he drew his Beretta and headed up the stairs.

It is there he witnessed a sight that made him vomit harder than he ever vomited before, a child who couldn't have been older than a year or six was being raped by what he could only describe as a extremely hairy ape.

There was blood and vomit all over the floor as the oversized ape like creature was endlessly pounding away on the child, Luke Bavarius lifted his Beretta and pulled the trigger shooting the abomination in the eye socket.

After the smoke cleared from his Beretta Luke Bavarius could finally inspect the creature, he was shocked when the creature was nowhere to be found, the only thing he saw in the hallway was the lifeless corpse of a dead man.

A closer examination gave room for the ugly truth, the bullet form Luke's Beretta had penetrated the skull of the now lifeless corpse who Luke Bavarius recognized as Raymond Von Strathburgh an ultra conservative right wing Christian with a PHD in Creationism.

The thought of what he just did shot into Luke's mind faster and harder than the bullet shot from his Beretta, his stomach growled as vomit shot up to his head. But Luke Bavarius couldn't open his mouth due to shock.

While pressurized vomit was shooting out of Luke's nose another tenant ran into the hall and witnessed a sight that made him projectile vomit down the stairs of the building, Luke realized he couldn't allow the man 'a witness to the horrible vomit inducing crime' to live.

Unwillingly Luke Bavarius raised his Beretta for the slaughter of another innocent man, upon seeing Luke take aim the man froze with fear while simultaneously shitting and pissing his pants, the horror of the situation dawned upon Luke Bavarius as he decided to do the thing most fitting.

He shot his Beretta, as his Beretta fell inside a huge pool of blood mixed with vomit the now lifeless body of Luke Bavarius let go off its boundaries and shit and piss flowed freely out of his lifeless corpse.

The hall Stank with the stench of piss, Vomit and shit. The police declared it a health hazard and had the entire block evacuated, all but one officer who entered the building projectile vomited unto another officer.

The tenant who witnessed the horrible crime went insane and was sent to an asylum where he promptly killed 3 staff members before committing suicide with Luke's berretta.

Two weeks later new tenants found the lifeless body of a little girl inside Raymond's flat, she showed signs of repeated sexual abuse, her rust colored dress was soaked in blood and semen. Raymond's semen.

## Chapter 44

# The Mosquito of Death

By Assless Chaps

Luke Bavarious stumbled slowly through the New York City alley, gently swatting the mosquitoes away from his skin with the butt of his beretta. It was a hot and humid night, and the blood-suckers were relentless in their pursuit of delicious, sticky human blood. His delicious blood was made even more delicious after drinking four Coors in a nearby bar. The mosquitoes knew it was delicious and that Bavarious was too drunk to defend himself properly. Or so they thought.

As Bavarious continued to wade through the refuse and urine-soaked mattresses strewn about the alleyway, the mosquitoes became ravenous. They swarmed him in droves, and he began frantically waving his trusty beretta around, squishing the lowly bugs into a mess of guts and recently-consumed human blood.

Suddenly Bavarious vomited. The alcohol had finally gotten to him, and he spewed out chunks of peanuts and pretzels, mixed with beer. He puked so hard he began puking blood out of his mouth. The blood and vomit cocktail splattered to the ground, forming a vile and horrid river of bodily fluids. If only he had listened to his young son, Timmy, and stayed home that night, instead of going out and drinking Coors, none of this would have happened.

The mosquitoes began to fly away from Bavarious. He thought in his drunken mind that they were giving up, and that he would be able to continue on his walk home, while the insects pursued more easily-caught prey. Bavarious was wrong. Dead wrong.

Bavarious tripped over a rotting pile of dog feces, and landed face-first onto the asphalt. As he raised his head, blood spurted from his broken nose in every direction. Bavarious used all his manly strength to pull himself up, and when he looked up, he saw all the mosquitoes joining together, like a giant mosquito army, in a frenzy due to the delectable scent of his flowing

blood. They grew in number, and eventually a million mosquitoes joined forces and swarmed together. They began to morph into one hideous creature. One giant mosquito! The most humongous mosquito ever recorded in the history of mankind. A gargantuan travesty of a beast.

Not deterred by this horrendous creature, Bavarious screamed at the top of his lungs, "EVIL-DOER! VILLAIN! YOU DO NOT FRIGHTEN ME!" As he screamed, flecks of spittle mixed with the still-running blood from his broken nose, only attracting the giant mosquito more.

The giant mosquito, the size of Bavarious at least, stood up on its back two legs like a human, to do battle with Bavarious. Its long, pointed proboscis inched closer to him, yearning for the sweet taste of human blood. Luke Bavarious unholstered his beretta and let loose a torrent of bullets that merely ricocheted off the giant mosquito's hard insect body. *This is no ordinary mosquito*, Bavarious thought to himself.

The massive insect lunged forward and sunk its sword-like blood-sucking mouth-nose into Bavarious' neck. Bavarious screamed in agony as blood flowed from his wound like a red rapid. The pain caused him to lose control of all bodily functions. He writhed in agony as the pain caused him to puke up the remnants of his pretzels and peanuts, mixed with beer and the bile left over in his stomach. He felt particularly uncomfortable as his bladder and bowels emptied into the camouflage fatigues he wore. His apparel was filthy. He was reduced to a slithering, screaming shell of a man, covered in excrement, urine and vomit.

The mosquitobeast had had enough. It pulled its sucker from Bavarious' neck with a wet, slimy burp. Bavarious watched in pain, as the mosquito slowly turned and began to walk away, unable to fly because it was so filled up with his beer-blood.

Suddenly, a white light beamed down on Bavarious. He squinted from the blinding light, and could vaguely see the shadow of a man in the light, far, far away. As the shadow-man moved closer, Bavarious felt that he looked familiar.

"Grand-nd-pa?!" he said.

"Yes. It is me, Luke Bavarious. Your grandfather: Brock Bavarious. I am here to help."

Soundlessly, Grandpa Brock showed Bavarious how to slay the beast. And as quickly as he appeared, he was gone.

Bavarious mustered up the last of his strength and stood up. He slowly stalked the giant mosquito and lunged forward, clinging to the creature's back, like a child riding piggy-back on the back of a man. As the mosquito let out an eardrum-bursting roar, Bavarious grabbed its giant proboscis and yanked it hard. The proboscis broke off and the creature's power was drained. Its only way of eating was destroyed. It crumpled to the ground, writhing in a puddle of its own blood mixed with the blood of all of the victims of the millions of mosquitoes that made up this disgusting creature. After a few seconds of painful screaming, the creature died.



Bavarious didn't want to take any chances, so he raised the broken-off proboscis and stabbed the mosquito right through its insect heart.

"You suck," he said, as he hobbled away, ready to get home and get some sleep.



## Chapter 45

# The Monster of Lake Grim

By Sirocco

I stepped out into the night. The clouds were dark and raining shadows. The lake was calm. Dead fish rose to the surface. They shone in the moonlight. I was here. Lake Grim.

I am Luke Bavarioux. A detective from New York City. But I wasn't in New York City anymore. I was at Lake Grim. Investigating. My shoes squelched horrid vomit noises in the mud. When I heard the sounds I stopped. I looked around, in a sudden panic that threatened to overwhelm me. I fell forward and knelt in the mud and vomited on the ground. Some of it went on my hands but I didn't care. I was afraid. Reports from this area had reported strange vomitings in the lakeside town Grim which was next to Lake Grim. First you heard the vomit noise. And then you vomited yourself. Then the blood. And then... you were never heard from again.

I stepped up. I knew if I wasn't careful enough I would fall to the hands of the monster. If they were hands. That it had. The boy had warned me about this. I had been foolish not to listen. I looked around and restlessly put my hand near my Beretta. My TWO Berettas. The breeze drifted through the trees and made waves on the surface of the lake. My eyes scanned the lake.

"The monster must live in the lake," I said to myself.

I walked down to the lake's shore and looked into the black, swirling water. I saw my reflection. I was about to look away when I felt the need to vomit rise from my stomach and into my mouth. I vomited into my reflection, again and again, blood and saliva came out too.

"This is horrid!" I gasped, in between vomits.

A dark, black shape broke the surface of the lake. The monster of Lake Grim had decided to show its face. I needed to act fast before it was too late. I leapt back and pulled both Berettas out and fired them at the shape but it kept on coming. Shells hit the ground and got stuck in the mud. I tried

to reload but the need to vomit and the fear made my hands too shaky. I dropped the shells and backed away from the monster.

"My weapons are useless!" I cried. I tried to swing my fist but my vision was blurry from salty tears of pain and fear and horror. And I missed. I fell back on to my face and broke my nose. Blood splattered everywhere on the ground like a rose trampled underfoot. Then I vomited into the blood. And then I sneezed. I turned over and looked up at the starlit sky. The night sky turned black. The monster was looming over me, ready to do its evil deed.

"Kill me! Just kill me now!" I gargled, trying to speak through a mixture of vomit, blood, boogers, and pus from where the blood came from. "Kill me!"

It stopped. Then it walked away, leaving me in the mud and the grass, shaking without control.

And suddenly I was crying.

## Chapter 46

# The Horrid Reflection - Redux

By Cota Froise

I sat at my computer. The email had come again. I was checking my emails in between browsing the Something Horrid forums. My hand shook slightly with the mouse in my hand. The white cursor was positioned and ready, ready to click. I am an internet detective. My name is Luke Bavarius. I like this work.

People had been complaining about horrid email attachments coming from a mysterious stranger for about a year now and I finally decided to see what was going on. I had decided to stop these emails.

I leaned into the dim monitor light. I saw a single email sitting in my 'junk' folder, hiding away from me. It was strange and suspicious. I raised my mouse and lined my cursor up with the icon.

"You there... What are you then?" I whispered through the darkness.

"Open up..." I whispered again.

"Beggin' your pardon, but... you don't want to open that," my young son said.

"Sure I do. I got a cursor pointed right at it so I'd better," I replied.

"Okay, you asked for it," my son mumbled as he began to turn around.

A chill trickled through the room as I clicked and the picture began to load for me. I couldn't see it yet, it was loading on the screen.

"Get onto the screen."

It inched downward. First its back. Then its arms. Then its ass. Then its legs. If you look at the legs. His ass was horrid. There was an abundance of red flesh. There was blood leaking from a burst blood vessel and he only had one gold ring. There was no face. There was no head. Only a hole.

I took a step back in astonishment. I gritted my teeth to keep the vomit down.

I took three more steps forward and I felt my tears glisten in the dim light.

"I told ya," my son said.

He screamed and began to run away from me. My mouse was held high in the air and was ready to commence my brutality. I clicked the right button on my mouse. The click soothed my fear as I saw a drop-down menu open and saw the 'delete' option make a white rectangle over the thing's ass. It kept resisting with the assistance of my email provider's inferiority. It had only been a split second before I brought up another drop-down menu over its ass. The thing was inches away as I dragged and dropped it into the Recycle Bin. Two more appeared on my desktop.

My palm smashed my forehead terribly powerful. Muscles were strained and torn as my head jerked to the side, smashing a window. I fell and landed in jagged glass. Dazed I stared again and again into the thing's hole. I felt the vomit rising back rhythmically. Glass hitting the floor. Me hitting the glass. Vomit showering me. I felt my own blood from the side of my head fall and drip. I kept staring. The hole was empty. I staggered. I tasted my tears and blood mixed into a horrid cocktail. It fell down next to me. A name sparkled on the side of his ring. Bavarius.

I looked up at the computer screen and saw a horrid reflection. Suddenly, I was sobbing.

## Chapter 47

# The Library

By Combat Wombat

My name is Luke Bavariious. I'm a PI, a private investigator. I wasn't always a PI, I used to be a cop. A damn good cop, the best on the force. But that was the past. There's no point dwelling upon the past. It's not so bad though, a PI is like being a freelance cop.

I had a new case, it had come in this morning as I was trying to murder my hangover with a cocktail of aspirin and coffee. The phone pierced the silence and drove deep into my head with the force of a semi-truck going 55 miles per hour. I swore never to get this drunk again. I remember I had fought down the vertigo and struggled to make sense of the words coming out of the earpiece. "This was worse than the time I killed myself in the alley," I thought to myself. At least I hoped I thought to myself. What if I spoke it out loud? I looked at the phone in my hands in horror. My hand trembled. It suddenly became too much weight to bear. I remembered mumbling something close to "I'll be there" and slammed the phone headset back on it's cradle. At least I hoped that's what I said. It was all too much to deal with.

I was struggling to piece together what the voice on the phone had told me. The voice said something about noises in the library. There were children there, they were afraid it was a stalker. The police had found nothing and they couldn't watch the place all day. That's where I came in.

I grabbed the bottle of aspirin and twisted the child proof safety cap off. I downed the entire bottle and washed it down with the remained of my coffee, now lukewarm and disgusting. Odd, I thought. I just made this pot.

I grabbed my berretta and palm slammed a clip into it. As I made my way towards the door with grim purpose I was accompanied by the sounds of aluminum cans being crushed underfoot, cans that lay scattered across my apartment like ammo shells. There had been a war here last night, Coors were the bullets. I was the victor and the defeated.

When I got to the library it was deserted. It was a cold, desolate place lit only by the night lights. Rows upon rows of books lined the shelves. Each one was like a tombstone, the library a masoleum. It was all too much.

If there was a stalker I would need to stake him out. I searched the library and found the perfect place, a hallowed out section of a bookshelf that I could fit myself into. I removed the books and squeezed myself into my new hiding place. As I began piling books to cover myself up my fingers brushed against the covers of all the books. I could feel the grain, the texture. The embossed lettering. I hate embossed lettering. Some of the books had jackets with embossed lettering on them. I tore those off and hid the jackets. The books were much better without them. There wasn't anything I could do about the ones that had embossed lettering on the covers themselves.

Soon I was perfectly hidden, a specter. A ghost. Now I had to wait and watch. My berretta felt cold and heavy in my hand. It was my constant companion, my only friend in this cold, terrifying world.

I waited out the hours. The cold blackness of night soon gave way to morning and the library opened. Librarians streamed in and began sorting the returns and placing them on the appropriate shelves. Dewey Decimal would have been proud of these librarians.

Soon the place was filled with adults and children. My eyes were sharp, alert. I had picked a perfect spot with a clean view of the checkout counter and much of the library itself. I would find this stalker.

I could see the effects of his presence, clear as day. People looked around worriedly as if they were aware of someone watching them. No, not someone. Something. I could feel it too. A deep, murderous intent hanging on the air like heavy cobwebs. A cold, unrelenting malice that permeated the very air. A thick, undulating smog of contempt. It bore down on me, on everything. It terrified me. I swallowed the vomit that threatened to climb up my throat.

I could feel it everywhere. I could feel it's eyes on me. I could see no trace of it, though.

The police came again, I guess they decided to take another look. They inspected the place. They were dutiful and attentive, but my hiding spot was too good. The stalker's must be even better. Soon they left.

The stalker was still here.

Hours continued to crawl by like a wounded semi-truck limping down a gravel road with a flat tire as oil, precious blood to the vehicle, vomited forth from ruptured lines and leaving a death trail on the rocks. My finger rested uneasily on the trigger of my berretta. I had to be ready.

I was startled to attention by the voice of the head librarian as she picked up the phone and punched in a number.

"Is this Luke Bavarius?" I began to tremble. *No... no!*

"This is Pamela Dufrost at the Metropolitan Library, we've been hearing strange noises and it's frightening the children..."



As I felt the icy grip of fatalistic, militant terror grip my heart I could hear laughter. Was it coming from my own lips? No, it couldn't be! I screamed, the noise erupting from my throat like vomit.

Edit - I guess it has a very weak link to respecting children. Not being a creepy time travelling stalker is an important message right?



## Chapter 48

### Pearl

By Phthalogreen

I stand in the shadow. The sounds have been coming again and again for thirty years. I'm in the old folks' home on 42nd Street in New York. Right by the alley where it all started. My hand shakes slightly with my pain meds in my hand.

Pearl, my ten-year-old granddaughter, sits on the bed across the room. I keep my hat down and my collar up so she can't see my face. I won't let her get any closer. I don't want her to see what I've become.

"Why won't you take your medicine, Grandpa?" she asks.

"It won't help me," I say. "There isn't a cure for what I have."

"It's okay, Grandpa," she says. "You don't have to take them if you don't want to."

Suddenly the nurse enters the room. Nurse Packard. She's the old hag of the nursing home. Everyone hates her and everyone is hated by her.

"You there! What are you doing? Swallow those meds!" she shouts through the darkness.

I look at the pills and hesitate. They are huge and taste horrid.

"That's it, I'll have to feed them to you!" Nurse Packard shouts again.

"The pills don't help!" Pearl cries. "Don't you get it?"

"Quiet, kid," Nurse Packard yells. "Turn around," she says to me.

"No. He's sick. You don't want him to turn around," Pearl says.

"Sure I do," she replies. "Step out of the dark and open your mouth." She doesn't know my mouth is always open now. I stay put and pull my coat collar over my chin.

With that she runs towards me and commences her brutality, grabbing the pills from my hand. I keep my head down, but her clipboard smashes my head terribly powerful.

"Grandpa!" Pearl shouts. "Stop it, you hag!"

Nurse Packard ignores her. She giggles and forces her hand into my mouth. The pills enter my throat.

Unable to control myself, I inch forward. I feel the light on my legs. Then my chest. Then my head.

"Look away, Pearl!" I shout. I lift my hat and Nurse Packard screams at the sight of my scarred, purple face.

As the pills enter my stomach I feel it turning and tightening. Putrid vomit erupts from my mouth and nose and splatters on Nurse Packard's face. As the old woman screams, something pops in her head and she drops to the floor, twitching. The vomit keeps gushing toward the wriggling body on the floor.

Then my stomach is empty. I fall to my knees. My head is spinning. But I hear Pearl's voice.

"Grandpa!" she says. I feel her grabbing my coat.

"No! Don't look at my face!" I shout.

"It's okay, Grandpa," Pearl says. "I saw you. I never looked away."

Suddenly I am sobbing. I realize I was wrong to assume she was weak. She has the right to see her Grandpa's face. I turn and look at her.

"Grandpa," she says, hugging me. "I want to know something."

"What, honey?" I say.

"What is your real name? Mommy won't tell me."

I think for a moment. Then I pick Pearl up and put her on my lap.

"My name," I say proudly, "is Luke Bavariious."

[edit: typo fixes]

## Chapter 49

# Reunion Under a Blood Red Moon

By Sleepless Dreamer

The man stared at the figure wrapped in black sitting on the bench in the middle of town at 3 in the morning. It was late, but he felt it was his duty to talk to the lonely person who had seen better days. After exchanging meaningless talk, the man in green asked the man in black what placed him in this situation.

"It all started when that Bavarius kid moved in the 3 story house by the cemetery. That kid, Luke, was a curious little punk, but he just turned the whole neighbourhood around with his investigations. That little jerk was probably too smart for his own good, and brighter than any of the people around him, including his parents. That kid fancied himself a detective, and he was quite good at his "detecting" work, especially for a 13 year old boy who listened to no one but himself. He was smart, he was the first one to see right through the facade that suburban life provided, he knew how fake everything was."

The man in green asked: "so he spotted his mother cheating on his father or something?"

The dark person replied: "no, he had been aware of that for quite a while, he simply realized what was happening in the graveyard at night. The most of the neighbourhood would gather around a specific grave, late at night, around this hour, and they would chant horrible songs of death and despair. A black magic ceremony of the darkest kind, celebrating horrors man should not know. Luke was a kid, but he knew what was happening there wasn't right. His parents wouldn't believe him, and his older brother, Frank, just said Luke probably had imagined everything. His brother didn't care; he was 16 and had started dating a slutty girl. He was more concerned about that than the darkness that surrounded their house."

The man in green smiled and said: "it sounds like Luke was just in need of attention; he was probably a bit jealous his brother had started dating. I've seen that a lot in my line of work."

The brooding figure replied: "Luke didn't need these easy girls to be happy, and he did not invent anything because he needed attention. He was right. The whole street would gather, planning human sacrifices. One night, Luke snuck out of his bedroom, into the graveyard, and observed what was happening. There was more people than usual, and on a grave that served as an altar, a girl was bound and gagged... Frank's girlfriend. The ceremony started, and Luke tried to get under the altar to untie the poor girl. That's when a familiar voice caught his attention. He could not quite figure out who it was, the voice was transformed by dark magics. That's when he heard a sound that will be burned in his memory forever: the sound of the girl's throat being sliced open. Blood dripped at first, but it eventually pour over Luke, the blood of this poor girl sacrificed to a dark god. Luke waited for an hour, and then snuck away from the mass and washed himself before going back home. The next day, he asked his brother about his girlfriend, but was told that they had broken up the night before."

The man in green said: "that's quite a story you've got there, do you need a place to spend the night, I know a shelter, and I could start seeing you as a patient, you see, I'm a psychiatrist."

The man in black looked up and said in a grave voice: "I know what you are Frank. I know what you've become. You feed on men and women's souls and masquerade as a psychiatrist. I'm here to stop you. I've known it for years, but I'm not a kid anymore, people listen."

The man in green snarled: "Who do you think you are? Luke? I killed you years ago, I sliced you up like a pig on that altar. You bleed and cried, you pissed your pants when the knife went through you."

The figure in black rose, the street lights revealing his pale complexion, his emaciated figure, and the darkness in his eyes. He said: "you killed me, but you failed to make sure I was dead." Luke grabbed Frank by the throat and crushed his airways. "You are going to hell, where you will be devoured slowly by the people you have killed, until all that is left of you is blood, tears and pains. And it will start over for eternity." The dying Frank let out one last airless shout as his soul went to hell.

Luke smiled and said to himself: "Another job well done, and now I can wear his skin to seem more human. I finally have a life back." He looked up and saw Sandy, the girl his brother had killed, waiting for him back to un-life like him. Things were getting better.

## Alternate Ending

Luke said to himself: "They always fall for the zombie make-up." He looked up and saw the ghost of his mother, who asked: "Are you sure that was Frank?" Luke replied: "Yes mother, thank you for guiding me to him, and

for saving my life when Frank tried to kill me." "Don't thank me, she replied, I've been with you ever since I died, thank you for not taking these pills that make me disappear."

Luke smiled and said to no one in particular: "Psychiatrists, what do they know?"

\* \* \*

I actually like the alternate ending more than the original one, however the alternate one is closer to what I usually write.

Hopefully I managed to make something bad and good at the same time.





## Chapter 50

# Untitled

By TheSpiritFox

Luke walked into his room. Man! What a shitty day.

He hated this town. Ever since he'd been moved here, the days just got longer and longer, more and more boring. From the hours long train ride into the city to the four hours of processing to even get past the train station, he'd been bored to tears for months now. The shelling had begun two days ago, but it had yet to affect his part of the city, so he ignored it like he ignored the usual sounds of doors crashing down in the middle of the night. It was never *his* door. He never got to play.

He'd talked to his mother about it, asked her why their family never got to have fun like everyone else's. Why they never got to go on the vacations his parents told him about. Why the police didn't come and take them fun places. She told him it was because he was special.

He hated being special.

Luke heard the front door open and close, the lock clicking as two sets of footsteps walked into the small apartment.

Great. His parents were home.

He heard hushed, worried voices, and his heart jumped. That's how all the neighbors always talked before they went on vacation. His parents were probably worried about what to bring, since people always had to say yes and go immediately without packing if they wanted to get in on a vacation. A small vibration shook the building, as he realized that the shelling had finally moved to their part of the city.

His mom had told him about the shells. They dropped pinata's into the city which burst open, and people got to keep whatever they grabbed out of it! He couldn't believe his luck, two events in one day! Maybe when they left on vacation he'd pass near enough to a shell to get to keep something.

He hoped his luck was turning.

There was a pounding on the door, and he burst out of his room eagerly with his pillow and blanket.

"Open up!" a rough voice shouted. His parents gave frightened looks back and forth, he knew they'd been caught unprepared. Luckily, he was a practical kid, all he needed was stuff to sleep with. His parents opened the door to see a guy in some wierd kind of mask like science on his face.

"You're to come with us. Now"

His parents obediently followed out the door, and Luke Bavarius brought up the rear, his proud strut meant to show anyone who watched that it was *his* turn now. He just knew that his vacation would be far better than anyone else's had ever been. He knew he was special, and he knew they'd only have made him wait this long to prepare everything in advance.

They walked out the front door of the building, and he walked right into his mothers back as he saw what had frozen the policeman with science on his face. Two shells sitting there waiting in the front yard, freshly landed.

Luke could not believe his good luck, in all his 10 years he'd never gotten anything special for himself, and he could understand how anyone would be frozen with excitement upon seeing not one, but TWO untouched shells to be raided.

Luke darted past his parents frozen forms to the leftmost shell and eagerly peered inside it. A small form moved, and leaped out. Luke ducked out of the way and turned, seeing a small four legged animal standing on the ground. It didn't seem to have any eyes, but looked at him just the same.

"A pet!" Luke thought. "A pet! I've heard people used to have pets but I never thought I'd have one of my own!"

Luke ran forward and grabbed the small animal before it had a chance to move again, and heard the roar of a gun as a bullet chipped the sidewalk not a foot from his foot. He looked up, the science-police was pointing a gun at him! He wanted to shoot his new pet!

Luke turned and ran, dashing behind playground equipment as his parents screamed at him to put down the "headcrab"

"A headcrab?" he wondered. "So thats what you're called, little guy" he quietly muttered to his new pet, hiding behind a large piece of playground equipment.

"You'd better leave my pet alone! I'll make you sorry!" he yelled, mostly at the policeman. His parents were the ones who answered though.

"Luke! Please you don't know whats going on! That thing's dangerous!"

Luke stared incredulously at his new companion, and shouted back "Why are you always trying to take everything away from me? Why can't I have one thing, just ONE THING that other people have? If I'm so special why am I always left out?!"

He knew he'd need his hands to get away, so he set his new pet down on its four spiky legs and shushed it, telling it to calm down. It kept trying to sit on his head though, and luke eventually relented with a sigh, thinking it would be easier to have it sitting up there than on his arms.

As soon as his new pet gained its throne, he felt a funny tickle at the back of his neck. Suddenly, he couldn't move. He felt strange little tendril-tickles under his skin and looked down to see his veins growing, then eventually shattering and strange tendrils of skin that looked kind of like his pet grew out of them instead. He could see his skin rotting before his eyes, but it didn't hurt, so it didn't scare him.

On the contrary, he felt strong. Luke was amazed at how he suddenly felt like he could lift a car or jump 15 feet in the air without trying.

His amazement was shattered a moment later as a flurry of bullets tore through the playground area he'd just been hiding behind. But before the first bullet was through the material enough to hit him, he was eight feet away in a crouch.

It was a flash, but a very clear one. He felt like he could remember each individual fraction of the half a second it had taken him to dodge the bullets. But his wonder quickly turned to anger.

The science police was trying to kill them both! Red rage caused his heart to accelerate to a hummingbird like rate and a curtain fell across his vision as he realized that science police wasn't trying to take him anywhere fun, that in fact science police was about to take away the only thing he'd ever truly loved. He sprang completely over the playground equipment and charged straight at the man. He saw the man shoot twice, felt the impacts and watched skin and gore fall off of his body in equal amounts, but to him it was no different than running into a mosquito that was flying forward intending to bite.

He leaped again, and crashed down on the policeman. He knocked the science off his face and stabbed a hand down at his head. He was strong, his hand went completely through the policeman's head and cracked the concrete below. Luke looked down at the mingled brain and rotting arm, and vomited up a small amount of bile.

He immediately swallowed it, as his face was covered by his headcrab.

Still enraged, he turned to see both of his parents there. They were in on it too. They had stood there and let the science police try to take his new pet headcrab away.

He roared inarticulately as he hurled himself at them, stabbing at their chests with both of his new, stronger arms. His hands went through, and his parents stared down at him in horror.

He could feel their pulsing hearts in his hand. He looked into their eyes (strange, how he could see them through his pet's body) and said "I told you you'd be sorry"

They were. You should always listen to your kids.



## Chapter 51

# The Cellar Of Death

By Lord Humongus

Luke walked down the house's scarred walls. The place was full of hate, he could

feel it tingling in his bones. Like some sort of hate filled bastard feeling. *Filled with hate.* he dismissed the thought.

His parents were moving thier stuff into the old, creaking hate filled house. Luke ran up to his obsequious parents, warnings of hate emerging from his mouth accompanied by the screeches of horror. His abusive father slapped him in the face and told him to "Quit it, you dumb pecker." Luke couldn't. He had to warn them.

Luke looked for anything to defend himself from the evil, but he found nothing. He looked throughout the house for something. Only to come up empty handed. He walked out of the door wondering about what he could do.

He ran into Suzy, his sister, she teased him and called him a pussy. *She called me a cat that's not insulting why would she call me a cat?* thought Luke.

The sun hid under the horizon. The screams of animals filling the empty night air. Luke arose from his bed. Suddenly a illmunescient gigantic head appeared in his room. It opened its lips to talk. All Luke could feel was hate in his brain.

Nasty, painful hate.

Luke awoke in his bed in the morning. He ran down to his parents screaming and screeching like some annoying owl. His father rose his hand. Luke closed his mouth shut.

He wandered down into the lone cold cellar of the hate house. Looking for clues as to what was causing so much hate. He looked around the

dusty cold floors. His came upon an old case full of dust. He opened the golden latches, looking for anything that might be a clue. Inside,

was a horrible book. He knew what must cause the hate. This book. He threw it into the evening fire that was in the fireplace. His dad slapped him in the face for doing that but he thought to himself "I just saved your life you fool." and smiled to himself because he was so smart and stuff and found out about the hate.

But it didn't work he was wrong. The hate returned each night, and each day Luke received a slap to the face for being an annoying little mutant. He slept scared under his covers each night the horrible head would return to him and use all the hate and torture him with its 's telepathic mind full of hate and ire. He awoke every morning screaming at nothing. Until one night, he heard his parents scream. He ran to thier room to see them being dragged into a portal. A portal to hoboken. Luke laughed at them as they were sucked into a trailer park abyss. Full of people you didnt want to hang out with because they are all hate filled evil creatures from the third nuclear war.

He hid the bodys in his bavariious cellar.

They should've listened!

## Chapter 52

### Untitled

By King Plum the Nth

I'd never been to San Diego before. Never been further west than Iowa. But I like to travel and I like my job, so when my job called on me to travel, I packed my Beretta and bought a one way ticket to SoCal. One way because, in my line of work, you can never be sure if you'll be coming back. My name is Luke Bavarious, I'm a private detective and this is the story of how I died.

The bus disgorged its wretched few passengers into a diseased corner of the city. In some ways, all cities are the same, and San Diego was no different. You won't find a bus depo or the train station in a nice part of town. No, the rich white folk pawn this stuff off on the poor blacks. As if their urban lives weren't hard enough; the man sweeps all his dirt under the rug of the black culture's communities.

I hadn't been on the streets of San Diago more than ten minutes when I was mugged the first time.

"The fuck you doin' in our neighborhood, white?"

I could've cried. There were four of them. They were tough, angry black youths, and if they pushed this too far, they'd get hurt. "Just passing through," I said.

"Passing like a piece of shit, mo'fucker. Gotta pay to walk our streets."

"It's public property," I didn't break eye contact. Like dealing with an angry dog, when you talk to a gang member, you can't show fear. "I'm the public. Let me past," I unbuttoned my jacket, flashed my Beretta. "There's doesn't have to be any trouble."

The kid, their leader, lifted the hem of his hoody with a slow insolent gesture to show off his own piece, a Glock. Two of the others reached for the back of their waist bands. I tried again, using their language: "Don't start none, won't be none." I'd tried in vein.

"Stupid mo'fucker." The leader jerked his piece from his pants. His draw was admirably fast. These kids knew violence, they were born it, it was their legacy. A cold, harsh society had turned an indifferent shoulder to them and they had risen to the challenge, becoming the only thing they could be in this city. They were tough, but I was professional. My Beretta barked four times, once for each of them, and the fight was over before it began. They weren't dead, but they couldn't threaten me anymore. I moved on. Violence isn't the answer, but sometimes it can teach a lesson that needs to be learned.

The lady, Kelly, my client back in New York, had told me all about San Diego. Said her old man had taken her and her sister, Amy, there after the divorce. Kelly'd been a little girl, the sister was a baby. "The kids at my new school," she said, "taught me fast. My first day, they told me it wasn't smart to wear so much red." We made love for hours that night. It was glorious but I never felt like she was really there under me. She was that little girl again, scared to finish her first day at school in that pretty red dress.

So she'd gotten old enough and run away, all the way to New York City. But her baby sister, fifteen now, was still trapped with the father. Still trapped in San Diego. She'd hired me to go find her, save her, and bring her back. "He won't give you any trouble, Luke. Just make sure you see him during the day. He works at night." She'd paid me in cash and her body.

I found the little cinderblock house she'd described and I knocked at the door. The only answer was a dog barking in the next yard. I walked around the front yard a bit, looked and saw I wasn't being watched, and slipped around the corner of the house. I let myself into the fenced off back yard, peering in windows as I passed. The place looked deserted. Around back, I found a narrow concrete stairway leading down to a basement door. I figured what the hell and went down the stairs and tried the door. It was open. I went in.

It was gloomy and smelled damp and it looked pretty empty. All I saw was a couple of cardboard boxes, a water heater, a couple of coffins. "What the hell?!" Curiosity is a big part of my job but I wish I hadn't given into it then. I walked over to the first coffin, lifted the lid. There was the too fresh body of a man, thirty something, long black hair pulled straight back from the temples, a trickle of blood running down from his livid lips. I stared, shocked, and as I did, his eyes snapped open. Before I could do more than gasp his hand was on my throat.

"Who are you," he demanded. "What do you want?"

"Your daughter," I choked. "She sent me."

"My daughter?" His eyes glanced to my right. "She's right there." I looked as best I could and saw a young woman, the spitting image of my client but a decade younger.

"Oh," he said, rising from his coffin. "You mean the traitor."

"She said..." I was choking to death in his grasp. I produced the Beretta, painfully slow, but it was like he wanted me to shoot him. I squeezed off the last few shots, right into his gut. He didn't so much as flinch.



"I know what she said," he said. "She said I was harsh. That I abused them." He grimaced horribly and his eye teeth erected into fangs. "But she never understood. You have to be tough to live in a city like this, Mr. Bavarius. I only wanted to make my little girls tough." The world was fading, purple splotches exploding in my vision. "Amy will show you what I mean." The girl hissed, drawing her lips back from cobra-like fangs.

...I guess you wouldn't say I died exactly. Could a dead man tell you his tale? But that's the story of how I stopped living.



## Chapter 53

# The Boy That Lived

By Irish Joe

It all started when Luke Bavarious was aroused by a knock at his door. "Who is it?" the mighty detective shouted from the comfort of his bed. No answer but the sound of more knocking. Disgruntled, Luke raised himself to his feet, still wavering from a night of heavy drinking. "Damn you all" he shouted, approaching the door. Leaning against the frame, he began to undo the lock when a shot rang out. Looking down he saw a smoking crater where his peep hole used to be. Thanking God he was too hung over to see anything, let alone use his peep hole, Luke staggered back from the door and reached for his Magnum Revolver lying on the coffee table.

The second shot didn't startle the brilliant gumshoe as much as the vintage leather Ottoman lying between him and his gun. Falling head first into the coffee table, Luke was barely able to grab his Magnum Revolver, roll over, cock and fire the gun twice at the man kicking in his front door before he passed out.

Luke awoke in the darkness of a car trunk. 'Its eerily quiet,' the great protagonist remarked to himself. He then felt a sudden warmth on the back of his leg. Luke reached around his muscular thighs to feel about and find the source of the warmth. Blood! A second man lie with Bavarious in the trunk. Before he could ponder further upon this discovery, the car ground to a halt. Luke furiously grabbed at the darkness searching for something, anything that could be used as a weapon. As the mysterious driver exited the car and approached the rear, Luke grasped on to the only thing he could find, a large black iron tire iron.

The rattle of keys. The click of a lock. The sound of fury and bone, crushing and yelping, cries of disbelief, anger and surprise. Then silence as Luke Bavarious stood alone.

The awesome dick did not know who the two men were: one lying bloodied on the ground with grey matter strewn to and fro on the road, the

other in the trunk, intestines drooping from a Magnum hole in his stomach and half his face missing from one in his head. It did not matter, for though it may sound strange to you, dear reader, the fickle nature of Lady Death was all too familiar to Luke Bavariou. She has pursued him with a vengeance since the day he was born all those years ago in an abortion clinic. 'The Boy Who Lived' they called him. Lady Death had another name for him, 'The One That Got Away.' She tried as she might to catch him throughout the years: car crashes, earthquakes, sicknesses and contagions, shipwrecks. However, nothing could kill Luke Bavariou. And as the trail of bodies he leaves behind continues to grow it seems that nothing ever will.

## Chapter 54

# A Tin of Popcorn

By Dirty Sanchez

"He was right, three left," I said aloud, my own voice startling me as it broke the silence of the restroom. "Not very many but they're gonna have to do". I lined the shells up on the sink like stalwart little soldiers and paused for a moment to make sure nothing heard me. I need to stop talking to myself.

"Won't be enough," the voice in my head replied. "You saw what happened to that deer. Three or Thirty, it won't be enough."

The deer. The memories came back to me in a flood. Its hard to believe that just this afternoon we were fooling around, shooting cans by the campsite and sitting by the fire.

It all started with a can of overpriced popcorn. You know the kind, one half covered with a powdery orange substance that's supposed to be cheese and the rest a solid brick of caramel and popcorn that requires an ice pick to break apart. The popcorn itself was not my problem but rather the scrawny kid who brought it. Timmy was his name, or was it Tommy? It doesn't matter. All that mattered were my Captain's words to me in his office that morning.

"The Commissioner feels that we need to do more for the community," He said. "I volunteered you to take a boy scout troop camping this weekend."

"You're joking," I replied.

"I never joke. You know that. Besides," He continued, "Bavarius, you've been a little weird since you returned to duty and you're making everyone around here uneasy. Doing this will show you're just a regular guy."

"A regular guy," a voice echoed in my mind. "I wish."

"When?" I asked.

"Saturday."

"I'm busy."

"Not any more. He will be here in a little while and they said he's bringing you a gift. Make sure you smile."

Sure enough, about two hours later a kid showed up with the can, a bandanna, and an invitation to join them camping. He was a squirrely little fellow, who seemed to be as uncomfortable as I was. Despite how ridiculous the situation, I determined to make the best of it. What else could I do?

After shaking hands with the little guy and feigning gratitude, I asked him where we were going.

"Timber wolf lake." He replied.

"I don't have any camping gear."

"Oh, you don't have to bring anything, well have all the gear you need. But don't forget to bring the popcorn."

"This popcorn?" I replied. I had no intention of eating the garbage. Maybe I could give it away.

"Yes," he said, looking me straight in the eyes. "Don't forget it. Its a tradition."

"I'm really not much for traditions," I said with a smirk.

"Its very Important."

"Uh, Ok," I replied, still smirking.

"Great! See you Saturday. Nine O'clock," he said and bolted out the door.

"That boy looks like a frightened animal," the voice in my head remarked.

Saturday morning came and I dragged myself out of bed hung over and smelling like the floor of a frat house basement. I showered, threw on my clothes, and ran out the door. I would be late but at least I would show up. Good thing I didn't have to pack anything.

When I finally arrived I was greeted by a pack of impatient and excited boys and one pale, stern looking gentleman, who I could only assume was their troop leader.

"Sorry," I mumbled. "I'm not much for early mornings or camping."

"Don't worry about it," he offered. "Thanks for coming. The rangers won't let us camp here without a police escort. Not since those campers disappeared last year. If you didn't come we couldn't go at all."

"Glad I could help," I lied. "I'm Luke. Luke Bavarius."

"Pleased to meet you Luke. I'm Tim."

With the formalities out of the way, he rounded up his group and we began our hike. After a few hours of walking my mind cleared and I began to observe my fellow campers. A very unusual bunch. There were eight of them. They all appeared to be about ten years old, blond, and skinny. And there was something else. They were all very quiet and jumpy. Once, shortly we passed the last park restroom, I stepped upon and broke a stick which shattered the silence of our hike. All eight boys stopped simultaneously, their heads snapping toward me in unison. A second later, they seemed to realize what they had done, put their heads down and continued walking.

"Creepy," the voice in my head commented. But what do I know about kids?

We finally arrived at the campsite. The boys, a flurry of quick movements, erected the tents, hung up the food, and gathered fire wood. When the work was done they left me sitting on a log alone as they went off to do whatever it is young boys do on a camping trip. I took a second and looked around. The air out here was fresh and invigorating. The temperature was perfect, the sky was blue, there were sounds of nature everywhere. Suddenly feeling good for the first time in ages, I picked up a discarded soda can and walked down to where the boys were. Pulling my side arm out of my pant leg I yelled "Who wants to learn to shoot?"

Suddenly, the boys were all just standing there looking at me with a blank expression. "You brought your gun?" Tim asked.

"Habit, I guess." I replied.

"You have much ammo?" He asked.

"Twenty rounds."

"Come here boys," he said loudly "Mr. Luke is going to show you how to shoot."

The boys gathered around me and I put on a show. First they wanted to see me hit the can from ten paces. Then, twenty paces. Next they pointed out a log in the lake they wanted me to shoot. It seemed that they couldn't get enough of watching me blow things apart. I have to admit, I was enjoying it too. I also was working up an appetite.

"So there you go boys," I announced.

"Come on!" a boy shouted.

"Keep going!" another added.

"I'd like to boys," I said, "but I'm almost out of bullets."

"You have three left." said the smallest boy, who seemed to be the troop leader's son and was opening his mouth for the first time since asking me to go with them.

"Maybe another time guys, I'm hungry." I said, ending the debate. We walked back to the campsite and settled in for the night.

After a dinner of half-cooked hotdogs and baked beans heated in the can, the silence settled back in and the sun began to go down. Tim, the troop leader stood up to speak.

"Boys, I think it is time for dessert. Son, do you have the tin of popcorn?"

"I, um, already gave it to him dad."

"Oh. You didn't happen to bring it with you, did you Luke?"

"I'm sorry," I said sheepishly. "I was in a hurry."

Tim glared at his son who turned paler than usual and stared down at his feet. "Never mind then!" he shouted. "Bed time, everyone!"

Without a word Tim and the boys turned and quickly disappeared into their tents. Suddenly alone, I turned and walked to the tent that had been designated as mine and laid down on the cool sleeping bag. As I lay there the day's activity seemed to catch up to me and I drifted off to sleep.

The sound that awoke me was like nothing I had heard before. It was a sound of pure, primal terror. Instinctively, I jumped to my feet, grabbed my Beretta and entered the darkness. The moon was full and high in the

sky. With the fire burned out and no other light sources I could see quite clearly and distinctively. Too clearly.

A flash of movement about fifty yards from the tent caught my eye, but it took me a few moments to figure out what I was seeing. It was a deer, running with something hanging off the side of it. It was now making a gurgling sound as the creature attached to it tore at its throat. In a heap the deer went down. I could hear it being torn apart. I pulled my gun and shouted at the creature, thinking it was a mountain lion or coyote. It looked up at me and in the light of the moon and I realized what I was looking at. Or, perhaps I should say, WHO I was looking at. There, perched on the disemboweled buck was a young human-like creature in a Boy Scout uniform. Blood dripping from fangs that protruded from his mouth, he seemed to be sizing me up while also staring at my gun. The sound of breaking brush began to come from all around me. I had a choice to make. Fight or flight. I made a break for it.

In the moonlight I could see the trail we hiked out on almost as clearly as I could during the day. The adrenaline flowing through my veins allowed me to run faster and further than I had since my days in the marine corps. At first I thought I could hear someone behind me, but eventually there was nothing but the sound of my own footsteps. I rounded a bend in the trail and saw in the distance the restroom that we passed on the way to the campsite. Unable to run any longer, I lunged for the door, found it unlocked, and dove inside, latching it behind me.

The restroom only had one door and no windows. I was cornered but at least I only had to defend a single point of entry. I ejected the clip from my pistol and counted the rounds. Only three rounds left.

"Won't be enough," the voice in my head replied. "You saw what happened to that deer. Three or Thirty, it won't be enough."

"I'm afraid there is more than three of us," the voice behind me says. I can feel the hot breath and sets of eyes on me.

"If you only ate the popcorn we prepared for you then you would still be asleep right now," another voice, a child's voice, says from the shadows.

"I'm not much for traditions," I whisper as the teeth close upon my throat.



## Chapter 55

# The First and Second Stories

By O Tempora! O Mores!

### The first story!

The bottle had clouded the room almost as much as the cigars. I could hardly breathe without inhaling more smoke—it was so bad, the door opening barely shifted the fog. But that may have just been my mind.

“I got a case for you,” he said. “I been lookin’ for this girl goin’ on three weeks now. You find her, you bring ‘er to me. For your trouble,” and he tossed a stack of bills on the table. The sound was like a sledgehammer to the skull. “You got a picture,” I asked, the words slurring together in a muddle. He tossed a polaroid on the table, the sound like a smack to the face. The door closed, and I passed out.

When I woke up, I was surprised that I didn’t choke on the fog in the room, as thick as it was, and at least now I could see the door again, with its golden-painted name: Luke Bavarious, P.I. I rolled out of the chair, and watched the room spin. I’d hit the bottle hard last night, and I felt the bile rising. I forced it back down, my head spinning. I stood up, and picked up the picture. She was pretty, I’d give the man that. But that smile... she liked fun. She liked a lotta fun. I turned it over, and saw a string of numbers written there. It was too long for a phone number... Wait. One-two-three... Ten digits. Four. Two. Three. A number and an address? This guy coulda picked her up himself. What’d he need me for?

I picked up the stack of bills, and headed for the door. I grabbed my coat as I meandered past, and the bills. Past due. Past due. Late. Hmm... this one was already paid for? Since when had I paid a bill? Advertisement.

That damn client who wanted another look around. Hey. Here's the place. Damn fine building for a pretty little girl.

I got up to the door, and knocked. A soft voice called, "Come in," and I did. She wasn't wearing much, and it was cool in there. Damn, but she was pretty. And that was a thin little slip to be wearing with company, but hey, who cared, it was just us. She walked over, smiling slightly, and asked, "Are you looking for me?" "A man asked me to find you, and gave me this picture..." I said, but my mind wasn't on what I was saying, she was too fine to think about anything else. I'd been alone a long time, and here she was, standing real close.

"Aww, don't be all about the work," she said, her smile suggesting such exquisite delights, and her dark, seductive eyes pulling me into an intimate embrace of desire and pleasure. I felt passion stirring lazily, swelling in my chest, like an exceptionally loud burp, but always finding more room to fill, until it finally took up all of the space it could manage, as it got more and more intense. Like a storm ravaging my soul, it burned in me, a desire to have her, this pretty little thing. She saw my need, my want, and opened her mouth, to say the affirmation that already was showing through the way her bosom swelled with air, stretching the thin fabric to its limits, threatening to release her breasts like racehorses from the starting line, until it suddenly did, and the smooth skin made me lose track of my own senses, as her smile deepened and she pulled me close, her soft but firm body pressed against mine, our two forms moving as one towards the room, satin sheets already on the bed, a heaven of fabric and lust.

She pulled off my trenchcoat without my noticing, as I undid the buttons on the back of her slip. Her hands pushed aside the ruffles of my shirt as she looked for the buttons, like a man running his fingers through sand to find his glasses lens. I didn't notice she had undone the buttons until her hands wound through my chest hair, tugging like a rider at a horse, and pulled me down, as somehow, like a magician's trick, my pants were lying on the chair, and my boxers too. She wasn't wearing much under the slip at all, mostly just skin. There was a little darkening of hair, but my, she had a fine body. Athletic, too. She knew what she was doing, and I got lost in the flow, the rhythm, the back-and-forth of it all, as a flower of light blossomed in my mind, my eyes closed in ecstatic pleasure and joy as I felt like new life had flowed into my aching bones and washed away everything that was wrong, and she squealed a sound of pure delight that rang like a bell in my mind with a sparkling love and glory as I dropped away, exhausted.

Waking up was hard after what had gone on before, but I managed to pull myself together enough to smell the iron and the sticky-sweet smell. My eyes opened, and I saw red. Lots of red, all over the mirrors and the walls and the ceiling and spilled onto the bedsheets where we had lain the night before. The room stank of blood, as I saw spatters across the dresser and sprays on the mirror, which had dripped down some, and traced red trails across my image. As I moved on the bed, it squished with blood and oozed out red, onto the already soaked sheets and into the dark red pool

around me. I saw her body on the floor, bullet holes riddling her side, and still somehow pumping out the gory flood, slowly, pump... pump... ... pump-... as the dark red dried around her, and all over the room it still rolled down, a sad end to a pretty girl like her.

I was back where it all started, in the office. There was more smoke this time, it was like a dream. The booze burned, but not as much as the memory of her lying there, her vital fluids pumping out onto the floor, already drowning in blood. She had been so pretty, too... I reached for another bottle, and forgot the glass this time. It wasn't like it was the taste that mattered anymore, it was the forgetting. I pulled out more tobacco, and added a little extra from my hidden drawer. I needed to get rid of these memories. The smoke was different now, the taste was more bitter, but I didn't care. She would go away. As the haze took everything, she walked through the fog and everything else faded, but she was clear. She stood there, pretty as she was when I saw her first, and wearing a little black silk thing too, it was so thin and sheer, you could see every detail, and my, wasn't she fine. She started to pull it off, and slowly, slowly, it dropped to the floor, too softly to hear. She turned, and started to dance. I just wanted to forget. Here she was. Relief. I wanted her to go away. Release. Let me forget you, I wanted to scream. Let me die in peace! The smoke was acrid now, burning and black. The pain was fleeting, and the dark was better. The room was painted red, a red fog that spread through the smoke to coat the wall, and pour out onto the floor, a sticky, dark red pool that shined lazily under the swinging light.

fin.

## **The second story!**

I stood at the corner of Selby and Rice glaring at the bright neon sign hanging over The Purple Mermaid Motel.

"Years of being a private detective and this is all I get?" I swore under my breath and gracefully walked through the revolving doors. The dim lighting over the front desk glowed ominously, casting shadows on the stained carpet over the cheap linoleum flooring. I curled my lip and walked cautiously to the small man perched on a bar stool and gazing down on the desk, only moving to adjust his glasses and scratch something with a ball point pen.

"Excuse me, are you David Dawson?" I asked placing my hands on the counter, attempting to look intimidating. I quickly removed my hands noticing a large cockroach scuttling along the banister.

"Yeah, who wants to know?" he continued to look down rather than up at my face, which was frustrating to begin with, but to actually question who I was... that was another frustration.

"Luke Bavarioux, Privet detective, per your request." I could feel my lips tightening into a straight line as I held on to the 't' entirely too long. Dawson

\* \* \*

12:21 Standing before me was a large man's body, or what was left. The eyes were removed and caked blood filled the outer rim of the sockets, his teeth were broken and jagged inside his mouth, lips torn off to reveal

rotting flesh and maggots. My skin crawled as he opened his mouth once more and uttered my name.

“lllllllluuuuuuuuukkkkkkkkkkkkkkeeeeeeeeeee” my eyes widened in horror and I rushed out of the room, leaving my tools and clothing behind I dashed down the stairway and into the main room.

"Dija fix it?" Dawson asked, holding up the money. I grabbed the bills and rushed out the door without a word, quickly across the street and into the bar.

"I quit" I muttered, ordering my first round.

I had barely begun my first drink before I heard it.

"lllllllllulluuuuuuuuuuukkklkkkkkkkkkeeeeee" I felt my heartbeat quicken, my pulse erratic and sweat start to pound from my veins. He's here? My thoughts seemed childish and rhetorical, of course he was. I took a shallow and shaky breath, hands and lip quivering in fear, stood up and walked towards the door. I threw a twenty on the counter and pushed my way through the doors. There he stood in the glow of the parking lot, flesh falling off as he stood.

"uuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuukkkkkkkkkkkkkkeeeeeee" I cocked my gun and fired one, two, three. I could feel the fire back effect and emptied my clip into the corpse. He only smiled, or what I thought would be, and opened his mouth again, saliva dripping down onto the concrete. My heart thudded against my chest, ragged breathing tearing through me like a cold blade. I threw my gun to the side, useless to me now, and closed my eyes. You can do it! I urged myself forward and threw myself on top of him. My fists met flesh, tearing and ripping at the body in an attempt to ward it away. My eyes shut tightly, I continued to pound my fists into the cold man hoping that this would finally take his retched face from my memories. I dug through my pocket and took out my switchblade, releasing the blade I stabbed and ripped at the face tearing it apart before my very eyes.

12:46 "MMMMMMMMuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuukkkkkkkkkkkkeeeeee" I stabbed and  
stabbed and stabbed until the body ceased and the mouth released one final  
word.

"Luke?" I opened my eyes and saw Dawson laying in a bloody pile under me, his face ripped to shreds by... my blade. I glanced around for the body of the cold man, but I couldn't find it anywhere. My heart began to pound again, filling my ears with rushing blood, drowning out the screams and chants of the gathered spectators. I barely noticed the cuffs being slapped on my shaking wrists or the rough push into the white van. As I gazed out the small window in the van I heard short breathing and a slight chuckle. Slowly I turned my head and gazed into the eyes of the corpse.

"lllllllllllluuuuuuuuuuuuukkkkkkkkkkkkkkeeeeeeee"



## Chapter 56

# Nobodys Savior

By Pro-Swordbro

My grandma always said I'd be nothing. I'd approach her with an aspiration, she'd mock, criticize; "You're too dumb to be an astronaut", "How you gonna rap if you don't know meters?". She was french.

I miss her.

I am a police officer. My name is Luke Bavarious, badge number #25912. I used to freelance, I saw the worst this cruel polluted world could offer me. Drug users; marijuana in their veins and hatred in their eyes, crooked cops who took bribes and sold justice to the highest bidder, I think I even saw a man with a tail once.

However, what worried me most was what was staring back at me in the mirror.

I bought a new gun recently. From some punk kid in an alley, handed him a couple crumpled twenties, he handed me this Beretta. It felt solid in my hands, the metal was cold, cold as this goddamn December night. I walked out toward 42'nd street with a fresh bulge in my coat pocket. Something had happened here, the memories wouldn't come. They rarely do. It's hard to hold on.

My last night in my practice was in this neighborhood, I thought. Probably busting some drug ring, maybe saved some old lady from a mugger, or some old drunkard from himself.

Word around town is someone's killing kids. Stabbing them with a knife, impaling them from behind. A child told me, his name was Julian. When I heard this I vomited. According to this kid, someone with a cross on his neck and a knife in his hand was following him and his little friend. Julian's mom came to pick him up, he begged the mom to take his friend home. The man had made himself scarce. Him and the mom drove off.

I gazed around with my eyes, everything was quiet, it was still; it was as still as it was quiet. How am I going to find this sonofabitch? The police sure

as hell aren't, the ones who are not incompetent are all marijuana addicts, no help they are.

It was up to me, Luke Bavarious, badge number #25912 to find this demon, to avenge these horrible deaths.

My phone rang. "Just let it ring Bavarious, whoever it is would provide no help"

RING

RING

RING

I surrendered to it, flipped it open.

Luke.

Yes?

I might have something on that knife wielding maniac you are always talking about.

What?

Some guy with a crucifix was murmuring to himself near Biddick Park, this afternoon.

\*click\*

It was a few hours until morning, The sky was vomiting snow as I walked to my apartment, the snow crunched under my combat boots.

I haven't eaten in days, I can't keep anything down. I tried to watch TV. Something scary was on, It was alright.

As I got up after the movie ended, I could practically swear I saw a face in the window. A face.

I'm losing it.

I gazed at the clock, it was 6 at night. Where had the time went?

The stairs proved no more than an organized hill for me, I exited into the street and made my way to Biddick Park.

People looked at me with admiration in their eyes, and why wouldn't they? I'm a hero, I'm a ...savior? No, not that far. I fingered my Beretta in my pocket.

I thought in my head of Julian as I approached the dimly lit park, a more brave witness there never was. Goes to show that kids need to be respected and listened to.

I noticed a man leaning against a building. He was wearing a Run DMC shirt, I immediately recognized that as a rap group, I'm quite interested in black culture. I had a hunch he wasn't my man though.

It was then I noticed a man following a child, twenty to thirty feet behind, My experience taught me how to spot a tail. I used to be a cop. I took a route to intercept him, something gleamed in his hand, this is him. I approached him, and held my Beretta to his head. "You there, turn around!" I shouted. He pivoted and glared at me, a cross dangling from his neck. This was it, this was the man who had murdered that kid. His eyes were gleaming black, I gritted my teeth to keep the vomit down.

He made a sudden move suddenly, bringing his knife up across my neck. I fired at him.



My neck vomited blood. His neck vomited blood.

There was nothing I could do but sink down to the ground, lying in the snow, my monster beside me, gurgling; blood? vomit? whatever.

"You know, you and I aren't that much different", he giggled. Suddenly I was sobbing.



## Chapter 57

# Words Will Never Hurt Me...

By Detective Thompson

Young Bin Beddick was angry. He could feel the foamy rage rushing through his ducts and into his brain. His parents didn't understand him. They did not understand him. Did they understand him? No. He could still hear his dad's stinging words echoing like the tones of the Liberty Bell, ringing in his ears.

"What is this crap?" his father bellowed like a walrus. Bin had showed his dad his latest story. Bin was proud of the story. But his father just crumpled the paper up, and tossed it in his face.

"I will not allow this heathen tome within my house!" he raged at the young Bin, before sending him to his room without supper. His mother laughed her awful laugh, which sounded like the cackling of a mother pig.

It was dark that night. As Bin bubbled like a cauldron of hatred and spit, night-dim clouds began vomiting rain and lightning onto the earth. Bin wished he could shoot lightning at his parents. But no, he had better ways to get back at them. The pen would be his weapon. Despite his young age of thirteen, Bin was capable of writing like a pro. His teacher told him his writing could make James Joyce and Shakespeare spew jealous tears from their eye ducts. Bin's fellow students quaked in awe whenever he gave one of his weekly readings, weekly readings that had been insisted upon by the principal, Mr. Howard. Mr. Howard hoped the other students would learn something from Bin. So far, all they learned was fear. And jealousy.

So Bin picked up his pen, his fingers closing around it like steel claws closing around the neck of an unsuspecting victim. Bin smiled as he set to work, his pen flying across the page, his pen releasing little black trails of ink, dark coffin worms that formed words of terror and evil. Bin would show his parents what it was like to be burdened with such talent. If it were

ever to happen, Bin felt tonight was the night he could give life to his words, for real. How little did he know, he was too right...

As Bin finished his tale of fierce revenge and bitter anguish, he heard a cough from behind him. The sound of a man clearing his throat. Reflexive instinct twisted Bin's neck around, until he caught sight of the man behind him. Tall, shadowed, wearing a heavy black trench coat and gripping something in his right hand. That something was the sleek, metallic shape of a Beretta pistol. The kind a detective might carry.

"Who are you?" Bin asked with something more like confusion than fright. Bin was made of stuff much too dense for fright.

"Luke Bavariou," came the words, spilling from the man's shadowy mouth like soup from a Grandma's lips. Bin's eyes went wide, then turned mechanically like a robot's eyes to the pages in front of him. At the top of the first page, like a crow roosting above in a branch, sat the title of his story. 'Luke Bavariou'.

The man chuckled. Bin gasped, bewildered beyond thought.

"But... but how?" he stammered, again, not with fear but with unknowledge.

"You gave me life, Bin. Your pure and simple rage came together and hardened like a Jell-O mold in the fridge, creating me, the perfect tool of your anger!" Luke Bavariou nearly shouted with glee. Bin hoped his parents wouldn't hear.

"But what are you doing here?" Bin wondered aloud. Luke smirked. He gestured with his Beretta toward Bin's door, beyond which his parents were undoubtedly sitting like sheep before the TV. Before Bin could speak a word, Luke Bavariou charged forth like a rhino charging a hunter. Luke Bavariou smashed down Bin's door. Bin could only follow him out into the living room, where his parents were watching some inane television program. When they noticed Luke Bavariou, both his mother and father shrieked like lambs with their faces cut off. Bin's father leapt to his feet. Luke Bavariou raised the Beretta pistol and fired, the bullet entering his father's brain, Satan-red blood gushing forth from the hole in the back of his skull. He was dead. Bin's mother tried to run, but Luke Bavariou shot her in the back. She fell like a few dozen sacks of potatoes.

"Oh, my spine!" she whimpered. Her spine indeed. Bin could see into the bullet hole, see her spinal column wriggling like a snake caught in a bear trap.

"Mother!" Bin cried.

"Why Bin, why?" was all she could sputter from her bloody mouth. Then she died.

"No! I didn't want this to happen!" Bin screamed at Luke Bavariou with all the rage of a volcano in Pompeii.

"Oh but you did, Bin. You did," Luke Bavariou chucklingly spoke. Then he pointed the Beretta at Bin.

"Why me?" Bin shrieked.

"Because, you are a bad boy, Bin. And bad boys must be punished!" Luke Bavariou said his final words as he pulled the trigger of the Beretta. The bullet from the Beretta slammed into Bin like the 42nd Street Subway slamming into a hobo that jumped onto the tracks for some loose change. Bin collapsed, rusty blood erupting like a fountain from every orifice in his face and from the hole in his chest. A final, horrid chuckle escaped Luke Bavariou's lips before fading away, dying with his creator. Bin couldn't understand it. Luke Bavariou was a good guy in his stories. How did this happen. And then, just before dying in a pool of the blood from his body, it hit him, like a bat hitting a skull.

"If only my parents respected me, then this never would have happened!" Then he died.



## Chapter 58

# Dead Tired Horrid Reflection: Gaiden

By Count Snapula

Luke Bavarious woke up from a horrid dream in his Manhattan apartment. He was vomiting sweat from every pore in his body. It was exactly 6:36 in the evening, according to his digital clock. It was blinking red. The color of satan. Luke had been having the same nightmare for a week now. He was on duty looking into noise disturbances when he was assaulted by a horrid monster, that was maybe himself. Not even his trusty Beretta could save him from the undead menace. Detective Bavarious grimaced grimly as he put on a dirty wifebeater and some slacks that smelled faintly of hobo urine.

Walking to his refrigerator, Bavarious picked up the ubiquitous Beretta off the toilet on the way there. He searched through the crisper intensely, only to find a week-old tuna sandwich and a single piece of knockwurst.

"Jesus fucking christ. I wish my wife didn't leave me," bemoaned Bavarious as he settled for the tuna. The bitterness over his ugly divorce almost masked the taste of sour mayonnaise. With some sustenance in his stomach, he began shaving over the kitchen sink. Though Bavarious was uncannily dexterous with a Gillette© Fusion razor, something caught his eye in the reflection of the faucet, and he made a deep gash in his face. Rust-colored blood began to spray out, but fortunately Bavarious was able to hold back the flood with a wash cloth.

"Man, I must be going crazy or somethin'," muttered Bavarious to himself as he opened his last can of Coor's Light, which responded with a concerned 'pfffsssssh!'. Turning around to look out the window and watch homeless people fight over garbage until his shift began, Luke finally saw the culprit of the Razor Incident: an enormous crow, black as midnight, holding a human eye in his beak. Never to be caught off guard, Bavarious emptied his clip

into the horrid avian intruder. As he went to confirm the death of the crow, he saw something that drained all the blood from his face.

Below on the fire escape was his ex-wife, her intestines trailing out of her corpse and one eye pecked out of its socket. Seeing this, Bavarius vomited uncontrollably out the window and onto the grisly scene.

"Who could have done something like this?!" Shouted Luke Bavarius, once he had regained control of his bowels. Suddenly, he felt his hands bound behind him, with the familiar click of handcuffs.

"You did, Detective Luke Bavarius." Replied an NYPD officer, who had just walked in with three others through his open apartment door. Suddenly, those dreams all made sense to him. "You've done well by me, Luke Bavarius," whispered a terrible, gravelly voice in his ear. He could tell it wasn't the cop taking him to the street, because he had been punched in the balls as a kid and now he talked like Elmo.

"What have you done?!" Luke struggled to break free from his captors. But in the end, he knew it was true. The real captor was himself.

"Go to sleep, Luke. I'll take care of this," the voice whispered smugly. Luke suddenly passed out, then. When he woke up, he was covered in rusty red blood down to his buttocks, and all four cops were dead.



## Chapter 59

# Black River

By Creflo Chronicle

The horrid, crushing sound of a gushing river broke through Luke Bavarius's rushing mind. He had awoken from a deep sleep to the sound. The horrid sound. He had a hangover from too many Coors, and it was driving him mad. Ever since the alley, where the ghoul had deformed him, he drank every night until he blacked out. Otherwise, there were the dreams. The horrid dreams.

But now the river had woke him up. It made no sense. He lived in the city, not by a river. And the sound was driving him mad. He vomited.

He got out of bed and shook the horrid vomit off his hands. He went to his window. He looked out of his window. His apartment had been moved from the busy city to a deserted hill overnight. At the foot of the hill was a river. A black river. He went to his front door. He opened it. He stepped outside. Rough stone steps lead from his door down to below the surface of the rushing river. He turned around and looked at his apartment. It was as though a giant had reached in to his apartment building and scooped his apartment out and then dropped it on top of the hill. The grass on the hill was brown and dead. Around the base of the hill there was a dark, impenetrable forest. Bavarius thought he could see faces peering out at him from between the trees. Suddenly, night fell. Luke ran in to his apartment.

The moon was the only light to be seen. There were no stars. The moon shone down and was reflected on to the river.

Two fiends rose out of the river, walking up the stairs. They were as tall as a tall man, but fat and obese. They looked the way babies would look if they were as tall as a tall man. They were white with black splotches like an albino who had had mud thrown on him. They were naked. Bavarius quivered with fear, and held his Beretta close to comfort him.

The manbabies reached his door and stopped. They shouted to him inside the house in unison. "Luke Bavarius!" they shouted. "Let us in

and we will save you from some pain!" Their voices were like a sick man vomiting while trying to talk.

"No!" Luke shouted.

The manbabies each raised a hand and pressed it against the door. The door flew off it's hinges and slammed into a wall like from an explosion. The manbabies entered Luke's apartment.

Bavarius was still shaking with fear, but his killer instincts kicked in. He leveled his trusty Beretta and fired 4 quick shots: 2 in each of the ghouls' heads. The bullets struck them and black ichor vomited out of the wounds. Soon though it congealed and clogged the holes. The manbabies smiled and walked forward. "No!" Luke shouted. They didn't listen. They walked him out of his sliding glass door that used to lead to his balcony. It no longer led to his balcony. He wasn't in the city any more.

Outside there was a flat black stone, like a chunk of a freshly paved road, but it looked natural. The manbabies led him to it and held him against it, one at either end. The one by his head held his arms down against the stone. The one by his legs held his feet down against the stone.

Skinny, emaciated people emerged from the forest and came up to the stone. In their hands they held sharp shards of rock. One by one, they stepped up and cut a deep gash in Bavarius's skin. He screamed horribly. Wherever his rust-colored blood vomited from his body onto the grass, the grass came to life with a rich golden sheen. The life spread across the grass slowly.

"No!" Luke shouted.

Luke died.

When the last of his blood had left the wounds, the manbabies each grasped their end tightly and tugged, ripping his body in half. Each tucked their half under their arm and trudged down the stairs and under the horrid black river. As they submerged, the river seemed to dry up, leaving a barren riverbed.

"It is good," the leader of the tribe said to his woman. "Our crops will grow again."

"Yes, it is good," said his woman, patting her pregnant stomach. "Little Luke Bavarius will not starve."

The End

## Chapter 60

# The Area the Moon Ignored

By slackerpride

The moon was glowing, sending its light all over the town. All over the town except for one part. That was where Detective Luke Bavarius heading.

The calls came in tonight — like they had every night for the last ten years. “Officers,” the voices said, “I saw something in the darkness... maybe a man, I’m not sure.” “Ya gotta believe me Mac, there is something dark going on there.” “It maybe occult related, I’ve read articles!” No one ever cared enough to believe it, but the Chief’s patience with the never ending calls finally came to an end tonight.

The same day his patience with Detective Bavarius ended also.

The sounds of his shoes hitting the pavement made a rhythm that sounded eerily like a heartbeat. *Good, thought Bavarius, now I won’t have to listen to mine.* Bavarius’ reached into his pocket and felt the cold steel of his Beretta on his skin. He didn’t want to have to use it, but he was ready to. *That’s why I go to the gun range,* Bavarius thought grinning to himself. His teeth glowing like the moon.

Suddenly, it started raining. The sky vomited it’s tears on Bavarius, thankfully he was wearing his hat. *Never leave home without,* Bavarius mused. It was coming down in sheets, like cats and dogs, and it made everything slick — except for Bavarius’ vision, which was as sharp as ever.

Chief didn’t see that. Chief didn’t see anything, except for the bottom of a brown bottle. No one else knew but Bavarius and he never said anything to anyone. He had caught chief one night outside the back of McLeary’s puking his guts out maybe ten years ago. It was tinged rust colored, no doubt a horrible cocktail of bloody Mary mix and blood most foul. Bavarius and him locked eyes — and ever since then they’ve been at each others throats.

Suddenly, he was on the outskirts of the dark part of town. New York City was big, but there were parts that were small. This was one of those

parts. Bavarius took a step into the darkness — his heartbeat stopping and blood chilling his body. Things were different here. They were strange. This was the area the moon ignored.

That grip around his gun was tight now. Bavarius pulled down his hat, shielding his face from the rain that was falling. He wanted a cigarette but remembered he quit last week. *Damn*, Bavarius thought, *a Chesterfield would do me good now*. But there was no time for smoke right now, Bavarius had to keep his vision sharp. But it was hard, because it was dark. There was no light. The moon even ignored this area of town.

Then, off to his left, near a diminutive pile of offal storage, there was a rattle. It sounded like a chain, but Bavarius wasn't sure. His one strength, vision was compromised by the darkness of the moonless section of city. The rain fell, filling his ears with constant buzzing like someone was selling bees nearby at discounted prices. *Crazy thought*, Bavarius thought, *but this is New York City — anything is possible*.

"I agree Detective Luke Bavarius, a voice came from the pile of rotting smelly garbage and various garbage cans.

"Who is there?"

"Oh Bavarius, I think you know me well."

"Listen," Bavarius said gruffly, "I'm not above firing a shot into those cans. It's dark here and no one will see anything."

"He will. He knows everything I know."

"Who is he," Bavarius asked cocking his gun. *What's going on*, Bavarius thought glancing from side to side. The academy hadn't trained him to deal with hell on Earth.

"You wish to know what is going on...I can read those thoughts well. I was born with this gift...though some might call it a curse."

"You can read my thoughts?"

"I can see into the dark corners of your soul Bavarius — mind reading is but a minor talent."

"No bother asking then. Just tell me what's going on."

There was a laugh, a hellish laugh that rang off the dark walls like a booming sonic boom from a low flying jet airplane. There was more rattling and Bavarius now wished he had that cigarette so he could shine some light on the area. There was more rattling from that area.

"Just come out — if you're going to kill me, let me see you first," Bavarius bartered with the thing from the trash.

Laughing the thing thus spoke, "Very well...you shall see me and know where I come from."

The can rattled once more and then, as if on cue, a nearby broken street light flickered to life. It wasn't a lot of light but enough to stun Bavarius to his soul. He — or it — dragged itself from behind the can. It was no more than three feet tall. There were no eyes.

"I need not eyes Bavarius — I see everything."

The street light flickered off again.

"Jesus," Bavarius garbled out of his cracked open and dry mouth.

"Not even close."

The creature was red and looked like walking vomit mixed with bits of trash. It smelled like a horrible combination of garbage, vomit, death and dank darkness. If it wasn't for the constant stream of rain washing his shocked face, Bavarius' eyes would be blinded with fear tears.

"That's right, that night you saw the Chief vomiting, that's when I was born. You see he is not human nor am I. He is my father — a creature from the depth of an unimaginable hell — he birthed me that moonless night. You are the only person to know our secret. You will be the only one to ever know. Because, Detective Bavarius, you shall die tonight."

And then the creature made his way towards him, quick like a sly brown fox. Bavarius squeezed the trigger and felt the recoil as he sent six bullets towards the approaching creature. The bullets tore through the walking vomit and shattered into the garbage cans behind him. Laughing, the creature kept coming forward.

Bavarius wanted to run — his every instinct wanted him to do it — but his cop's instincts took over. He was going to stay and fight even if it meant death. Bavarius dropped his gun, took off his hat and threw his trench-coat on the floor. He rolled up his sleeves and glared at the creature like a beast gone wild.

"Let's death dance you nasty bastard," Bavarius growled, the hair on his neck rising.

"A foolish mistake."

And then the creature leapt like a dancer towards Bavarius. This thing was growling, shooting his nasty breath towards Bavarius. But Bavarius didn't move. He was determined to catch this thing and body slam it to the cold wet concrete if possible. Perhaps he could cuff it before the thing got away.

Suddenly, as if God flipped a switch, the area the moon ignored was awash in moonlight. A beam of it hit Bavarius' badge which hung from his neck like a necklace. That beam hit the creature and it's manic laughing changed into horrid screaming. Before it reached Bavarius and possibly killed him, it erupted like a fireworks display.

The bloody vomit creature splattered all over Bavarius's face and body. His white shirt was now rusty looking with blobs of trash sticking to it. Bavarius could taste it — not just the creature's gooey body but impending revenge.

The rain let up and the moon disappeared behind some clouds. Bavarius placed his fedora back on his head and put his jacket back on. He also reached down and grabbed his gun. Feeling inside his jacket pocket, he felt something. Bavarius pulled it out — it was his last cigarette from last week. It would taste gross, but Bavarius was already knee deep in gross. He struck a match and lit it up.

Cocking his baretta, Bavarius stood and grinned. He knew what he must do next. He knew it was going to be ugly. He took a nice long drag from

his stale smoke and exhaled. He placed that loaded gun back into his rain soaked jacket pocket.

“I’m coming for you Chief.”

## Chapter 61

# The Killer B

By Yaos

Luke Bavarius looked down at the ground, it turned a putrid rusty caused by the bullet holes in his latest victim, Zigmatron McGlutenon. Luke Bavarius brought his Barreta up to his nose and took a smell. "This smells good, it smells like" but stopped in mid sentence because he thought he heard something so he looked around but there was nothing there except some things, so he continued speaking loudly, "death". Every time Luke killed somebody it reminded him of the time his son told him that he should not go out, and when he did and came back his son was dead! His son had died a long time ago, almost 3 months now today. Luke found his son's body but no head because his head was torn off. They searched for days but no head was ever found. They even used dogs that are good at finding heads without bodies.

"Why do I keep doing this", Luke thought to himself. "I can't keep killing, it won't bring back my son Luke Jr." Then somebody said that this was not true at all, but who could it be?

"But that's not true Mr. Bavarius, killing can bring back your son, because I can help you." Luke saw a man he had never seen before that looked like he was 50 years old with gray hair and balding. His sweater smelled of blood. "Luke, I know something that you do not, your son is not really dead!" But how can this be?

"I don't understand, I buried his body in the ground myself and his head was gone! You can't keep living without a head! And who are?" Luke was distrustful of the stranger.

"But you can live with a head Luke, and your son still has a head, he's not really dead at all because the body you found was a fake and that's why you did not find his head because there was no head to find." Suddenly it all made sense very quickly, Luke Jr. did not feel like any body Luke had felt before and he always thought that something was wrong and now he

had the proof. "I am Ugundun, you need my help and I have a shop that can help you!!"

"We can't talk here Ugundun, we need to go to your store before more thugs show up to kill us."

So they went to Ugundun's store, where Luke had gone many times to buy guns and bullets from from Ugundun, but it was weird that he did not know who Ugundun was, that was very odd indeed. "Let's have a beer" and so they had a beer while they talked about Luke Jr.

"Do you want my help Luke?" He did want his help. "Good, but first you must kill somebody for me."

"But, I'm done killing people, I promised my dead son Luke Jr." Luke was angry that Ugundun wanted him to kill, but after a while he decided he would help Ugundun if it meant he could get Luke Jr. back. "So who do I need to kill?"

"You need to kill this man." Ugundun handed Luke Bavarius a picture of something that looked like a man but was not a man, it was a two legged dog.

"But it's not a man, it's a two legged dog!" Luke Bavarius was about to rip up the picture but Ugundun stopped him.

"You should know that appearances can be deceiving, you found out your son is not dead and even though you ignored him you can still get him back." Luke Bavarius knew Ugundun was right so he ran off to go kill the two legged dog.

Luke Bavarius walked into the park where the dog was hiding out, as he walked through the park he patted his trusty Baretta that he has used many times to kill people with. And there it was, the two legged dog! But it was not like the picture, he was covered in rusty blood and vomit. "Dad" it yelled out.

"I'm not your dad dog." Luke Bavarius was angry at the dog for lying to him.

"No dad, I am your son, I'm Luke Jr. Don't you remember me?" The dog slowly walked up to Luke, and as he walked closer he turned into Luke Jr.!

"Luke Jr. It's you! I thought you were dead! I'll always listen to you again!" Luke hugged Luke Jr. and gave him a kiss and a hug.

"I love you dad, how did you find me?" Luke explained to Luke Jr. how he found him. "Ugunden was the one that turned me into a dog dad, you have to stop him!" Suddenly it all made sense, that's why Ugunden knew his son was not dead it was because Ugunden had taken him all the time! Ugunden hated how much Luke Bavarius loved Luke Jr. because Luke Jr. was a great child and did everything right and everybody loved him and liked him and Ugunden wanted him to kill Luke Jr. but Luke Bavarius did not kill Luke Jr. Now it was time for Ugunden to die.

Luke Bavarius walked into Ugunden's shop, he threw a dog's head with a bullet hold between the eyes on the table and said the job was done. Blood and urine oozed out of the dog's eye sockets and bullet hole. Ugunden took



a look at the head and started laughing and laughing. "Ha ha ha Luke, that was not a dog, that was your son!"

"I know that Ugunden, my son told me." Ugunden looked surprised.

"But why did you kill your son if you knew the dog was your son?" Ugunden looked scared and Luke Bavarius knew he was scared.

"I did not kill my son Ugunden, I killed this dog to trick you. Now you're going to be punished! Luke Jr. get in here!"

Luke Jr. Lept through a window while shooting Luke Bavariuses Barreta and other gun, the glass showered out and covered Ugunden giving him many cuts and scratches. Some of the broken glass got stuck in Ugunden's eyes which made him blind and vomit. Because Ugunden could not see and he was covered in glass cuts he started screaming and vomiting and running around getting vomit and urine and blood all over the place. Luke Bavarius opened his coat up and started throwing rats and dog guts all over Ugunden which made Ugunden defecate and urinate and vomit and bleed even more. The rats started eating the dog guts which made Luke Jr. and Luke Bavarius start vomiting also. The rats tried to eat the vomit and feces and urine but it made them sick so they vomited and exploded covering the inside of Ugunden's shop with rat guts and blood and feces and urine and vomit. Ugunden was still screaming and running around and he ran out the front door of his shop. A large semi truck was driving down the road and the driver did not see Ugunden in time and he ran over Ugunden. Ugunden's head exploded from the truck's tires, all the guts and vomit he had not vomited out shot out of him like there was an explosion. The driver of the semi truck tried to stop but it made the truck skid out of control and the truck ran into a pet store. All the animals inside started hooting and hollering and they all ran out and they were all on fire. The truck was filled with gunpowder so it exploded killing all the animals.

"Thank you for helping me dad, I am your son and I will always love you even though you did not listen to me." Luke Jr. gave his dad a hug.

"I love you too son and I will listen to you from now on". Luke Bavarius started to walk away, as he did Luke Jr. Raised his weapon and pointed it at the back of Luke Bavariuses head.

"I know you'll listen to me for the rest of your life dad." Luke Jr. pulled the trigger.

The End?



## Chapter 62

# Character Sketch

By Ghost Hat

I frowned as I looked at the crime scene. The lawn had been well kept once, but now it was all wild. The grass had been green once, but now it was all brown from the blood. The blood was from a corpse named James McDaniels. He was ten years old. He was murdered here last week in front of his house. James McDaniels' father had hired me to find out who killed his son... or what.

My name is Luke Bavarius. I'm a private eye. I'm whom they call when the police can't handle a case. Or if they don't want to. This is one of those cases because James McDaniels' father, James McDaniels Senior, is a crime boss for the mafia and the cops don't like him. I don't like him either, but I'm a desperate man.

I looked around and inspected the white chalk circles from where his body was found. There were two. One for his body and one for his head. The kid had been decapitated viciously. Just thinking about it made me taste vomit in the back of my throat. At first the police had suspected the kid's father. It makes sense. The crime boss's case of alcoholism was publicly known. But he had an alibi in his frightened wife and anyways it didn't make sense since he hired me to investigate his son's murder. A guilty man wouldn't do that.

It might have been a rival gang, or even a cop trying to get back at McDaniels Senior, but I didn't think so. The crime was too violent. The force used to tear off the kid's head, the distance it had been thrown, the amount of blood... it had to be personal.

I didn't like to think that another kid could do this. I didn't even know how since to rip even a kid's head off you would need at least the strength of a gorilla. But I couldn't dismiss a lead until I followed up on it. An investigator follows his instincts and mine said I was on to something fishy here.

At the school I questioned everybody. Everybody who could have had contact with James McDaniels. As I talked to more and more people, I started to draw a picture in my head. The picture was one of James McDaniels, and soon the picture got more and more detailed. He was sent to the principal a lot because he picked on other kids. He would torture, beat, and steal from anyone smaller than him. He was a bully of the worse kind, just like his dad. I guess it's true that the apple really doesn't fall far from the tree.

"Is there anybody James really picked on? More than everybody else?" I asked a little boy during lunch. He was maybe a third grader, and he didn't seem too unhappy about his late tormenter being dead. Who could blame him.

The boy looked thoughtful for a moment and then pointed to a dark corner in the cafeteria. He said with a mouthful of hamburger, "Tommy. James hated Tommy because Tommy was never afraid of him."

I thanked him gratefully and looked over in the corner. A boy was there and it was strange. Every other kid here was eating lunch and laughing with each other. But not this kid. Not Tommy. He was alone and hunched obsessively over a bunch of papers. I think he was drawing, though I couldn't see what from here. I knew I had to talk to this kid.

"Hey Tommy, what are you drawing?" I asked carefully, sneaking a peek at his masterpiece. It was a picture of the cafeteria and all the kids in it. I figured it'd be a child-like scribble, the sort of stuff normal kids do, but I was surprised to see that it was pretty good. "Hey, you're better than I am," I joked.

"It's just practice," Tommy mumbled, covering the drawing with his hands. He looked away from me and stared hard at the wall.

I paused hesitantly. I don't talk to lots of kids in this line of work, but I knew that I had to try. "Tommy, I need to talk to you about James McDaniels, okay? I'm trying to catch the guy who murdered him, and I need a big guy like you to help me."

Suddenly the school bell rang and all the kids got up to leave. Tommy shot up like the red plastic of the kid's chair he sat on had burned him. He grabbed his backpack. "What can I do? I'm just a kid," he snarled angrily as he shoved past me, rushing off to math class.

I blinked as I watched him go, and then I squinted down at the papers he had left. He was going to be in a lot of trouble if any of this was homework, but as I pushed the papers around I saw that there weren't any words on them, just drawings. Some were of nice things, but most of them were grotesque and disgusting, blood, flesh, and vomit so realistic it turned my stomach. One of them caught my eye in particular and I picked it up.

It was a creature all shadowy and dark. Its tail looked vicious and I could feel the terrible expression on its face in my very soul. But what caught my eye the most was the head it held in its hand. I recognized that head. I recognized the house behind it. It was James McDaniels' head and that was his house too!

That night I staked out Tommy's house. The sky was as stormy as my mood. The clouds turned and swirled around as viciously as the insides of my stomach. Even the lightning made me feel like vomiting, but I smoked a Marlboro instead. It calmed me down enough to think. I didn't know how, but I knew that Tommy was a murderer. I needed to prove it somehow and get him put away, maybe put away for life.

The broken clock radio flashed 12:00 A.M. in glowing green light. All the lights in Tommy's house were off. Strange kid. All alone, but he ain't scared of the dark. Tommy's parents had gone off to a fancy party hours ago. Tommy's dad wore a tux and his mom, a nice looking dame, wore a sleek little number. I didn't expect them back any time soon.

The rain pattered on the top of my beat-up Oldsmobile like hundreds of little mice feet. The lightning flashed and Tommy's house was lit up in black and white, like some old horror movie. I wasn't scared, but I reached inside my jacket and stroked my Beretta. Thunder grumbled like a monster, a hungry one at that. My imagination went a little wild as I thought of all those pictures Tommy drew. That kid could draw all right.

The rain kept pattering away. Pattering away like thousands of little mice feet now. But suddenly, with a loud thump, something huge landed on the roof! It shook the car and I bounced inside and looked up in surprise. The surprise turned to horror as I saw a huge indentation above me. That was no mouse! No, I doubted it was even a really big rat!

I pulled out my loaded Beretta and aimed at the roof above me and fired three rounds in quick succession. I know I missed it though because I felt the thing leap off the roof and land on the street outside the car. Nothing but rain came through the holes, good news for my seat cushions but I wouldn't have minded the cleaning bill. It was too dark with night and rain to see outside the window, so I opened the car door and leapt outside, squeezing my pistol blindly into the air. The thunder cracked then, even louder than my gunshots and I heard a scream louder than them both combined.

I peered into the wetness and saw a dark figure clutching at the side of its neck. Thick black blood oozed from between its fingers and as it screamed again, more vomited from the creature's mouth. I moved closer, clutching my Beretta with white knuckles. I was staring at the creature's head, but I realized what a mistake that was when I recognized that horrid expression on the monster's grimacing face.

I leapt back. Just in time as a whip, faster than a speeding semi, struck right where my skull would have been. It was the creature's tail. This thing. This man that was more monster than human was the beast from Tommy's drawing. My brain was struck with awe, but luckily my hands didn't care about what my brain thought. My fingers squeezed at the Beretta's trigger over and over again, filling the creature full of holes. Black blood sprayed out from all over the creature's body, mixing with the pure rain, like mixing demon urine with holy water.

The creature gave one last angry garble as it lurched towards me. I could have sworn it said something in English but I don't know what. My

brain was on automatic as I fired my semi-automatic, the barrel spewing out bullet after bullet. Finally the beast staggered and collapsed, right at my feet. Its tail gave one last feeble lash and subsided. Up close I could see how truly hideous it really was, with pulsing black veins and oozing pustules all over its body. I licked my lips and tasted salt, which surprised me since rainwater is fresh. I was crying.

I knew I couldn't stop now. My hands shook with the nervousness I had felt from the assault of Tommy's monster, but I reminded myself of whom I was. I was Luke Bevarious. I was a private investigator. I had faced down lots of tougher situations than some kid with a coloring book.

I went inside the house. It was much quieter inside the house than it was outside. The water dripping off my coat sounded loud in my ears as I went from room to room, searching for the boy I knew must be there. Finally I found him.

It must have been his bedroom. I spotted a bed and dresser out of the corner of my eye, but mostly I saw the drawings. Hundreds and hundreds of drawings stuck all over the walls and the ceiling, the floor and every bit of furniture. And in the middle of the floor was Tommy. He sat beside a flickering candle and didn't bother to look up at me when I opened the door.

Tommy was drawing.

"Put down the pencil," I said, my voice sounding harsh and gravelly. "I got a pistol pointed at your head, boy. My fingers have minds of their own sometimes, I can't promise anything if you don't."

"You're just in time," Tommy said with a soft smile. I was surprised when he did what I told him to do, tossing the pencil playfully off to the side. But something was off. His smile was more than just a regular kid's smile. My eyes widened in horror as I bolted forward and snatched up the just-finished drawing. I gazed at it with terror as I turned around to face the door I had just used.

Yes, it was just like the drawing. The kid was good. Really good.

The End.

## **Part III**

# **The Chronicles Of Biddick**





## Chapter 63

# Station 666

By VelvetEvoker

Tommy and his best friend Bobby were twelve years old. They lived in a small town that reeked of pestilence and a terrible oldness. Bobby's parents were very strict with their son and wouldn't even get him a television, so all they had was an old antique radio that once belonged to Bobby's grandpa.

Tommy and Bobby knew there was something wrong with the radio, but no one would listen. Many times they had asked an adult to come take a closer look at the radio, because they knew if anyone else got the same feeling they were getting they'd burn the radio or bury the remains. Many times Tommy and Bobby tried to throw it out, but it was too heavy for the children to carry and the adults would not let them throw it away because it was their old grandpa's antique.

One night when Tommy was sleeping over at Bobby's house, he noticed something strange. No matter where it was left the day before, the dial would start turning and eventually it'd end up on the frequency of 666. Tommy tried turning it as low as it would go, and in a few hours it'd be back at 666. It was the same thing if he tried to turn it higher.

Later that night they turned the radio on while it was at station 666, but it did not seem to be an active station. Nothing but static spewed forth from the speakers, but in the static was the sound of dread. Bobby's mom said that it was odd but it must just be the dial's default setting, so still nothing could be done about the radio.

The next day at school Tommy agreed to sleep over at Bobby's house and leave the station on all night to see if anything happened. However, nothing happened all night and they were tired so they began to fall asleep. They were awoken again at exactly midnight by a terrible screeching noise, followed by a voice.

The voice spoke in an unknown language that was possibly even older than the radio. It was such a terrible voice that it sounded like nails on a

chalkboard and both boys had to cover their ears. Bobby took his hand off of his ears and they were covered in blood, but Tommy wasn't bleeding.

Suddenly Bobby leaned over as if he was about to vomit, but instead of puke a clawed hand came out of his mouth. The hand continued to emerge, followed by a shoulder, until Bobby's mouth could take it no more and his head split in two, with his brains slopping down his back and his jaw trailing down his stomach.

Finally the demon had emerged, covered in Bobby's blood and stomach fluids. "I am Xavid Viarabous, and no one has survived the sound of my voice for a thousand years."

Suddenly Tommy reached into his sleeping bag and pulled out an old Beretta he found in the field. On it were the initials 'L.B.'. "I survived." he said. Then he shot the demon.

The radio was still not thrown out for two days. Tommy turned it to station 666, and from midnight to 12:01 he could hear Bobby screaming.

## Chapter 64

# The Promise

By Donde Esta

5 A.M. is a shitty time for burnt coffee.

As I, Luke Bavarious, stared in to my barren mug and gently touched the still fresh wound on the side of my head, a reflection in the still slick bottom forced a sob from the trenches of my gut.

It was him.

That night in the alley way, four sleepless and coffee spurn nights ago, I saw something that can only be described as awful, and I shot it. I shot it dead.

He came at me and he came at me hard, but Ol' Betsy finally laid him to rest. As he slumped over my side, covered in warm oozing liquid, I caught a reflection of something far worse than the disfigured wretch I had just put down. It was him; the man of my non-existent nightmares.

I caught his reflection in the broken glass and he was smiling, smiling an unnatural and hideous grin. I was in no position to defend myself. While I might be able to load a Beretta faster than anyone else this side of the Hudson, being in his presence, time seemed to slow to a halt.

His wild arms flapped about as if the cool alleyway breeze had been given life. Entirely too tall and entirely too pale to be human, only one thing came to mind: Slender Man.

Two weeks before that, I had gotten a call from an extremely upset and distraught mother. She said that her son came home and he wouldn't stop talking about how the "Slender Man" had just played with him and some of the other children at Bryant Park just off of W 41st St.

Her son went on to tell her how "Slendy", as the boy had nicknamed him, had taken a particular interest in Suzy Carlton. He said that Slendy took her into the alleyway and she came back with a strange purple mark on her arm. She thought it was awesome and all the other children wanted

one too, but Slendy said that they would have to wait and that he, "Would be back for everyone!" Her son was the only one who was scared of him.

I scoffed at the lady and told her that I had more important things to do than investigate some street performer handing out stickers to children in the park. I didn't care if her kid got stiffed a purple tattoo from some freak. I hung up on her.

I shouldn't have hung up on her.

As I laid in the street, looking at the piece of glass I was terrified. Sobbing, making all the connections in my mind, I stared at him. Stared into his devilish eyes, wondering what it was that he wanted from me.

As he approached me, arms dangling all around, he bent down in a way that a human should not be able to and stuck his face nearly an inch from mine.

In that moment, the only thing I wished for was death; quick and sudden death. Instead, the Slender Man would give me something much worse: a promise.

He looked me in the eyes and with a smile he whispered in a voice which came out in chortles, "Don't worry...Bavarious...I'll be back for you too." It was a promise which kept me awake for four nights, and a promise I expected him to keep.

Now, looking into my cup, I watched as he stood behind me. I did my best not to show my fear.

I looked at the badge lying out on the table. A gold shield made of brass and time. It wasn't much, just a symbol, but it gave me the courage to speak.

"Mr. Slender, why'd you go after those children?" I asked, trying to sound as calm as possible.

"The children give me..." it sounded now as if it were trying to speak while a river of maple syrup ran through its throat, "...they give me lifeeeeeee".

"So why are you here...Slendy?" I asked cautiously, doing my best to distract him while positioned my hand on the holster under my robe.

"Little...David Sanders...didn't last very long...and his mother...was...lacking," he said smugly.

"Well Slendy, that night in the alleyway, you should have taken your chance because now I'm ready for you," I barked, as I spun around and emptied a whole clip into his chest.

He shrieked and recoiled as black, viscous liquid leaked out onto my kitchen floor and ate away at it like acid.

With his defenses down I fought through the mess of flailing arms and pistol whipped him with the still burning hot barrel of my Berretta.

"You shouldn't have fucked with those kids, Slendy. You shouldn't have fucked with Luke Bavarious," I yelled at him.

He wasn't done. Despite my damage, he was still functioning, though severely wounded.

"I'll be...back for...you...Bavarious," he coughed out, between sputters of demon blood.

He dashed out the door and before I could get to it, the thing was out of sight.

With a little boy's death that could have been prevented on my conscience, I now know my purpose in life. If I had only listened to him.

The Slender Man may have just made me a promise, but I'm going to beat him to it. Luke Bavariou is now on the case.



## Chapter 65

# Johnny the Knifer

By BoldFrankensteinMir

I stopped short at the counter. I sat down. Coffee poured out the coffee pot and into my cup, like a pot of brown bullets shooting into my cup and splashing in coffee. The waitress was very pretty. She said "would you like some coffee"? My name is Luke Bavariou. I like coffee. And I am a detective.

It was my favorite restaurant. It was on 756th street in Manhattan. New York. The waitress was very pretty, and the coffee was just as good. "How do you like your coffee Luke Bavariou" she said. "Sweet like you" I winked. She winked back. There was something about the way she winked at me and the way she poured my coffee. My heart beat double the blood suddenly, but I was in control. In control of my blood.

"How is that kid you have" I said romantically. The waitress blushed. "Johnny is a good kid but I'm afraid he's falling in with a bad crowd" she cried. I comforted her, my shoulder soaking up her sweet sad woman tears that she cried from those pretty eyes.

Suddenly, three men walked into the restaurant. "Well Well Well Luke Bavariou" said the first man. He was horrible and tall and ugliness all wrapped into a tall horrible suit. "You better run Luke Bavariou after you ruined our drug crime this morning!" he said. Then he said it again. With his guns. And his bullets.

I jumped behind the counter. The waitress cried "don't let them shoot the restaurant I have a kid" so I jumped in front of the counter. The mobsters cackled a sick crackling laugh that bled in waves out of their toothy horror mouths. "The great Luke Bavariou" laughed Jimmy the Knifer. "Hiding behind a woman! Laughable!" he said and proved it with more laughs.

"Not so fast!" I yelled and reached for my sleek silver loaded Beretta with my name engraved in the gun and on the bullets too. I realized my gun was gone! I had to think fast.

"Not so fast!" I yelled and grabbed the pot of coffee. I splashed it at Jimmy the Knifer and his goons. The goons ran, missing the terrible shower of deadly boiling coffee. The coffee splashed into Jimmy the Knifer's hands and face. I recoiled in horrible terror as he screamed.

"NO" screamed Jimmy the Knifer. He fell to the ground, the tears of pain mixing with the steaming sweet coffee as the veins in his forehead popped open like firecrackers in hot coffee and tears. Blood and tears and hair and coffee spilled into the coffee puddles on the floor and he screamed as his skin went into the puddles too. "NO" he screamed again. "NO".

I turned to have my sandwich that I also ordered and the waitress had brought to me before the mobsters came in. Tears were on her face just as surprise was on mine because of hers. "What's wrong Suzie" I said. "We're in New York the city that never sleeps, of course there's gonna be a little crime but I'm Luke Bavarius".

"NO!" screamed Suzie. She ran to Jimmy the Knifer! What is happening?

"I told you he was in with a bad crowd" she sobbed through tears of grieving for her dead mobster son. I recoiled in horror from my sandwich. If I had known! But Jimmy the Knifer was not a child!

"He looks older because of makeup so adults would take him seriously!" she cried at me. I looked now at Jimmy. A kid! The makeup was melting off in the blood and coffee and boiled skin and it was a kid! The sandwich dropped from my hands and the coffee pot shattered all over my shoes also. How could I have known?

Jimmy the Knifer looked at me with blood eyes and tears coughed from his dying words. "Who's the big man now... Luke... Bavarius..." he said, and in his hand was the baseball card I had given his mom to give him for his birthday just a week before. That made it even more incredibly sad.

"NO" I screamed and they took me away for murder, on two counts of homicidal killings. Johnny the Knifer... and Johnny the Boy.



## Chapter 66

# A BUTTER KNIFE

By lemonlime

Martin Boswell was always required to remain at table until Mr. Boswell dismissed him. Some nights Martin would sit in his creaky old wooden chair, picking at a tattered and threadbare corner of its cushion, until long past midnight. Since eating his supper never took more than an hour, Martin would be left with a very long time in which to sit, pick at his lumpy old cushion and watch his father watching the butter knife. This knife was dull, scratched stainless steel with a rounded tip and a very slight serration; no different than any other butter knife that might grace another, happier supper table.

At first Mr. Boswell would turn it around and around, so that the lamp-light flashed off its blade hypnotically. Then, holding the handle lightly between his thumb and all four fingers, as one would hold the bow of a cello, he would run that knife's dainty little teeth slowly up and down the length of his forearm, occasionally pausing to turn tight little circles over the network of veins decorating the inside of his wrist and displaying to all the precarious restraint in which his very life's blood was held. Martin had used his father's butter knife once when Mr. Boswell was at work; from that day forth, seeing his father's shivers never failed to provoke an answering shiver in himself.

Then Mr. Boswell would turn the butter knife's attentions to his scarred, scabbed hands, those stained and stinking hands which had fired the little gun that shot Martin's mother in the back as she tried to run for the last time. He would drag those hateful smiling teeth back and forth across the back of his hand as though buttering an english muffin, hour after hour, until the skin began to abrade and swell and eventually bleed.

At first the wound was a minor one. But after being kept open by Mr. Boswell's nightly ritual for the better part of a year it began to grow wider and deeper. His flesh became purple and black and the stench of putrefac-

tion was so strong that no one would willingly go near Mr. Boswell except for Luke Bavariou, a former police detective turned bodyguard, and Martin.

One night, around 11 o'clock, Martin saw bone. Not even the memory of the four days of torment his mother suffered in the root cellar as she died of her gunshot wounds could keep him in his chair then. In his bedroom, Martin stripped off his soiled clothes and set them to soak in the bathtub, then opened the window to clear the odor and began to wonder whether a jump would really kill him. He didn't feel like adding to the number buried in that grisly root cellar, yet he knew that if he tried to creep out of any of the doors he'd be instantly caught by the keen eye of Bavariou.

There was a knock at his bedroom door and then it opened. Luke Bavariou stood there and he said, "I'm sorry, Kid, what you're gotta live with is wrong. Just run back as quick as you can. Get in your chair and I'll come in a bit later to shake him out of it. I promise I'll hurry."

Martin threw on a clean set of clothes and dashed back downstairs. His father never even looked at him as he took his seat as quietly as he left it. Mr. Boswell did not shift his attention from the butter knife until Bavariou walked into the dining room, claiming to have seen an intruder across the courtyard. Martin was immediately ordered to his bedroom for the night, and as he left the table Martin felt a gratitude and devotion for Luke Bavariou that he could never have imagined just fifteen minutes before.

That night taught Martin that while Mr. Boswell was watching his butter knife, he could go anywhere and do anything without his father seeing him. Only Luke Bavariou could keep him from leaving during those times. One night, as Mr. Boswell sat mesmerized by the clean red blood that seeped from his corrupted flesh, Martin went to the linen closet and pulled out a backpack in which he'd stashed clothing, food and a little money. Bavariou met him at the door.

"Let me go, Luke, please," Martin begged. "You know he'll kill me too, as soon as he sees that I want to leave."

After looking at Martin for a moment, Luke said, "I know, kid. After what he did to your Mom, I knew that I'd only leave this house when I was dead. Mr. Boswell, he'd kill me in a second if he knew I was standing here talking to you and not killing you. No way can I let you stay here. Your father doesn't love or respect you. But he was a good man once, and I can't bear to live with having done something to betray his trust in me. No, there's only one way it's gotta be."

With that, Luke Bavariou pulled out the Beretta he'd carried since early childhood, applied the muzzle to his temple and squeezed the trigger. A scalding wave of blood drenched Martin's face as he stood frozen there. He turned suddenly and ran away into the night.

It would be a long time before Martin Boswell stopped running. He crossed oceans and traversed lands stranger than he'd ever imagined during the long empty hours sitting at his father's dining room table. During that time, Martin was a beggar, a slave and a whore. When he woke up one morning in a place where the air was so thick it could be used as a sandwich

spread and the rain fell as warm as blood, he knew he was home.

Martin would forget, sometimes, why he'd run. He'd be eating supper at a cafe and the light shining off one of the diners' butter knives would make him shiver with some dark lust. But none of that mattered. Every time he felt the hot rain wash down his face Martin would feel the blood Luke Bavarious had shed, the sacrifice he'd make of his own body, so that Martin could be reborn into a new life.



## Chapter 67

# The Cave

By Monkey Trouble

The name's Bavarious. Luke Bavarious, P.I.

My morning began with a mysterious phonecall. An unidentifiable voice, wracked with sobbing, incoherently pleading for help. The only words I was able to decipher were "help", "old cave" "outside town". That could only mean the old, disused coal mine on the outskirts of town. Whoever the poor shmuck was, I decided to investigate.

I followed the overgrown dirt track from the edge of town, until I was staring into the dark, gaping mouth of the cave. As I clicked on my flashlight, I heard a voice behind me.

"Mister. Hey, Mister."

There was a small blond-haired boy on a rusted red bicycle behind me.

"You shouldn't go in there, it's dangerous." he said.

"Beat it, kid, you shouldn't be messing around out here." I said gruffly.

A small smile twitched at the corner of his mouth. "Ok, but don't say I didn't warn you."

I watched him turn the bike around and ride off. As I stood at the cave entrance, I felt a strange itching sensation on my right hand. Looking down, I saw a wart I hadn't noticed before right next to my index finger. Dismissing it, I drew my beretta and headed into the darkness of the cave.

As I shone my flashlight into the murky depths of the cave, I could see it went on for miles in front of me. The itching sensation had started to travel all over my body, getting more intense. I was eager to find whoever was in trouble and get the hell out of here.

BANG. A gunshot cut through the air like a knife. I hit the deck, rolling behind a pile of rocks and scanning my surroundings for my would-be attacker. It was only then that I realised the shot had come from my own gun.

I looked down at my gun hand, and recoiled in horror. Where the wart had been, there was now a fully grown finger...*and it was curled around the trigger!* I swiped at it with my other hand and it responded by trying to turn my own gun on me.

Seeing no other choice, I dropped my flashlight and grabbed my knife from my pocket and started to saw into the strange digit. I vomited in pain as the blood flowed from the cut. My flashlight lay on the floor, casting it's light onto me, and I watched as the finger continued to grow even as it hit the floor. The flesh writhed and I realised it was growing into a hand, then an arm!

The itching sensation suddenly wracked my whole body, and I ripped open my shirt to reveal several pairs of hands growing from my chest! I vomited again in disgust, once again going to work with the knife, vomiting blood and vomit from all over me. Suddenly I was sobbing.

As the piles of bloody flesh on the floor surrounding me continued to grow, I felt a hand clamp down on my shoulder, and I was spun around to face...myself. I gazed in horror around me as I realised all of the parts I had chopped off were growing into other versions of me!

This...is the dawning of the age of Bavarious.

The End...?

## Chapter 68

# The Bodies of Bavarii

By Hired Gun

It was a haunting and horrid night in the city. Luke Bavarious sat at the bar. He knew that nights like these only brought trouble. All night, he had been feeling like he was being followed. He sipped his drink and sighed. If only he was back at home with his family. His wife and son had been killed in a tragic Beretta incident. Thinking of their deaths made Bavarious want to vomit. Instead, he had another drink. This was his fourth one tonight.

After paying for his drinks, Bavarious put on his jacket and walked out onto the dark street. He knew that every alley and dark corner could be hiding a horrifying secret. He still felt the presence following him, but he put it out of his mind. Cautiously yet fearlessly, Bavarious began the five block walk to his apartment. A few minutes later, he suddenly heard the unmistakably terrible sounds of screams. These were no ordinary screams. These were screams of murder. Bavarious ran into the alley, his Beretta in hand. It was so dark that he couldn't see anything. He also suddenly felt that he was no longer being followed.

Suddenly a flash of lightning lit up the sky and illuminated the scene in the alley. Bavarious could barely stop himself from vomiting when he realized that there was blood everywhere. And he was covered in it. Each drop of rain smeared the blood into his face and his clothes. Another flash of lightning revealed the true horror of the alley. The blood came from two bodies. The bodies of his wife and son. Their deaths were no accident after all. Bavarious stared at his Beretta. He noticed that half the clip was empty.

As sirens rang in the distance, Bavarious knew he had no other choice. As blood and vomit flowed down the alley, the sound of one final gunshot pierced the night. The body of Luke Bavarious fell next to his son. For a moment, the two pairs of dead eyes met.





## Chapter 69

# The Torrid Connection

By Danger408

Cleaning his Beretta for the third time that day, and taking a swig of cheap whiskey, Luke Bavariou pondered his current case.

"This is going nowhere" he thought. The case was different, it wasn't about helping others — it was about helping himself. After seeing the face, the one so much like his own, yet so different; things had changed. He tried to forget, but all he could remember was the blood, all of the blood, the blood everywhere. "Was that really me?" He didn't know.

He glanced down at the picture of his son he always had on his desk. The divorce had been rough, and he hadn't seen him in while. Taking another swig from his bottle, suddenly he turned as he heard a knock at the door, followed by two more in quick succession. He hid the bottle behind his desk, hoping to appear a bit more professional.

He didn't have to respond however, as the mystery person had already opened the door.

"Hello," A beautiful woman started, "I need your help."

"Have we met?" He asked.

"I don't believe we have," she replied. "I got your name from a friend. It's doesn't matter though - I have a case for you. My husband is missing. I need you to find him, and I hear you're the best at what you do."

"I'm not taking any more cases... I have a lot of personal shit to deal with. Besides, you really don't want me to take the case." He paused for a moment. She looked familiar, a face he knew he had seen, perhaps in another life, but couldn't put his finger on who it was. She looked good though.

"I'll do anything." She pleaded as she removed her shirt. Luke had always prided himself as being a man of ethics, but ethics only went so far. As he removed his shirt, he added, "I'll take the case!"

They commenced sexuality. It had been a long time for both of them, too long in fact, as it seemed like it would be over before they even started.

As he lit up a pair of cigarettes, he once again got the feeling that he knew her from somewhere. He knew her named started with an "L" but he couldn't remember the rest.

"Are you sure we haven't met before?" He asked.

"Now that you mention it, I think we have." She added as she began to pull at her face.

She stretched and tugged, as vomit-like ooze poured out of her. She tore away pieces of herself, discarding them on the floor like a used condom. It seemed that the only thing left was a bloody mess — until she wiped it off, revealing a familiar face... His own.

Scared half to death, and knowing that the other half would soon be complete, he managed to say, "Listen to me... Whatever you do... Don't touch my son..." He knew he should have spent more time with the kid.

Finishing him off in more ways the one, the once-woman's transformation was complete. Dressing in his cloths, and putting on his badge, she was the new Luke Bavarious. Was it a monster? Or could the real Luke from the future? Some questions aren't meant to be answered.

## Chapter 70

# Hell Cab

By Safe Driver

"Wake up, Bavarius! Wake up! Wake up!" The dispatcher's voice screeched through the radio.

Luke Bavarius was asleep behind the wheel again.

"Wasn't sleeping, just resting my eyes."

The radio buzzed back "...1977 Ruminant Way, pick up."

At night the fares usually tip well. Mostly it's vomiting drunks with wallets that are just as loose as their mouths. Luke's been pulling a lot of late shifts driving his taxi. They help keep his mind occupied from the hard life dealt him. His wife is gone now; it's just Luke. The cancer came out of nowhere. It cashed in his wife's last chips. It ate her up from the inside, destroying their lives. All Luke could do was pray and make empty promises as the doctors ran their constant tests and hooked up more tubes everyday. It never went back to being right, she never got better.

With all of his time being devoted to his dying wife, Luke ostracized everyone else around him. Even their only child, Bryson Bavarius was ostracized ... ostracized with extreme prejudice that it would make you vomit. Luke's neglecting of the rest of his family lead to more trouble for them. Bryson Bavarius needed daily injections to keep his type X diabetes under control. The injections never came. Bryson accidentally ate an entire bowl of sugar. The moment the sugar touched his lips, Bryson's face exploded like a pus filled vomit balloon. He died. When Luke found his body weeks later, the room reeked of rotting vomit and glucose. Luke told his wife that the boy could not make it to the hospital, he was just too sad. His wife got worse with each passing day.

Luke would never forget his wife's final words; it has haunted him since that day. "You lied." In her final twitches a pressurized pocket of vomit burst from her mouth. Then it was over and it was just Luke and his night shift.

The address dispatch sent Luke to was an empty lot; nothing there but silence. Luke began circling around the lot. It was probably a crank call. Out of nowhere the rear door is yanked open and a passenger jumps in.

"Christ, I didn't even see you! Gave me a scare there, well where to?"

Luke looked into the rear view mirror. The passenger's familiar eyes were empty and cold. The passenger smiled and Luke's heart skipped a beat. The smile turned into a grimace.

"Drive Luke, you're just going to drive." The voice was hollow.

Luke's taxi pulled into gear. None of the streets were familiar anymore. They turned into endless circles of blurred buildings and drab scenery. Luke had never been so scared in his entire life, and he did not know why. He vomited on his lap. The taste was like the final taste he had of his dying wife. Bile.

The same horrible voice broke Luke's confusion,

"Keep on driving Luke, we're almost there."

They made it. Luke Bavarius didn't wake up.

## Chapter 71

# Destiny Calls: A Luke Bavarius Mystery

By Livestock

Luke Bavarius was on edge. For months he'd been receiving terrifying phone calls from a mad man. The telephone would ring, Bavarius would pick up, and that horrible voice would speak.

"You're dead, Luke Bavarius. *Deeaaaadddd...*"

"Who is this?" Luke would respond. "I'll get you! I'm a cop, you idiot!"

"It doesn't matter, Luke. The law cannot stop me."

Luke wondered what the calls meant. They happened every night at midnight. Luke knew that midnight held special significance to satanic cults and the criminal element. In his work as a gritty New York City detective he had made many enemies. He could scarcely keep track of all the men he put behind bars, let alone which ones still harbored a grudge.

Luke could barely sleep. In his dreams he was chased by shadows. Glimpses of dark alleyways and shattered mirrors haunted his slumber. Luke was near his breaking point. What did it all mean?

*Ring!* The telephone rang. It was midnight again. Heavy beads of sweat started oozing from Luke's forehead like anchors dropping from ships at port.

"Who is it?" Luke answered angrily.

"Now, now, Luke. Don't be so angry. It's just your old friend."

"You're no friend."

"And you're dead, Luke Bavarius. *Deeaaaadddd...*"

Luke slammed the phone down. His heart was racing like Big Brown in the Kentucky Derby: fast and determined. Luke took a swig from his flask. He knew he had to do something. How long could this go on? Not much longer, Luke thought.

It was time to involve his friends at the station. Luke called in a favor from Jim Centauri, an expert at tracing phone calls. Jim hooked his equipment up to Luke's phones, and the two waited until midnight. Nothing happened.

"Damn it!" Luke yelled. "He calls every night. *Every night!*"

"It's probably just a prankster, Luke. Don't let it get you down. Anyway, maybe he got tired of calling you."

Jim packed up his equipment and headed home. Luke thanked him, but felt disappointed he had no answers. Then it happened. The thing Luke was least prepared for.

*Ring!*

"Not again!" Luke yelled, staring at the ringing telephone. He debated answering, or letting it sing its horrible, shrill song. Finally, Luke could wait no more. He reached his left hand out and clutched the phone, squeezing so tight it would die if it were alive.

"Nice try, Luke. But you'll have to figure out who I am on your own."

"Who are you?" Luke demanded, his voice surging with anger.

"Don't you know, Luke. Don't you know who I am?"

"It's only a matter of time before I find out."

"Sooner than that, Luke. Don't you recognize my voice?"

Suddenly a horrible realization came over Luke. "No. No! No!!!" he cried out. He looked to his right, and he was holding a second telephone.

"All this time, Luke. It was you. It was me. It was us!"

Luke heard a click. He looked to his left. The telephone in his left hand was gone. Now it was a cocked Beretta pointed at his skull. Suddenly he gulped. *Click.*

## Chapter 72

# Horrid Transformation

By JohnnyThreeToes

A man lives in that abandoned house at the end of the street. He is old and secret, nobody knows that he is in there. Those that do know don't suspect it is a man, but maybe a dog or a cat living in the house. There is strange foggy weather over that house. Tonight thunder rumbles all around the house in the air.

The man sits at his counter and does not say a word. There is no one to say it to. He is alone. Pain is in his staring eyes. Pain from loneliness. Depressed pain. A bowl of eaten cereal is in front of him. He is frowning, not satisfied. Some open bags of dog food surround him, too.

Horrid thunder surrounds his house and then there is a flash of lightning. The man has had enough! Enough of this civilization where people shun him for his talent. They could never understand. The man grins and puts on a collar. There is another flash of lightning and by the end of the flash the man has changed into a dog. He will do what he always does tonight like every night. He will wander around until somebody takes pity on him and pets him and feed him. As a homeless human society hates him, but as a dog he is the greatest thing ever to them. Life is funny that way, he silently thinks, walking out the door into the lightning.





## Chapter 73

# Flow My Tears, the PI Said.

By King Plum the Nth

The kids from the neighborhood pooled their money to hire me. All the kids on that street in the Bronx, in New York. One slow day I was getting ready to leave the office a bit early when a kid pushed open the door with my name, Luke Bavarious, and my job, private detective, painted in neat black letters on the gray pebbled glass.

"Mr. Bavarious?" he said.

"That's what it says on the door, kid." He looked like he was about 12.

"My friends and I need to hire a private detective to find Mikey." He walked across the room trying to look brave, shoved a hand in his jeans pocket, pulled out a wad of crumpled \$5's and \$10's, and set them on my desk.

I eyed the dough suspiciously. It looked sticky and damp. I can't remember ever not wanting to touch money before. I reached out gently and poked at it. Maybe \$45 bucks. Maybe less. It wasn't enough to pay for the time it'd take me to take a piss all over their sorry case. Whatever it was.

"Your mother know you're here, kid?"

"Mister, Mikey's been missing, and all our parents and the cops say he ran away, but we know he got taken."

"Taken by what, kid?"

"Taken by a nameless horror, sir."

I looked at the dough again. "I charge a hundred and fifty an hour, kid. In this traffic it'd cost ya another two fifty five just to get me to set foot in the Bronx." The kid looked like he was going to cry. I swore under my breath, stood, and grabbed the cash from my desk. Shoving it into my pocket I said, "Never mind. I'll bill this Mikey's folks for the difference if I find him alive." The kid started sobbing then. Really hard. While he got it out of his system, I opened my desk drawer, pulled out my trusty Beretta and checked the magazine.

Once I got to the Bronx it didn't take me long to find out what had happened. Sometimes my job calls on me to fight monsters of a supernatural nature. Sometimes I find myself buried neck deep in the blackest culture, the world of the gothic and occult. But sometimes the monsters are more horrible than monsters because sometimes the monsters are men. And this monster was a man. He was a homeless pedophile. Mikey wasn't his first but, by god, he was going to be the last. I pulled my revolver and pointed it at him,

"This is the end of the line, hobo."

"You won't kill me, Bavarious! I used to be a cop. Like your father. It's against the law to kill me no matter how many kids I raped and killed."

He had me. I knew, and he know, and my father — god rest him — had known, no matter how many kids you rape and kill it only warrants murder in certain states and then only after a lengthy judiciary process. But, looking at poor Mikey's broken, rotten corpse, I just wasn't sure if any of that really mattered.

The sick hobo followed my gaze to the body of his most recent victim.

"Oh, him? Don't worry about him. He liked it."

And that's when I snapped. Everything became crystal clear. I wasn't sure what was right or wrong anymore but there was one thing I knew for damn sure. Mikey didn't like it.

I pulled my trigger. My Beretta belched hot lead. The shell hitting the warehouse floor made a sound like a polite cough afterward. A ragged, bloody hole exploded in the monster's gut. He stopped, stared at his gory wound and began to vomit. Vomit flowed from his mouth and, after a second, shot from the bullet wound in his stomach too. I pulled the trigger again and again, each time it was less for anger and more for mercy. I perforated his neck. He kept vomiting. The vomit flowed from his mouth and gut and the hole in his neck. I put a hole in his head — right between the eyes — his eyes crossed looking up trying to see his death wound. His body heaved again and again, and vomit poured from his forehead too. Torrents of blood and bile and breakfast pouring from four holes on his body, three of them man made.

Finally, I could take it no more, my stomach surrendered and I vomited. As I vomited, my eyes slipped back to the body of the monster's latest victim and I wept and my tears commingled with the vomit. There we stood, the two of us, vomiting. The pseudo mythical hero and the pseudo mythical monster over the poor broken body that had so recently vomited a child's soul into the afterlife. In a way, we were brothers, in vomit. He fell to his knees. He died. And, although I stopped vomiting, eventually, I could not stop sobbing. I cried so hard the flow of my tears washed the vomit away.

## Chapter 74

# Horror D'oeuvres

By Yogi Byron

I am on the verge of tears by the time I arrive at Espace, as I'm sure that I won't have a good table. However, the maitre'd shows me my place, a cozy booth next to an aquarium, and I feel relief wash over me in an awesome wave. I sit down. The sound of knives scratching against bone china, however, sets my nerves on edge. My name is Luke Bavarious. I am a private detective. I like my work.

Complaints had been trickling in for a little over a year about cases of food poisoning emanating from this restaurant. I look carefully over the menu and order a lobster roll with arugula bedding. I choose this food in particular because it is my assignment to stop these complaints.

My suspicion is first aroused by a loud belch from the table directly to my left. The gasses reverberate against the glass of the aquarium and offend my nostrils. A dark and horrid man is clutching his stomach, fork gripped tightly in his free hand. This scene elicits a grimace of pain from his face, and, suddenly, he shouts violently, jabbing the fork into his abdomen. A stream of vile stomach acid and gastric juices billow forth, burning his hands in acidic bile and causing him to vomit from behind pursed lips onto the tablecloth in front of him. My Beretta is already drawn as I attempt to calm the surprised crowd that is gaping at the food-poisoned man. His wife has urinated onto the carpet and is troubled by unwilling spasms that are shaking her body. I fire a round into the plate of food that sits between them, while grimacing. I snatch the ejected shell from my Beretta like it's a flying bumblebee and place it in my mouth, clamping down on the brass with my teeth to dull the pain of my miserable and human, all too human, existence.

Blood is now mixing with the bile and urine into a disastrous chemical. I fire a round with my Beretta into the man, who is gripping the tablecloth in pain. He giggles as he is relieved of his cruel fate, lapsing into the sweet

embrace of untimely death. I draw a bead on his poor wife, who is sitting in a pile of her own waste like a squalid dog or cat. I fire twice. Three shells hit the concrete. "You!" I yell at a waiter hiding behind the aquarium. "Let me speak to your manager!"

He wipes his miserable face with a cloth. "Beggin' your pardon, but...I am the manager," he says. I motion towards the table with my Beretta. "Sit down." I say. While he takes his seat before the lobster roll and arugula, I catch a glimpse of myself reflected in the glass of the aquarium. A white shirt and cummerbund are smoothed elegantly around my midsection, and on my right side is a gleaming nametag. "Luke Bavariious, Head Waiter, Espace." Suddenly, I am sobbing.

## Chapter 75

# I am NOT Luke Bavarius

By Funk In Shoe

Interviewee: LARRY BAVARIUS - 05/05/09

So what do you want to know?

*Question.*

Okay, see, this is something we're going to have to address before it starts bugging me: You need to relax.

I see you're tensing up there, a little already, why is this? When we spoke on the phone earlier - when you called me up and asked for this interview and I told you it would be no problem and to come right over whenever you saw fit — earlier you came off so easy going, on the phone. I made coffee, did I not?

Is this just a matter of you being the kind of person who really knows her way around a phone but tends to come off sort of skittish in person? No? Could you put that down Bic pen already? You know the clicking, and all. I get skittish, too. Honestly it's alright.

You DO seem horribly tense. I am not, let me assure you, Mr. Ehl Bee. There is no need to go all star struck on me. I am as much of a nobody as you are, probably more of a nobody.

Put the pen down, honey — in lieu of that, just stop with the clicking, please. I'm sorry. Do carry on.

*Question.*

Well the thing is, the way you're phrasing that is you want me to tell you a certain mapped set of details about myself; details you're likely more acutely familiar with than I am myself.

I don't know that I am related to Luke, as such. We haven't had much to do with each other since he published that... Oh. Don't make that face.

Okay, okay. Fine. So I am. Related. He's what you'd call my identical half brother. I know right? It's a weird way to put it and I apologize; I'm not trying to come off as overly dramatic here or trying to yank you around or

make myself appear interesting or anything like that, really, it's just a sort of neat way of recapping our shared genealogy.

And so but yes, I am a couple of years older than Luke and yes, we do share a good amount of absolutely top notch DNA. I've never been able to figure out exactly how much, you know, percentagewise et cetera, it's sort of a stupendously tricky prospect.

*Question.*

Because we got, obviously, the same mom and but so, as fate would have it, different dads. Tricky, because while my own dear sweet padre is an entity completely separated from Luke's ditto, they are, nonetheless, identical twins. This, their twin-inity, if you will, is what has made all my attempts at coming to terms with the whole DNA snafu so far pretty frustrating. By now I've pretty much just given up. This, having the same mother and two different fathers who happen to be *appear* completely identical, is probably also why you're still fidgeting with that *God damned Bic*, even when I asked you politely and repeatedly to put it down, because it's freaking me out.

I am not-I-repeat-not Luke Bavarius; and I am going to take the fact that you're still not quite sure whether to believe me or not on that, as a compliment that I am looking better than my usual best today.

*Question.*

Well because look at me. Check out thith. See thith? Ow. This is what the not-so-PC-crowd calls a hare lip. It's been fixed up, but it's pretty obvious with the scar and all, especially on the inside of the lip. Did you ever see a jacket photo of our boy Luke with a scar like this? This male pattern baldness thing? Luke dodged that bullet too. Where I'm 5.0 he's a good 6.1. It's a mystery, really. You should...

*Question.*

...I'm not finished, you should see our respective family photos. For some reason he just turned out like a late and slightly improved version of yours truly. Same parents, just slightly better. It's bizarre. By the looks of it it's the same parents in the same photo studio, doing the same awkward pose with our respective and identical dads in the background, arms wrapped around mom, wearing all red. Bizarre because so the kid in the foreground is basically either me or, like, a really, really pretty and tall and attractive *enhancement* of me. It's just weird. I am not Luke. Convinced? Want me to whip out the photos? No?

*Question*

Well I'm two years older. Dad and Not-Dad moved here together and started a used car dealership on the eastside. You are aware of all this, I am sure. Any profiler worth her salt, writing for such a major magazine, will be aware of this. So but they moved here, yes, opened up their dealership and started making good money right off the bat. It was a couple of years after the bubble burst and Dad and his brother were lucky-slash-clever enough to start their business at a time when people were just starting to make money again, but were still hesitant about, you know, spending it. Everybody and their mom bought used cars back in those days.

And so Dad meets our mom some forty-odd years ago and they fall in love pretty quick and Dad moves out of whatever east side apartment he's sharing with his brother at the time, and in with mom.

*Question.*

From what I've been able to ascertain, I came around some two years later. Give or take. You'll have to — stop clicking — you'll have to bear with me on the details. At this point, the dealership is running like greased clockwork and both Dad and Not-Dad are pulling in some serious moolah and Dad, Not-Dad and mom start getting invited to you know, get-togethers, shindigs, box socials, that sort of jazz around town with the movers and shakers of whatever post-recession high society was in function back in those days.

*Question.*

Well it started out as a sort of joke, you know. Don't-You-Drink-Too-Much-Sweetie-Or-You'll-Get-Us-Mixed up. Shits and giggles and lots of fun at parties with my Dad and his brother showing up in identical suits and my mom pretending to accidentally kiss the wrong clone et cetera.

Shits and giggles right up until, and you've seen this coming, right up until the three of them actually go and get so drunk that my Dad passes out in a bathroom at some fundraiser, slumped over a toilet for hours so that to this day he's got horrible problems with his back, and Mom goes and sticks her tongue down the throat of Not-Dad by mistake and by the time he gets to object they're both too drunk to even care and mom decides right there that for whatever reason, Not-Dad is a much better kisser than poor, passed out Dad ever was.

*Question.*

I don't remember much, except for him drinking a whole lot and never wearing anything but his underwear around the house, really. And the yelling-slash-stomping.

I remember asking him, once, like we're talking age three or four here, where Mom had gone and he yelled at me. My dad is sort of a dick. I told him he needed to stop yelling at me. He didn't listen. I told him kids need to be respected and listened to. No dice.

He would have to be, a dick, you know, to stick me with the short end of the DNA stick like he's done. Thith fucking thplith lip! Ow!

And so but Mom moves in with Not-Dad and lo and fucking behold THEY spawn a kid too.

*Question.*

Yes. Luke. I see you have fathomed the basic concept of *listening*, I am highly impressed. May I continue? Thank you.

So naturally, with my Mom gone off to shack up with his Brother, there's no fucking way in hell Dad's dealership is going to stay afloat, these two guys can't stand the sight of each other.

*Question.*

Just *imagine* that! It's like some bizarro-universe incarnation of self-loathing. Imagine waking up, hung over, and stumbling into the bathroom,

looking into the mirror and seeing the face of the guy your wife is currently fucking, who is not you. Then, suddenly, you are sobbing. One cannot even be-fucking-GIN to fathom...

So yeah, anyway, there was that.

*Question.*

Well so they split it up. Put down a fuck-all huge chain fence right down the middle of the store and the lot. Split the whole place in two halves that were pretty much identical except for the sign out front. Dad got the BAVA half, Not-Dad got RIUS.

And, foreseeably, they started harassing each other pretty much right off the bat. He'd bring me with him to work every now and then. I'd hang around in the lot and play in the oldest most derelict cars, the ones he couldn't seem to get rid of anyway, and I'd watch Dad scream his lungs off, whenever a potential customer went the "wrong", if you will, way around the fence and into the RIUS-lot.

*Question.*

Just insane stuff; like he had this thing where he'd jump onto the fence and hang there shaking it like a fucking deranged chimp, rattling the metal, shouting how the guy who owned the RIUS-lot was a no-good-for-nothing wife-stealer who also happened to sell exceptionally horrible cars that no man with half a fucking brain would ever want to et cetera et cetera.

*Question.*

Well Not-Dad would do the exact same routine whenever one went into the BAVA lot. Sticks and stones. I'm not going to sit here and assign blame.

*Question.*

She never came around. I haven't seen her since she walked out. He did bring Luke a whole bunch of times though. We'd play. In the beginning, we'd play. There was always this acute... weirdness about it. Playing with him. Like seeing yourself in a funhouse mirror that somehow made you just an eerily tiny bit prettier than you are. We had to stop when they put up the actual WALL — as in the brick wall.

*Question.*

They put it up in a moment of clarity I guess? Business had gone way downhill for both of them, what with all the shouting and fence-rattling and whathaveyou. It was sort of a necessity. They even split the bill.

*Question.*

Ah well so but it didn't stop there. Because after the wall, Dad got into this habit of sneaking into the RIUS-lot and greeting customers like he owned the place; he might as well could have, it's not like anybody could tell the difference.

So he'd sneak into the RIUS-lot and greet potential buyers and just do a hell of a good job at being the very worst salesman he could possibly be, to scare them off.

He'd make a show of keeping an open bottle of Jack on his person while talking to customers, luridly coming on to any female buyers slash wives slash children — this earned him a couple of impressive beatings that had



him just look an AWFUL lot like the kind of person you would not buy a car from — he would follow the buyer around the RIUS-lot going “oh heavens no, you wouldn’t want to buy THAT; two words: DEATH TRAPS” et cetera — until Not-Dad would finally spot him from inside the dealership and coming rushing it, swearing and screaming, effectively scaring off pretty much everybody.

Of course, after a week or so, Not-Dad would reciprocate by pulling the exact same kinds of stunts at the BAVA-lot and for a while there everything was absolutely, completely apeshit. Care for a drink?

*Question.*

Well Dad started getting up early in the morning to beat Not-Dad to work and lurk around Not-Dad’s lot, impersonating him. Not-Dad started doing the exact same thing. After a year or so, Dad would clock in at Not-Dad’s lot at seven in the morning and visa versa. After a year and a half, they’d pretty much swapped lots and spent most of their days scaring off the other’s half’s customers. They stopped selling cars over the course of a couple of months, in order to make sure the other didn’t sell any either.

*Question.*

Well they went bankrupt. Both of them, and spectacularly so.

*Question.*

And so Luke beat me to it, is the gist of my story. He wrote this entire thing down faster and much more eloquently than I found myself able to. And don’t think I did not try. I tried. The day I heard that he’d gotten published, I had two hundred and fifty type-written pages and was just about to finish up my own rendition.

*Question.*

Just another matter in which Luke Bavarius has proved to be that teeny, tiny bit better than me, I am afraid. He’s the genius, he’s the author. He’s the one with his god damed non-split face on the cover of dust-jackets everywhere. And so here we are. And here you are. Digging up the dirt for your fucking profile.

*Question.*

I don’t even fucking care. You think I haven’t told this story? Who *told* you this story? Was it Luke? Mr. Ehl Bee, mr. Writing-under-a-Pseudonym-to-be-artsy-Biddick, with his prodigious talent and his intense, *fucking* eyebrows that he probably picks like a bitch? Was it? It wasn’t. It was me. I want you to stand up, walk over to that bookshelf right there. Go ahead. Pull out his book. It’s right there. Don’t think I haven’t bought it. I’m not your average bitter fucking idiot. I have money to spend. Pull it out of the shelf and look at him, on the dust jacket. Monochrome and unsplit, brooding. Go ahead. It’s me.

Am I not the butt of a cruel, genealogical joke? My father abandoned by love. I myself abanoned by fate. You want horror? Look at his picture, then at me.

Do you not see this? Has the whole god forsaken world gone mad? I am telling you this story. I am the first incarnation of this story. Who is

this Luke Bavarius? Go head. Look at his picture. Look at this Davidesque, seemingly retouched rendition of yours truly. See all that is shared between us. Am I not the narrator? I am L. Bavarius. Do I not deserve recognition? Look at his face.

Pick it up. Go the fuck ahead.

## Chapter 76

# Little Men

By Zarimus

"It has happened again." moaned the dark clad priest, his rosary clenched in his left hand. With his right hand he held the old phone handset indicative of the respectable poverty of the church office. "Can you come right away?" Father Dennis almost sobbed into the phone.

Evidently what he heard comforted him and he hung up with a relieved laugh. He turned and smiled down at the silent young boy playing with some small figures in the corner of the room. Father Dennis stepped forward and patted the boy on the head in a friendly way. "Don't worry son, the detective will find out who brutally murdered your father and that man in the alley."

The boy did not look up, he was still playing with the small toys, little metal figurines of soldiers and knights and trolls he had been carrying in a small velvet purple bag ever since he and his mother had arrived at the church.

In a short while there was a knock at the door and Father Dennis rose to greet the gray coated figure who introduced himself as Detective Luke Bavarius. "The body is in the alley behind the church building." offered Father Dennis. "You remember Nick, Detective?" he said, pointing at the silent boy.

"Yes I do Father Dennis." said Luke Bavarius, gazing with intent at the boy. "Has he spoken yet?" "Not since his father was brutally torn apart, just like the man in the alley." Father Dennis faced the grim detective squarely. "Is it a serial killer?"

Detective Bavarius said grimly, "We don't know yet. Let me have a look at that body."

In the alleyway Luke nodded to the policeman guarding the crime scene. "Evening Bob. Know anything yet?"

The policeman shrugged. "Just that he died in a lot of blood. His arms ripped off." Luke raised an eyebrow in surprise. "Just like the boy's father."

Who was this guy?" The policeman didn't know, as it turned out. Detective Bavarious wondered if they'd ever find out who was responsible.

Back in the church office, the boy Nicholas carefully set down a small metal figurine that resembled a policeman. He then opened a tiny wooden box he took from his velvet bag and gazed silently at the two broken figurines it held. Both had their arms torn off. The boy picked up the policeman figurine and with a swift motion, tore off both arms.

From the alley behind the church, he could already hear the screaming.

**The End**

## Chapter 77

# For the Children

By CannedMacabre

Norma's Diner is a horrible place to get a cup of joe. The only reason I was there was to meet a mysterious client that had insisted on anonymity. He had reached me twice by phone in the past three weeks and only identified himself as Mr. M. I told him that I would only take the case if we met face to face. Mr. M contacted me again this morning by text message to say that we should meet here at Norma's at 10:30 sharp.

Its now 10:45.

I'm Luke Bavarious, Private Detective, and I don't take a case without knowing the client, and I don't like to wait.

The waitress pours me another cup of swill as I look over my notes on Mr. M's case. He says he is being stalked and that threatening messages are being sent to his e-mail and voice mail. He hints at the fact that some people are trying to blackmail him. He even casually ponders whether his life may be in danger. Its really not much to go on but with the clock ticking, I am beginning to wonder if someone might have already done the guy in.

Its 11:00.

The only reason that I haven't gotten up and walked out yet is that a manila envelope with five 100 dollar bills was slipped under my door this morning with the words "from M" on it. I figured that I would at least wait out the hour before going about my day. Maybe I will choke down another cup of the vomit they call coffee in this dump. As I raise the cracked mug to my mouth I hear the little bell on the door sound followed by a loud voice:

"HEY! What I tell you about those friggin skates in my restaurant?"

I turn to see a smallish kid with a stunned look on his face nearly crap himself. He has a giant book bag on his back and is wearing those shoes with the wheels in the heels. Heelers? Heelies?

"S-sorry mister, I forgot." He says sheepishly and hangs his head down in the embarrassment of all eyes being on him. He sits down at the table

across from me and takes out some school books and a notebook. The waitress brings him a cherry Coke and puts a hand on his shoulder for just a moment, then goes back to her cigarette burning at the counter.

Poor kid.

I look down at my watch for a second and notice that "M" is now a full hour late when I hear that sheepish little voice again.

"Sir, can I talk to you for a moment?" the kid is right next to me with his bag hanging half way off his shoulder.

"Uhhh...Listen kid..." I start to say some rhetorical crap about being a busy man or having some place to be, but something in my gut tells me that not enough grown ups have made time for this kid.

"You know what...Yeah. Sure kid, have a seat."

His eyes light up and he throws his bag into the seat next to me and grabs his Coke from the other table.

"You're a private dick, right?" The kid says.

"Uh...yeah, Detective." I respond.

"Cooooool, I wanna be a P.I. too when I grow up. You carry a gun?"

"Yeah, a Beretta, but it ain't all its cracked up to be. Sometimes you gotta deal with a lot of scumballs and sometimes you just can't help the people that hire you." I wasn't gonna BS the kid. If he was keen on getting into this line of work, he better know *exactly* what he was getting into.

"Besides, even if you do solve the case, you get the bad guy and he gets what is coming to him, it can leave a bad taste in your mouth."

He nodded a bit in agreement and turned his eyes down towards his drink. He was quiet for a moment and then suddenly he spoke in a voice that was not at all sheepish or meek:

"Detective Bavarious, Mr. M wont be joining you today." he said in a calm, controlled voice. "In fact, I doubt that Mr. M will be contacting you again at all." This statement chilled me to my bones and instinctively I lowered one hand under the table to the Beretta clipped to my belt.

I was all ears.

"You see, Det. Bavarious, Mr. M was being harassed, stalked and black-mailed. and I am the one who was doing these things to him." The kid's voice was deeper now, and I must admit that he commanded my attention as few others could.

"I targeted Mr. M for the crimes that he has committed against children. He is a child molester and a murderer and I wish to see him imprisoned for these crimes..."

"Wait," I interrupted. "A twelve year old kid has a man running so scared that he pays a private investigator to find out who is harassing him?"

"Det. Bavarious, my name is Nathaniel Stilling. On my twelfth birthday my father beat me within an inch of my life and I spent the next 4 months in a hospital. When I awoke from my coma I promised myself two things: I would protect innocent children from harm, and I would never have another birthday. That was 57 years ago."

I had no choice to believe him. From the beginning of our conversation I had felt that I was in the presence of a wiser, more virtuous man than myself. So when this kid, this small, sheepish child told me he is a 69 year old man... I believed him.

"Look son," he continued, "I know that you have the power to put this monster away." With that he pushed a DVD in an unmarked case across the table.

"I wouldn't get curious about what's on that disc if I were you. The things that man has done are not meant for our eyes." He slid out of his chair and grabbed his book bag.

"Oh... and Mr. M's real name is Michael Wilkinson. He is a biology teacher at Washington Junior High School. When you give the cops the disc, just tell them that it was given to you by another PI that knew who your client is."

The boy then gave himself a big push on one foot and skated towards the door on his heel wheel.

"Dammit kid! I'm gonna skin your hide!" The ape behind the counter screamed.

"S-sorry mister... I forgot again."

The End.





## Chapter 78

# The Cocoon: Part 1

By Ridgely\_Fan

This place was new.

My eyes took several seconds to adjust to the dim light, while I slowly drank in my surroundings. My head was throbbing, and my throat was parched. And it was cold in here. Very, very cold.

I seemed to be in some sort of dungeon, as comical and absurd as that sounds. Or the kind of thing an insane millionaire would build to approximate a dungeon. Instead of cold, damp stone walls, there were cold steel surfaces and unfinished concrete floors. Instead of a brazier in the hallway, the ambient lighting was set low. They got the stink right though, and of course the barred entryway that looked like the door of a jail cell.

I began going through my head, trying to figure out whom I'd pissed off enough to get myself into a place like this, when I heard a voice from a hidden loudspeaker.

"Well well Mr. Landon. I see you're awake. I hope you like your surroundings, you'll be here for some time."

"Who are you?" I shouted. My voice was harsh and raspy. "Why did you put me here?" I was on the verge of tears. If this was a prank or a trick, it was going way too far.

"My name is Bravarious. Luke Bravarious. It's my job to keep the good people of this city safe, and that means keeping horrid creatures like you locked up down here."

This had to be a joke. But if it was a joke, why go to such lengths? I put my hand to my forehead to think. There was something slick there. As I retracted my hand I saw it: blood. This crazy asshole must have knocked me unconscious to bring me here. The speaker started again:

"Don't worry Mr. Landon, your headache shall soon pass. Your kind heals quickly, even in your cocoon state. I can see you're confused. All shall become clear shortly."

This was some Silence of the Lambs shit. I remembered back to that movie, the FBI agent said it was smart to get the serial killer to recognize his victims as human. Maybe I can do something like that here...

"Mr. Bravarious, I can barely hear you through the speaker. Why don't you come down and talk to me through the bars? I'd like to talk man to man anyway."

There was some silence. He seemed to be thinking it over. After a short time (surprisingly short) I heard a familiar voice in the doorway.

"I don't see a problem with that."

## Chapter 79

# The Cocoon: Part 2

By Ridgely\_Fan

The man in the doorway was short and stocky. Pudgy even, though it was hard to tell in his trenchcoat. His hair was thinning, and had been clumsily combed to the side. His face shone from sweat or grease. This guy needed a bath. At least it gave me some idea of who I was dealing with.

"Mr. Bravarious, why did you take me here? Is this a joke? If it is, I'll keep it between just us guys, you got me good. Just let me go."

I hoped he couldn't hear the fear or despair in my voice.

"I can tell that you're scared Mr. Landon, but that fear too will pass, as you emerge from your cocoon."

This guy was crazy, but he was not going to be easy to manipulate. I know it's not a good idea to feed into the fantasy of a schizophrenic or crazy person, but I had to know what he was talking about.

"What do you mean cocoon? Is this some metaphorical thing?"

"Not exactly, Mr. Landon. You are one of an ancient race. A race that has hunted humans for millennia. A predator that acts like a parasite. Your kind leave its offspring in the form of a human for humans to raise. When that offspring reaches adulthood, it abandons its cocoon and emerges a hunter. Fast, powerful, unstoppable, and hungry.

"I'm saying that you are one of these offspring. In just a few weeks you will emerge. But instead of hunting humans, you will stay here. I have prepared food for you."

Bravarious pointed to a corner of the room, where I could now make out a pile of decaying meat scraps. That explained the cold and the stench. I wretched and nearly threw up.

"That's disgusting!"

Bravarious appeared calm. "I thought you liked uncooked meat."

"I like a rare steak, not a rotting pile!"

"So your transformation has not yet started."

It seemed like he had some twisted explanation for everything.

"How do you even know I'm one of these things?"

Bravarious started to look self-satisfied. Maybe I'd struck the right chord.

"It was a simple matter of checking the records at an orphanage where the last of your kind was known to feed. You had certain... traits. I confirmed these traits by watching you for the last two weeks. There is no uncertainty Mr. Landon, you are the monster I was assigned to capture."

I hadn't seen anyone following me. Who knows if he really had. It was just as likely that he was lying or had just imagined it.

Still, how did he know I was adopted? Did he know about my suicide attempts as a youth, about me dreaming of harming the others in the orphanage, my insane pleas for them to kill me? The years of therapy that my adopted parents paid for? How could he know? He spoke again before I could ask.

"Now Mr. Landon I have other duties to attend here. I must assume you'll be alright."

"No!"

I had to think of something quickly. I rubbed my forehead absentmindedly, breaking the scab that had formed there. Blood flowed anew. I had an idea.

"Mr. Bravarious, I haven't turned into one of these monsters yet. That means I'm still human. I'm human and I'm hurt, and I might die of thirst. Please just give me some water and some bandages before you go."

He appeared to think this over very carefully. "Very well, you cannot harm me in that state. I shall return shortly."

He was right, I couldn't hurt him. What was I going to do? I started feeling angry at my predicament, angry at this crazy bastard for locking me up. The anger dissolved my fear. I had to do something myself, I couldn't wait for the police or whoever.

I heard footsteps, and crept beside the doorway.

"Mr. Landon, I am leaving your supplies beside the do-"

Bravarious didn't get a chance to finish his sentence before I grabbed him through the bars. He struggled at first, but I put a stop to that by smashing his face into the door several times. An eye for an eye.

I found the key to the dungeon in his pocket. The maniac also had an old filthy Beretta, loaded and with the safety off.

As I let myself out and stepped into the hallway, I slid Bravarious into the room to take my place. I was feeling much better. The joy at my freedom, and my survival, was starting to cure my headache.

Just before I closed the door, I smelled the meat in the corner. I hadn't eaten for days. I started salivating. Looking down at Bravarious, I felt a new urge. An urge that was new to me and yet felt timeless. Prehistoric. This all made sense now. Yes, he was right, it would be several weeks before I emerged, but he didn't realize that before that came the hunger. I would need to feed before my transformation. And so feed I did.

## Chapter 80

# THE BLOOD GAME

By raptorred

Once there lived a maniacally demented hag. The kind of person whose cruelty made the blood run cold and the nose hairs stand on end. She made her dwelling in a blood-red house in suburbia, rife with infantile girly crap like odiferous flowers. And those stupid little porcelain cats which weren't even real cats so they didn't have blood or guts or anything in them. Also it was 1992.

Fortunately for her, there was one element in her dark life that kept her existence from being as miserable a waste as a Slip 'n' Slide in December: her perfect son, Luke. Luke was the age of a 12-year-old, with brown hair and searing obsidian eyes that were like pits down into his soul and his blood-filled innards. As sons go, Luke was practically the best. He sometimes took the trash out. And he hardly ever skipped school or beat up his stupid little sister until she cried and pooped her pants with grimy blossoms of baby turds which were sometimes reddish enough to pretend they were blood. But they weren't.

Luke hardly ever asked for anything. At least not unless he really really super duper wanted it. And every quivering droplet of blood in his body boiled with agonizing desire for a Sega Genesis with Sonic the Hedgehog 2. He wanted it so bad he could puke. Puke until he shrieked with the euphoric laughter brought on by true happiness. A happiness he would never know. Not if his scheming mother had her way.

"Honey, we can't afford it right now," Luke's mother hissed from her blood-red lips. "Maybe for Christmas."

But Luke was as clever as he was dashing. He could tell she didn't really care. She didn't even look up from the boring pieces of paper covering the kitchen table. She spent most of her time with those papyrus slips. Far more than she ever did with him. Luke had had enough.

"You will pay for your cruelty," he announced. His veins bulged with brutal wrath. Blood wrath.

"Lucas Theodore Bavarius! Go to your room!!" If he could have, he would have vomited blood in her ugly face. If you could call the grotesque mask of suburbia a face. But she was on the other side of the kitchen so he'd probably just get it all over the floor or something. So he went to his room.

In his room, Luke's eyes went dark, darker than the slick polish of a brand new 16-bit gaming machine that had his name on it. His heart contorted into something like a wad of coagulated bubble gum. Except it wasn't really that much like bubble gum, it was blacker and more pulsating and filled with the trembling sobs of jillions of powerless kids before him who had been denied justice. Also it probably would not have tasted like water-melons, which was Luke's favorite flavor. It would have tasted like blood.

Somewhere in Mobius, Sonic the Hedgehog heard his cry.

That night, Luke's mother went to bed. Nobody knew it, but she had a twisted secret that was vile and also murky. To get ready for bed, she took out a big secret pan of polish. The polish was made out of blood. She polished all of the skulls of little adopted boys who died because they were denied the latest in awesome gaming technology. She collected little boys like this for a long time in secret. It was because she was crazy and evil and liked breaking kids' spirits and tricking them into thinking she loved them. But Luke was smart. He already knew such a selfish blood creature couldn't be his real mom.

But when she got into her bed, she heard a sound. It was a strange sound. It sounded like buttons dribbling blood, only spookier. Then she heard another, even stranger sound. It was the ghostly wail of a Super Spin Dash, which was this awesome new move that they just put in the new Sonic game that lets you go up hills and stuff and any mom that wasn't pure evil would understand why her kid had to have it. If a kid didn't have something like that, the blood that coursed through his slimy organs would start shaking. And the blood was so angry and so filled with sorrowful hate that it would also turn into acid. Then his guts would get bigger and bigger like water balloons, only water balloons filled with blood instead of water. Until they exploded, spewing blood and guts and acid everywhere. Then the whole room would melt and the mom's stupid floral print wallpaper would be ruined.

That's what happened to those other boys.

"Who's there?" she asked, because she didn't know what a Super Spin Dash sounded like. If she were a good mom who bought her son stuff, she would know. Maybe it would have been enough to save her. She was so scared that a little bit of blood trickled out of her nose. It smelled like blood.

Then something see-through flickered in the darkness. It was like a whip, but really it was a cord attached to a controller. The controller was attached to a terrifyingly awesome ghost Sega Genesis. The ghost of the console that Luke should have owned.

Luke's mom tried to scream, but she was so scared that her blood started to gush into her throat. She gurgled on bloody vomit as two controllers (because Luke read in a magazine that Sonic 2 would have *two player mode* and it'd be more awesome than sliced blood and that was one of like a million reasons he had to have it or he would implode into a pile of bloody guts) thrashed out of the darkness and wound themselves around her neck. Then one controller started whipping her in the head. She started crying because it hurt. Then the controller started hitting her harder. She cried bloody tears this time because it hurt even more. They mixed with the bloody puke to make a sort of martini that was two parts blood, one part tears, one part vomit. And all parts terror.

Then she tried to tear the controller out of the socket. But the Sega Genesis is way too well made for a mere Mom to be able to destroy it. It laughed at her with ghost beeps as her skin started oozing blood for some reason that was really gross and scary. Then one controller wound itself around her feet. The other kept winding around her head. Her hair was full of blood and vomit and tears and spiders for some reason. The Sega Genesis pulled and pulled and pulled.

"Luke," his mom gasped, a trickle of vomit seeping from her hypothalamus. It made a gooey line in the blood that was rupturing from her pores. "I am so sorry."

But it was too late. The Sega Genesis pulled her whole body in half. Out of it fell a huge brick of hardened vomit-tear-blood that was shaped like the inside of her body. It was because she'd had so much vomit and blood and tears inside of her that it melted all of her guts and hardened into a shell. The shell was shaped exactly like a mean old mom. But the Sega Genesis wasn't finished.

A bell tolled in the distance. The siren for the Red Cross's Bloodmobile whistled in the night. And the shell started shifting. When Luke went into his mom's room the next day, there was no sign of her. Instead was a perfect Sega Genesis. Made entirely from hard blood.

From the depths of his mom's dark closet a voice echoed. A voice that sounded strangely like the Coolest Blue Dude with 'tude around:

*"Kids need to be listened to and respected."*

Suddenly, Tails was sobbing.





## Chapter 81

# It's just me, 'Luke'

By Lorentz Factor

I stepped from the shadows, those last shadows that were hastily escaping as the sun pours over the cityscape. I had awoken only moments ago, the sun's light entering my head like the scream of a newborn during a hangover. I could not remember what had happened. I was working on a case in the north end of the city, the details still not coming to me. I remember driving, perhaps I had an accident. I simply could not remember. Retrieving my shades from my breast pocket to halt the screaming rays of sunlight that were pounding at my spinning head, I noticed a door in side of the building I had found myself next to. I needed a place to sit while I waited off this pain in my skull.

Opening the door, I was greeted with soft music from the big beat band inside what appeared to be a small bar. Odd time for them to be playing, I thought, but, never mind. I sat down at a table near the door and grabbed the drink list. Interesting, they only seem to serve whiskey sours...fine by me, it's all I drink anyhow. After ordering, the bartender returned with my drink, I asked him, "Where exactly am I?" He chuckled, "It's only 11pm and you're already smashed," he continued his guffaws as he wandered back to his bar. Sipping my drink, something the bar tender had said bothered me. "11pm," but the sun had just come up; I checked my watch and it said nine thirty-eight. My watch breaking wasn't new to me, I get into rough spots quite often that my watch never makes it out of. I decided I needed to find my way back to the office.

As I left the bar it seemed that twilight was approaching. My car was nowhere to be found. I walked south on the street looking for anything that seemed familiar, when I came to an alley. Something about this alley. I still could not remember. I walked towards the opening between the two buildings to the alley. I heard a voice behind me, "Sir, I'm sure you don't want to go that way, won't you continue down the street?" It was a small

kid, a strangely dressed child. His pants were a grayish knee length trouser held up by thick suspenders that draped over his cotton shirt. His boots also were odd, laced up they met the short trousers leaving only an inch of bare skin between them. "Move along kid, I think this alley is important." I told him. "I'm thinkin' sir, you're going to be sorry," he was saying as he wandered off around an intersection.

After my short talk with the child, I realized the sun had already dropped behind the buildings to my west. I tried to get my bearings. I wandered into the alley and the pounding in my head had become so intense that my knees buckled. I tried to cry out in pain, though the intensity of it all left me with little strength and the sound escaped as more of a gurgle. The pain in my head retreated with the sun's last light. I slowly stood from the fetal ball I'd formed in my pain. As I was rising a light shown through the ingress of the alleyway. It looked like two headlights, they were bright and I turned away. A man approached I heard him shuffling through the broken stone of the ground in this ill kept thoroughfare.

"You there! What are you doing? Turn around!". These words, that voice. It all came back to me. "Beggin' your pardon, but... you don't want me to turn around," I told him. "Sure I do. I got a pistol pointed at your back so ya better." I knew what he was in for, I myself have seen this. It was my fault, it was his fault. If I kill him, I won't have to go through this again. "Okay, you asked for it," I told him as I approached still hanging to the shadows. He asked me to step out of the dark, what the hell. My life would end soon maybe I can stop this cycle here and now. As I approached the horror that twisted his face was intense. I doubt he recognized me, I hadn't myself at first. I rushed him, hoping to reach him before he fired his Beretta. I lunged as the first slug pierced my skull. Several more rounds pierced me, the pain offset by my wish to end this cyclic horror. Blackness was encroaching on my vision. Things began to swim. I tried to warn him, but I doubt he understood the wet blood filled, "I am you, I am Luke Bavarious...". I collided with him we smashed into a window. Everything went dark. My nightmare was over, but had also just begun.

## Chapter 82

# The Horrid Beginning of It All

By BatsBjorg

Eleven-year-old Luke Bavarious stood frozen in the doorway to his bedroom. He couldn't turn the light on. He wouldn't be able to turn it back off from his bed. But he couldn't get to his bed without the light on. He was in a real pickel.

"Dad!" Luke Bavarious yelled. Another year, another month maybe, and he'd be too old to yell for his daddy. But yell he did. "Dad?"

Luke Bavarious could hear the sounds of the Mets game from the living room. He could also hear the sound of another Coors popping open. His father's alcoholism had become publicly known sense his mother had left. Luke Bavarious thought his father was probably about halfway through his Coors consumption. The Coors consumption varied based on how poorly the Mets were playing, and right now they were on a hell of a skid. Luke Bavarious got a not-unwelcome rush from thinking the word "hell." Hell, hell, hell, he thought. Shit, hell.

"DAD?" One more time.

"GODDAMMIT Luke! What is it now. I toldja gota bed fiteen mints ago!" Maybe more than halfway through the night's Coors.

"C'mere a sec!" Luke Bavarious wouldn't tell Bartholomew Bavarious what he wanted until he came to the bedroom.

"Goddammit..." Luke Bavarious heard his father mumbling curses under his breath, heard his shuffling steps down the hallway, and then he was there. Luke Bavarious could smell the putrid stink of stale Coors and BO oozing from his father's pores. Or maybe his unwashed undershirt.

"Will you turn the light off for me after I get into bed?"

"Jayzus! Notiss shit 'gin!" Luke Bavarious watched, horridfied, as his father drunkenly reeled into the pitch black bedroom. His father wiggled

his ass at the closed closet doors. "Scareduh monshters? Monshter inna closet?"

Luke Bavariouus felt a thin stream of vomit rise up in his mouth, then burn his throat as he forced it back down. His voice cracked. "Dad, don't. Just... just.. get the light, wouldya?"

Bartholomew Bavariouus ignored his son. Or maybe didn't hear him over his own drunken whoops. "Monshter inna closET! Monshter inna closET!" He sang over and over, in a childish rhythm. Luke Bavariouus stood, unblinking, unbelieving in the doorway. He saw the closet doors rattle slightly.

"Dad!" His voice pitched upward, like a little girl's would. It was the last time in his life his voice would break like that. "Dad, seriously. That's not a good idea..."

"NOTTA GUDDEA? Oh fuck you, Luke Bavariouus." And with that, his father threw open the closet doors, completely unprepared for the horrid behind them.

Luke Bavariouus couldn't turn away. He saw a fountain of vomit bubble up and spew forth from his father's mouth, but he didn't notice his own vomit until later. It got all over his feet.

The horrid in the closet shot two tentacles out as fast as lightning. Bartholomew Bavariouus' eyes bulged, the Coors leaving his body in a flood of beer-scented piss that soaked into the carpet. The horrid's tentacles wrapped around Bartholomew Bavariouus' throat. Two more wrapped around his arms. A slimy, barbed tongue eased from the horrid's mouth. It slashed Bartholomew Bavariouus' face open, clear from one cheek to the other. Blood erupted from the face, mixing with the beer-piss in a rusty puddle.

"Oh dad!" Luke choked out. The horrid turned its horrid head for one horrid second. A glimmer of recognition flashed in its horrid eyes, but only for a horrid second. Then it unhinged its horrid, terrible jaws, vomiting forth a horrid stream of green, acidic vomit. Bartholomew Bavariouus' clothes started to steam and simmer. The last thing Luke Bavariouus saw were his father's eyes plucked out and eaten, first one, then the other.

A single tear rolled down Luke Bavariouus' cheek. Then suddenly, he was not sobbing. He knew what to do.

He sprinted to the bedroom his parents had once shared, back before the Coors and the publicly known alcoholism. He took his father's Beretta from the nightstand, relishing the feel of it in his small hand. It was cool, in every meaning of the word. A shock of what he would later know as desire prickled at his belly. He raised the Beretta, testing it. He grabbed ammo and shoved the gun in the waistband of his pants.

From the bedroom that was once his, he heard slurping sounds. He decided to take the shoes he'd left by the front door instead of his favorite sneakers. Now that he thought about it, those were kids' shoes anyway, and Luke Bavariouus was a man.

*\*\*Quick edit to fix an unintentional typo\*\**

## Chapter 83

# The Sack of Horrors

By Twigand Berries

I polished off another set of ten and felt that good, deep burn. I sat up from the bench and flexed, noting with pride the hills and valleys of my bulging musculature. My sweat caused my sleeveless shirt to stick to my body, and I thought to myself, "Damn, Luke. You look good." That's right. My name is Luke Bavarious and I am a private detective.

And let me tell you, smacking punks and thugs around, you need to be in great shape. And when I'm not cracking the skulls of dopers and adulterers, I hit the gym, pump some iron, and sculpt my body into a machine.

I couldn't very well meet up with my clients covered in sweat, so like always, I hit the showers to clean up. As I approached my locker, filled with my fitted suit, trenchcoat, and my Beretta snuggled in its holster, my eyes were literally destroyed by a sight that plagues my visits to this mostly holy Temple of the Body. Sure enough, some old man was standing at the sink, shaving, completely buck naked.

His wrinkly body sagged in every place imaginable. Hair sprouted from various places hair should probably not sprout from. His skin was covered in spots and possibly sores. What he does at the gym is a complete mystery, as his flabby body and gigantic swollen stomach betrayed no evidence of any cardio or properly balanced muscle training whatsoever. But the worst was his balls. His old, wrinkly, sack hanging down from his groin farther than it would seem humanly possible. I almost vomited all over the changing room floor.

I grabbed my towel and hit the showers, this monstrous image burned into my brain. As the water steamed off my red, ripped body I tried to come up with a reason why these old men would ruin my work out in this way. I come here to feel good and make myself into a god, but every day I am assailed by these geriatric sacks of downward flowing flesh, and am constantly reminded where we are all headed. I scrubbed myself down,

lingering my gaze over my own perfection, to banish thoughts of old, naked balls out of my head. I needed a drink.

Instead of heading to my office and checking my messages for new cases to crack, I headed down to my local pub hoping some old friends would have the same idea. Sure enough, Brad and Hooksey were draining some pints, and I sidled up to the bar next to them. My mind was still spastic over the horrors from the gym, so I broached the topic to my friends.

"Brad, Hooksey...you guys work out, it shows by the way, and I'm wondering if you two encounter the same problem as I do," I said.

"Do tell, Luke." Brad leaned in, interested.

"Yes, Mr. Bavarius. I love your stories!" Hooksey exclaimed, excitedly.

"Well, friends, you know how after you burn through your reps and it's time to clean yourself up, you go for a shower, right?" I asked.

"Always." Brad said.

"I like to shower." Hooksey replied.

"Well, why is it that every time you go into the locker room, there is some disgusting old man doing stuff naked? Like, I know you have to change your clothes in there, and there will be a point where you're naked, but these old guys are ridiculous. They get naked, and then it seems like they don't want to get dressed again. They stand around talking. They shave. They comb their wispy hair. They spend more time naked in the locker room than they do exercising I bet! And here I am trying to perfect my body, and I have to gaze upon these leathery sacks of fat!" I explained!

"It makes me want to punch their faces off," Brad agreed.

"I think I will vomit my puke up just thinking about their disgusting naked bodies," Hooksey chimed in.

Now, while I was telling this story, some young, scrawny punk came into the bar trying to sell some candy bars for the Girl Scouts or something and he overheard the whole thing. This punk felt the need to chime in.

"I don't know you gentlemen, but I couldn't help but overhear what you are discussing. I think you should be ashamed of yourselves talking about the elderly in this manner. They are deserving of your respect. They won World War II so you can be free, and shame on you for talking about them this way," the punk admonished.

"Hey, now..." Brad exclaimed!

"There are old germans!" Hooksey rebutted.

My friends were red in the face at the nerve of this punk, but I knew how to end this argument. I slid off my bar stool, and turned to the punk. He looked up at me with fear in his eyes, and I casually opened up my trenchcoat. His eyes wandered down past my ripped pecs and spied the Beretta casually hanging out in its holster. The blood left the punk's face and he ran on out of the bar, urine soaking his trousers.

"Hahahahahaha," Brad laughed.

"Hahahahahhaa," Hooksey laughed.

I smiled, and turned back to my beer, thoughts of disgusting flabby old ass gone for the evening.

\* \* \*

The next day I awoke with the urge to pump some iron again. I hurried down to my gym and entered the locker room to change into my work out clothes. As I was squeezing into my sleeveless tee, I looked towards the sink.

You guessed it. Just standing there, naked, in front of a full length mirror was the most disgusting specimen of humanity you could ever encounter. I would regale you with details of his mottled, paper thin skin, or his liver spotted, veiny scalp, or even how his biceps swung in the breeze, but it all pales in comparison to the most disgusting old man balls I have ever seen.

I stood like a deer in headlights staring at this inverted mushroom hanging for kilometers beneath an enormous, hanging gut. The gray, crispy thicket that it sprouted from. The scraggly forest of pubes that grew to ungodly lengths off the wrinkly, vein covered surface. The swirl of reds and purples that colored its sagging surface. The bumps and grooves. It was awful.

I was transfixed in my disgust. But slowly I got a hold of myself and my eyes raised from his lower regions, over his disgusting flabby body, and onto his wrinkly face in the mirror. And to my horror, his eyes matched mine in the mirror. He was watching me watch him!

And he smiled. A gap toothed smile framed in crusted lips.

I ran from there. I entered the gym proper, fighting back vomit and the desire to unload my Beretta into his nasty, smiling food hole.

The only way to recover from this was to focus every fiber of my being into my workout. And I racked up an obscene amount of weight onto the bar and reclined onto the bench. Screw warming up. I was going to pump that disgusting image right out of my mind with the sweet burn of my muscles pounding out ten reps of my maximum benchpress.

I hefted the bar off the cradle, balancing the weight between my two pistons of might. I closed my eyes, and began to work my way into the set.

**One.**

The bar was lowered to my chest and I shot it back up with a groan.

**Two.**

My blood raced into my chest and arms, filling me with energy and purging weakness.

**Three.**

The burn began. It felt magnificent.

**Four.**

I began to imagine the bar was some punk who dared to pull a gun on me. And I was shoving his punk face off a cliff.

**Five.**

I could feel the muscles in my biceps and triceps begin to quiver with sweet burn.

**Six.**

Maybe the punk was that punk from the bar. That punk who likes old guy balls. Heh.

**Seven.**

A warmth spread across my upper body as I heaved the bar up and down, bringing it within a centimeter of my chest.

**Eight.**

Images of disgusting balls were burned from my mind as I imagined that punk kid being riddled with bullets, bursting from his back in miniature explosions of flesh.

**Nine.**

As I crested my ninth rep, suddenly the bar seemed to become twice, no, ten times as heavy! I locked my elbows and gasped. It was unbelievable! My elbows gave out and my arms began to shake as the bar began to lower to my chest. I opened my eyes and looked up.

I moaned in horror! It was impossible!

The bar was still there with the normal amount of weight on either end. But between my gripping fists, in the exact center of the bar, hung what could only be the **THE SAME PAIR OF BALLS THAT PREVIOUSLY HAD BEEN ATTACHED TO THAT OLD MAN!**

And for the love of god, they weighed a ton! In fact, the weight was so much that the bar was slowly being lowered down to my chest! I stared in terror at this unholy scrotum that hung from the bar just inches from my chest. It was all there. The unexplained bumps. The crispy gray pubes. The mottled coloring. Oh my god! There was a sore on the underside of one of its orbs! As my arms shook and slowly lost control of this tremendous weight, I stared at pulsating veins that throbbed in a spiderweb encasing the two misshapened testicles that were contained within its leathery pouch.

My arms began to feel a million miles away. The numbness spread along my humerus, over my clavicles, and into my quivering chest. Sweat began to pour off me in sheets. I heard a distant mewling sound, and realized it was me.

The balls slowly descended. When they were inches from my chest, the impossibly long gray pubes tickling and entwining with my own chest hair, I saw a bead of brackish sweat appear from the patch of hair that was located at the join of this evil ball sack and the bar. It came as if from hell. It slowly tracked its way down the elongated skin pouch, over wrinkles and around encrusted follicles. As it beaded at the bottom of one hellish testicle, I began to scream wildly for help.

Tears sprang forth from my eyes, and I felt all strength fade from me. The bar swiftly began lowering, and I knew my chest was going to be crushed and my unblemished skin covered in sweaty old meat sack. My life flashed before my eyes, and I realized my beautifully sculpted body was about to be defiled for all time.

"You need a spot, young man?" came a voice from heaven.

"God yes!" I pleaded. And suddenly the crushing weight was lifted off me. I began to sob in relief. My body was broken. I pulled myself up to a sitting position and gazed up at my savior.



It was the old man! He stood there, dressed now in ridiculous shorts and v-neck white t-shirt, wiping his hands after racking the devil bar. How could this be? I stared at the weight bar that had almost killed me, and low and behold, the satanic ball sack still dangled from its length.

My fury gave me strength again! I leaped from the bench and grabbed the old man, screaming "You bastard! Why would you crush me with your balls? I'll kill you!" His face whitened in surprise and fear.

"What are you talking about, son?" he stammered.

I pointed at his dirty nut sack hanging from the bar. "Fiend! You almost crushed my ribs! You tried to dirty me with your geriatric filth!"

"I don't know what you are talking about!" the old man lied.

"Trying to trick me, huh? I'll show you!" I screamed.

At this point a crowd had gathered, curious as to what the altercation was about. I had to prove to them that this evil thing was the source of the sack of horrors hanging from my bar. I reached down and pulled his filthy shorts down and stood back, pointing to where his groin was missing its satchel of bulbous evil!

The crowd gasped, and I smiled in triumph as I turned to face the old man. My smile quickly left my face, for, suddenly, the scrotum of Hell had reappeared in their proper disgusting place. I quickly turned to the bar, and sure enough, it was no longer encumbered with its evil payload.

The crowd turned on me. No one would believe the horrors I had endured. I was thrown out from the gym, and, in my crushing defeat by the horrors of Hell, **they did not refund my membership deposit!**

The end.



## Chapter 84

# Kindness of Strangers

By Helmet

Luke Bavarious was driving his squad car on Old Pine Road. A little while ago, he had given an important lecture on drug abuse at the local Middle School. Then he saw it: a black car parked in a field where cars had no business being. He stopped. He walked over to investigate. The black car had crashed into a huge, unforgiving pine tree! Pine cones littered the ground like corpses after a massacre. From the shadowy wreckage emitted a small voice. A child's voice. "Help me-e," it begged.

Under his bullet-proof vest, Luke felt his guts tie in a series of knots, each more complicated and painful than the last. "Dear God, not a child," he whispered. Around the car a moat was forming of gasoline, battery acid and blood. Luke Bavarious blinked back tears and inched forward.

Inside the car was a man, dead at the wheel. An empty whiskey bottle sat in the cup holder. Blood was everywhere. During impact, the steering wheel had pushed through the man's mouth, decapitated his tongue and snapped his spine like a #2 pencil. Luke looked away to keep from vomiting forth the complimentary meal he had received in the school cafeteria.

That's when Luke noticed the boy buckled in the back seat. Possibly a seventh-grader, judging by his size. "Dad, are you okay? I told you not to drive drunk," the boy said.

Luke stared. Perspiration sweated from his face. The boy's eyes were gone, long gone, having catapulted from their sockets by the car's sudden stop and the tendency of objects in motion to stay in motion. The boy wept tears of blood from his disfigured face. Luke now observed two splattered milky blobs oozing down the front windshield like two unholy eggs from the bowels of Hell.

Afflicted with overwhelming instant insanity, Luke placed his Beretta to his own temple and pulled the trigger. Nothing happened! He looked at his firearm and realized the safety was on. Bavarious giggled madly and flicked

the safety off, then common sense returned to his disturbed mind. "Poor little fella," he muttered between clenched teeth.

"Is somebody there?" the boy asked. "Will you h-help me?"

Luke fired one bullet, doing the job.

## Chapter 85

# Creature Of The Night

By invision

Bavarious. Luke Bavarious. I'm a detective. I carry a baretta. A baretta so powerful only one man can handle it. And that man's name is Bavarious.

Luke Bavarious opened the door to exit the doughnut shop when he heard it. Or at least he thought he heard it. He thought he was hearing things again. Or was he thinking that he was thinking that he was hearing things again? He glanced down the dark alley to his right. He was definitely not thinking he was hearing things. The creature exploded forth from his midnight fortress of cardboard boxes oozing with the sludge from the rain soaked streets. The creature exploded towards Luke Bavarious. The creature was vomiting tears from its neck.

Luke Bavarious calmy took a drag from his Lucky Strike cigarette, then flicked it lazily, as if patting a dog on the head. He then drew his baretta. He aimed it. He slowly squeezed the trigger as one would squeeze a small centipede or other insignificant animal. The shots rang out through the night, with the force of a jackhammer shredding through the creatures skull. The creature stopped dead in its tracks and slowly fell to its knees. It fell from its knees to its belly, all the while vomiting from every available creature orifice it could muster.

Luke took a swig from his flask of EverClear 100alcohol hidden inside his duster. He placed the flask back inside his duster. He vomited. He approached the creature...

"Oh no. Oh God, NO!"

It was grandma.



## Chapter 86

# The Book

By Scissorfighter

Trent Fencer was a bully... He liked most to bully children. He hated all children. Even little Timmy

Ontario. What Trent didn't know was Timmy had found a book. A horrid book. Timmy was angry one morning and decided to walk around to clear some steam. He found the book poking out from under the stairs of the house that he had moved into as his parents had boughten it recently at an auction for houses that had to be put up for sale due to the owner of the house having recently been murdered in the house. It was a horrid house.

The book had leathery bindings and a faint smell of some body-emitted liquid he couldn't quite recall. He thought briefly of pus or urine but decided that wasn't quite it. He then remembered that he was angry. He angrily threw open the cover and looked at the writing. It was in Latin so entirely hieroglyphic, but he saw pictures of instructions... Instructions on how to raise the dead. It didn't take long before he thought of Trent Fencer and felt angry. He was angry with Trent because Trent loved all of his friends and hated only him.

Trent Fencer was walking outside some houses early one morning. He had gotten a message from his girlfriend Trish. Or so he had thought! It said:

"Hi Trent. Meet me in the graveyard. I'm horny, can you please ravage my hot body with sex?"

Trent high-fived himself immediately after reading it and quickly put his feet into a pattern of motion that would carry him to his destination. He was happy to receive that letter. He had built up a lot of power. Nuclear power, figuratively, where in this metaphor his father was the nuclear power plant. His dad told him before he left that his pants were too low and he should mow the lawn. With every complaint or chore request, Trent got more and more charged. His uranium was nearly at full capacity and he needed to

pump out some electricity to the general populous.

He got there and turned his eye-muscles to gaze around at the landscape. No Trish, only Timmy. Only Timmy and a book that sent chills deep down into his spinal discs and lodged there. Horrid book or no, he felt he could find another way to distribute power, so to speak. His feet had already moved him up to in front of Timmy's face and he barely noticed. His fist coiled back like a cobra then launched forward like the challenger shuttle, exploding on Timmy's cheek. Timmy's eyelids exploded open in a shocked expression, while his neck exploded out in veins and his mouth exploded in a red stream of blood.

"What is this book? Why are you bleeding red?" Trent asked. "Wait a minute, red is the color of satan..." His brain had started figuring out the vicious plot that had fallen onto him. Timmy no longer looked painfilled and merely stepped back, revealing a circle that Trent was standing in. Timmy then chanted the hieroglyphics carefully. It was suddenly a dark and stormy night. Thunder ripped through the sky like an explosion. The ground rumbled and out came a putrid hand. The hand grabbed Trent's leg. The hand then moved up further to his thigh and then revealed it was connected to a putrid head. The head came from the dirt, the very embodiment of the word "horrid." Its eyes were sharp and glaring, its pores were wide open, its earlobes had bulging lumps, and it was missing an eye.

It had finally stood up from its grave. On its chest was a shiny badge with the name "Bavarius" featured on it. It looked up at Trent and Trent screamed. Trent stood there, paralyzed and screaming. Timmy kept shouting orders from the ancient book. The water then forced the book to slip from his hand. He bent down to pick it up then picked it up and held it back up. He took one sniff of the cover and suddenly knew what the smell was from before. He dropped the book in horror.

"OH MY GOD!" Timmy screamed. "The smell... it smells of vomit." With this sudden revelation, he knew what was next. The Bavarius thing turned around as he knew it would. It stepped up to Timmy, its hands raised. As Timmy's dismembered head was flying through the air, his last thought was that revenge is morally wrong and often hurts the revenger more than the revengee, and it's best to take the high road in all conflicts.



## Chapter 87

# The Journey

By January

The name's Luke Bavarius, private detective. I've seen some gruesome things in my time. Enough to make a man vomit blood. That's why I carry a loaded Beretta. Ready to deal expedient death to a sucker that needs it, or any misshapen foe. But one morning in 1991, I stumbled into a tragedy that wouldn't be brought to such an easy conclusion.

It was a seemingly ordinary day. I turned on the TV as I ate my breakfast. I usually checked the news for the violent crime du jour, but I wasn't in the mood. I left the television dial to linger on a children's program, an animated story called "The Journey".

A young man decided to go on an expedition to a foreign land. He selected a group of friends and relatives to join him. The young visionary's face shone with pride as the preparations began. Loved ones provided plenty of supplies and all the financial things for the trip. A celebration was held when the group was ready to set out.

But some time into the journey, misery befell the adventuring party. Everyone developed a horrid sickness, the likes of which none had ever seen. Their eyes sunk into their heads as their frames grew gaunt and skeletal. Still, they pushed on. It was too far to turn back.

As they trudged onward, their skin thinned and the color diminished to putrid green. Pustules developed, swelled, and exploded like liquid land-mines, coating them in moist blankets of rust colored blood. In the end, every one of them drank of the bitter mercy of death, as they were reduced to nothing but fetid corpses.

When the story came to its revolting conclusion, I vomited a fountain of spew, transforming my breakfast cereal into a despicable acidic cocktail. I couldn't explain the severity of my reaction. But what were they airing on TV? This looked like a chapter from the work of a deviant mind — a day in the life of Luke Bavarius, perhaps — not a children's show.

I grabbed a Coors to soothe my throbbing nerves before work. I was already late. As I drove, I started to question whether the events of the morning had really happened. Maybe it had been a dream.

When I drove past City Hall, I was surprised to see a large gathering. Something told me I needed to investigate this instead of continuing to my office. I pushed my way through the crowd to enter the doors. All around, the atmosphere was one of revelry. A young man was giving a speech. Banners waved, and well-wishers cheered.

It was the same man from the story I had just seen! My mouth dropped open like a gaping black hole as I pondered his cruel fate. Immediately my veins pulsed and pounded, popping instinctually out of my neck!

I noticed one young lady whose silence was telling. Far removed from the merriment, she seemed as out of place as I. Tears trickled from her bloodshot eyes. I had to ask. "Who is that young man?"

"He's my brother," she said.

"He's going to die and take others with him!" I exclaimed. "His plan is foolishness! We must stop him!"

She did not respond. Her expression was of resignation.

"I must act if no one else will," I thought. "Better one bloody mess than many." I drew my Beretta and aimed it at the young man to make the fatal shot. At the sight of my weapon, the sister heaved violently. Vomitus sprayed all over my pants and on my Beretta. I hesitated.

"Don't," the girl sobbed. "I already tried to convince them not to go, but no one will listen. If you kill my brother, they'll probably go anyway. We just have to let it happen."

I felt the questions frozen in my mind like impending doom. "How do you know this? How do you know they will die?"

Tears cascading down her pale cheeks, she looked me in the eye. I knew the true meaning of hopelessness when she replied...

"I saw it on TV."

## Chapter 88

# Shiny Toy Gun

By katiekawail

I am a man. Some may call me a beast. I am also a detective. Detective Luke Bavarious. I wasn't always a man. I used to be a young boy. Carefree. But not for long.

It was said that when my mother gave birth I came out screaming. I was just like that. Maybe it was a predictor of things to come. Maybe. I got my first toy gun when I was nine. It was shiny plastic, a Beretta. Fit in my hand like a glove. Like a glove fits over a hand, that's how it fit in my hand. My mom didn't want me to have it. It was my dad's idea. My drunken father. He always came home late at night reeking of horrid vomit. He wanted me to be tough. Tough like him.

I was always being bullied. A sixth grader, Max Attica. I told the principal, but she didn't care. Sometimes it seemed like no one did. My dad told me not to be so weak. He yelled at me one night, "Don't be so weak!" he yelled. As he said it I could smell the horrid stench of vomit and the stiff gin and tonics he always drank. Hold the tonic. It made me want to puke. I could see his neck exploding as his veins strained against the skin with every syllable. "You gonna let that Max Attica push you 'round, boy?"

"N-n-o S-s-ir," I stammered as I sobbed and cried and held down my vomit. My father's vomit, which had been given to me with the breathing of each horrid vomit- and gin-soaked breath.

No, sir. Now I had my Beretta. It was just a toy, but I could pretend. I had a good imagination. I took it to school with me in my dark black backpack. Even then I favored the dark shade of the night that would later be my beat in the city. It was 1953. Back then nobody cared if a boy played with a toy gun at school back then. Things are different now. I'm why things are different.

It was a dark and cloudy day, the sun forced into shadow by the ominous clouds overhead. Max's classroom was across from mine, and as the bell

rang and we filed inside he looked at me and made the gesture children make to make a threat. A finger drawn slowly across the neck. I imagined the blood gushing out of my neck in a giant waterfall. He meant business.

I told the teacher, but like all grown-ups she didn't listen. Nobody listened. This was my fight and mine alone. So I made it mine. We came out of the classrooms for lunch. Our eyes met across the hall. Eyes are the windows to the soul. Mine were black. He came towards me with his hand twisted into a grotesque fist. I pulled out my toy Beretta and aimed for his face, which was twisted with hatred. He laughed. I pulled the trigger. There was a loud sound, and Max's shirt turned rust. A real bullet. That's impossible.

Suddenly, I was screaming.

## Chapter 89

# The Monsters in the Night

By rinski

Some would say I have seen it all. They luckily don't know the half of it. I have both seen it all and then I have additionally seen some more things. Unspeakably horrible things. Things that would shatter your mind like a car wreck. For me, it's just part of the job. You see, I am a monster hunter. The name's Luke Bavarius. And I love my job. Because I hate monsters.

I was at my office desk. I poured a cup of dark coffee. I accidentally burned the coffee, making my office smelled like a raging inferno. I drank the acrid blackness anyway. It tasted like a punch in the throat. But it's pungency and aroma would keep me awake. Awake through a night as black as coffee itself. I needed it: I felt tired and dizzy for some reason. I put my feet up on the desk. I took another sip of bitter liquid. Then the phone rang.

My son's voice echoed through the cold, lifeless plastic of the phone's receiver. I have three sons. They are volunteer fire fighters. Usually they can't make calls while volunteering. The call was therefore perplexing.

"Dad? Dad, you are in terrible danger!"

"Terrible danger? Me?" I scoffed at his insinuation.

"Son, don't you understand? I have seen it all. What dangerous fate could possibly surprise me?"

Before anything else could even happen, a smash caught my awareness. A window vomited glass fragments from its mahogany frame. A terrible entity was intruding through a now-broken window! Glass hit the ground like shells from my Baretta. Speaking of which, I withdrew my steel companion from its sheath. Time to investigate.

The commotion was caused by a horrid foe indeed. It was a seething mass of tentacles attached to a pair of sickening butterfly wings. Parts of it glowed like certain eels can glow.

"Son? I'm gonna have to put you on hold!" I predicted, stabbing the "hold" button with my left index finger. I unholstered out my Baretta and flicked off the safety because there was nothing safe about the situation.

Before the fight had begun, it was over. A mere twenty bullets reduced the monster to a twitching heap of calamari. The bullet-riddled monster could have made swiss cheese jealous. An acrid stench filled the office. The stinks of vomit and blood and putrid smoke and diherria mingled in an unholy potpurri. Its pungency induced nausea. My eyes watered protective tears. The atmosphere of my office was now more stench than oxygen, making respiration difficult.

I coughed. I holstered my Baretta in its sheath. I picked up the phone.

"Dad, you have got to get out of your office because you are in terrible danger!"

SMASH! Another creature erupted into my office. The window atomized. Glass fragments splashed the floor like razor sharp raindrops.

"I appreciate your concern, son. But your ol' D-A-D can handle a few monsters. I am a monster hunter by trade. And the hunt is on." I hung up the phone with confidence.

This monster was no ordinary panther. It was covered in poison quills that rustled like amber waves of death. Its face was that of the common fly. Its arms were like a nefarious—suddenly, the beast attacked, interrupting my mental registration of its descriptive traits. No matter. My index finger instinctively triggered the Beretta's firing mechanism. A steel barrage sonic boomed towards the fiend. Soon it was just another lifeless object clattering up my office floor. Blood gushed from its wounds like a Nile River of rusty fluid, courtesy of Luke Bavarius.

The stench staggered. I coughed, gritting back vomit.

Suddenly, a cacophony of smashes erupted. My remaining windows exploded in a crystalline supernova. The air was thick with a dangerous confetti of glass shards and monsters. Eight more monsters had broken in, causing this turmoil.

"My property value has gone 'out the window.'" I said with gallows humor.

The odor elevated to a living nightmare about burning corpses. It consumed my senses. I vomited. Twice. Some came out my nose. My eyes burned. Tears stained my face with anguish and despair. I faced my impending annihilation with eternal sadness and morbid frustration.

"N-N-NOOOO-O!" I puked out sobs and some of the coffee from before. I shot blindly, managing to kill one last monster. The remainder closed on me like a curtain of death. Knowing I was done for, I vomited one last time. Then passed out.

I awoke later with a start in a hospital. I coughed. The cough tasted like ash and my mouth felt like a chimney. I called to a nurse, "Nurse what is going on?"

"I don't know how to tell you this, Luke... but there was a fire in your office. You inhaled the smoke and hallucinated. Your son called to warn

you, but by that point you were virtually insane from fumes. Your other two sons were the first ones on the scene. You..."

Suddenly, she was sobbing. I sobbed too. For I had known all along.

"Y-you murd-ordered th-them with-with your Barett-etta. Then your third son showed up with more firefighters and you killed him too."

I thought I had seen it all. But none of the horrid monstrosities I had seen could have prepared me. Not for this. Not for a realization that hit me like the weight of a neutron star full of freight trains that were carrying my murdered sons. I was the only monster in this tale.

When I heard the news, my mind shattered like a car wreck. And I screamed and screamed and screamed...





## Chapter 90

# The Screw That Turned

By BigSkillet

"...and his little heart, dispossessed, had stopped," said a man in a powdered wig that was reading a story to a group of people. Everyone else in the group was scared except for one, and he stood up.

"That story sucked and the ghosts were gay," said the standing man, who took a badge from his coat and showed it to the storyteller. It read 'Luke Bavarious, P.I. PhD.'

"I should arrest you for being so boring," he said, drawing his gun and aiming it at the storyteller.

"Oh bother, please don't, old chap," said the storyteller, who was British. "It isn't my fault, it's a true story and it really happened that way. And it all happened in this very same house on this day ten years ago!"

When he said that everybody else got scared because it meant they were in a haunted house, but not Luke Bavarious. He just grinned and put a cigarette in his mouth.

"You all stay here, I can handle this. I can arrest those ghosts, and I'll show them the letter of the law the hard way."

"Oh Luke, you're so brave," said one of the ladies who was sitting in the room.

Luke Bavarious fired his gun into the air and then lit his cigarette on the still-hot barrel. "It's all in a day's work, ma'am," he said, "and I like my work." With that, he left the room.

Luke Bavarious walked down the hallway with his gun drawn. The hall was dark with shadows, but his glowing cigarette gave him all the light he needed. Suddenly, outside of a window, he saw a shape. Luke recognized it as a man, but the hallway was on the third floor. There was nothing outside for him to stand on except the darkness. It was one of the ghosts that the storyteller had warned him about.

"Stop where you are!" said Luke Bavarious, aiming his gun at the window. The ghost stayed outside the window, an evil glimmer in his ghostly British eyes.

"Put your hands up. You're under arrest for haunting this house and I think you molested a kid in that story," Luke continued, but the ghost ignored his order. Luke fired at the ghost, two bullets shattering the window with a thunderous crash. When the smoke cleared, the ghost had vanished.

Suddenly, he turned, and at the end of the hallway was another ghost. It was smaller but still British, and Luke recognized it as the ghost of the boy that had died.

"I've defeated the ghost that killed you, there's nothing to be afraid of now," Luke said, approaching the boy.

"Please don't feel that I've been bad," said the boy. Luke stopped and aimed his gun at the boy because his sixth sense told him it was a trick. "I had no intent to harm when I stole that letter."

"You're under arrest for stealing," Luke said. Two shells hit the floor as he fired into the boy's ghost. When he went to inspect the boy ghost's body he found a letter in his hand. It said: "To my dearest Luke. Please forgive me my son. Sincerely, the ghost."

Luke Bavarious dropped the letter and screamed as he felt his heart stop from the true horror that was his fate all along.

## Chapter 91

# A Red Sky at Night

By HastyDeparture

The sun slowly sinks in the sky, an orange halo telling of the the morrow's forecast. The forecast is always the same.

The forecast never changes, not for me, at least. Every day, I rise with the sun, and step out the door of my small ranch-style home as the sun clears the trees of my small suburban neighborhood. Every day, I grab a large, black coffee and the morning paper from the gas station on the corner. Every day, I park my black and white in the side lot of Lakeview Central High School. Every day, I sit down at my desk as Connie waltzes in the door, says, "morning, Officer Bavarious", and moseys on over to the copy machine.

My name is Luke Bavarious, and I am a School Resource Officer. I'm a cop in a high school. I wear a badge, I carry a Beretta, and I don't take shit from anyone, especially not people half my size.

They said that the regular doughnut-munchers weren't close enough to the people, not tied-in with the community, and unfamiliar with the hooligans in our fair town. They said that we needed someone to fill that role, to keep tabs on the kids, to keep our children in school and out of trouble. That's where I come in. I deal with the kids who have a streak, and who, without help, are likely to become the next generation of scum that plagues our streets. I keep the peace; I enforce the law.

I know all the bad seeds, the troubled families, the broken homes. I get to know them, I lend them a hand, and I set them straight. I know them all like family. So when a young voice says "hey, Officer B" as I'm looking out the window at the setting sun, it's no surprise that I know who it is before I turn to face the teenage boy in a hoodie and baggy jeans.

"Hello, Marcus. How was your day today? You go to class?"

"Of course, Officer B. You know me."

"I know I know you. That's why I'm asking. You go to every one?"

"Yes, Officer."

Marcus was a good kid with a bad streak. I've known him since he moved here his freshman year of high school. He moved out of a trailer park with his mom and younger sister to avoid their drunken, estranged husband. A rough upbringing; not uncommon. He's got a record like many of the others I've helped, ranging from little things like skipped classes and tardiness to a few more serious infractions involving alcohol and marijuana. The same old, tired shit. But he's been getting better.

"That's good, kiddo. That's good. You heading home? You know nobody's supposed to be in the school this late. You gotta study for those tests next week."

"Well, you see... I was wondering if you could, uh... come look at something."

"What is it? You getting into trouble again?"

"I don't know, Officer B. That's what I want you come see."

I look back out at the flaming ball in the sky, and remember that even though my day is coming to a close, my job never ends.

"OK, Marcus. Show me." He nods solemnly. We walk out the door of my office.

In silence, he leads me down the hall to the right, and up the stairs to the second floor. We make a left, and start down the next hallway. Marcus jogs ahead, and stops when he gets to the boys' bathroom halfway down on the left. "In here," he mumbles, almost inaudibly. He goes in.

I step up to the door, held open from the inside by a beat-up garbage can. It's almost pitch black inside; the lights are out.

"Marcus?" No answer. "Marcus? You in here?"

A chill creeps up my spine, an unwelcome feeling that's all too familiar for someone in my line of work.

I step into the shadows, and undo the strap on my holster. I hope I'm just being paranoid, just feeling a little scared, but I know it's not true. The door suddenly swings shut with a slam, and the world as I know it is plunged into darkness. In an instant, I'm gripping the Beretta tight in my sweaty hands; exactly the last thing I want to have to do.

"What's going on, Marcus?" I call out. The void answers, "What's going on, Marcus?" It sounds just like my voice; an echo. A soft sound appends the response; a shoe scraping the floor in the dark. My eyes slowly adjust to the dark, and I notice a small window on the far wall, just below the ceiling. The faint light coming through reflects off something to my right - mirrors above the dirty sinks. Another noise; my eyes dart back to the left.

I should have seen it coming, but it's too late; I feel the breath in my lungs explode. I'm slammed into the nearest mirror. The glass cracks, and so does my skull. I push away from the wall, repulsing the weight of two, maybe three kids. I should have known. The weight shifts, and my body hits the opposite wall and the urinals. The nasty water splashes across my hands and stomach. Disgusting. I turn away from the wall, to face the kids.

Disgusting. The weight hits my stomach, shots ring out in the darkness, and my breath bursts forth like doves from a magician's hat. I'm no magician.

I drop to one knee, my head turns toward the mirrors above the brown stained sinks, and in an instant, I see all those young faces I've helped staring back at me, their faces blank, emotionless. I collapse on the floor.

As I lay on the cold, damp tile, I can see out the window. The sun slowly dips below the horizon, painting luscious red streaks across the sky. Red streaks the color of blood. Red streaks like the ones painted across the walls of the boys' bathroom on the second floor.

e: As I wrote it, the story drifted away from the theme, but that's what happens. I'm sticking to it.



## Chapter 92

# The Warehouse

By lucifer chicken

Dripping water echoed through the empty warehouse. I stepped into a slant of light thrown by security spotlights outside. The sliver of light was intermittently chopped by an exhaust fan set into the wall. I checked my old automatic watch, lost in meditation as the second hand whirled smoothly around the dial. It was late. I wound up at the old warehouse in the harbor on a hunch, there was a lot of money riding on the investigation, and Luke Bavarius, P.I. listened to hunches when it meant keeping the freezer flush with starchy Hungry Man dinners.

In the distance, a low grunt crept through the darkness accompanied by the clang of metal. The sound rattled me down to the very marrow. Instinctively, my hand flew to my Beretta, two fingers rubbing the sleek metal for security. I'd seen a lot of horrors in the Big Apple, some things I'd never shake. The Beretta was my partner through each of them.

Gritty footsteps crossed the dirty cement floor some distance in front of me. Squinting, I caught a flash of pale skin, a glint of metal. I pulled my gun from its holster, admiring its length as it was unsheathed. Stalking forward, back tight against shipping containers, I disengaged the safety and cocked the gun. Footsteps scurried further into the depths of the warehouse.

I spoke to the darkness. "Show yourself, asshole."

Legs flashed across a slit of light.

"No one should be here now," I muttered. My heart fired adrenaline through my body. "Shoot first, ask questions later, Bavarius."

I raised my weapon, aiming it at the sound. "Stop right there!" I shouted, firing two shots into the darkness. An anguished cry echoed off the tin ceiling, followed closely by a thick thud of a body hitting the floor.

I honed in on the sound and stalked toward it. In the shadows, another hulking figure loomed. "What the fuck is that?"

It emitted a low sound and moved. Its form seemed unearthly. My colon clenched in response to the adrenaline rush. Must've drank too much muddy coffee before this stakeout.

Again, my Beretta found itself ready to fire as I aimed at the hulking figure. The sounds it was making, the low groans, were unearthly. Whatever it was, it had to be done away with. My finger twitched on the trigger.

"Don't do it, Mister." The weak voice came from my right. My eyes darted between the veiled voice and the shadows in front of me.

"What the hell are you?" I called.

The voice didn't answer immediately. It just whimpered.

"What are you?!" I demanded again, pouring all of the testosterone pooled my balls into my voice.

"I'm... hurt. Don't shoot it."

"Shoot what?" There was a pause. "Shoot what!"

"Please... I'm just a kid..."

Oh, hell. A kid. I bit the inside of my cheek to stave off the encroaching vomit. I could envision the bile on its rise from my ulcerated stomach. My hand shook. The figure groaned low again and my finger impulsively squeezed away at the trigger. Violence exploded once more, echoing through the tin-paneled warehouse. The figure received my bullet, still unsure of its identity, I watched its shadowed form waver in the shadows.

"No!" The kid cried, his pubescent voice cracking with pain and disgust. He had dragged his body toward me. My gun hand fell limply to my side; I looked down at the kid with pity and shame. A gleaming snail trail of blood darkened the cement floor behind him.

"Why are you in here?"

The kid's eyes were pale with death. You could almost hear the blood draining from him in sick little spurts.

"You shot the giraffe," he wailed, low.

My attention snapped from the kid to the darkness in front of me. I squinted, deciphering the dark figure wavering before me. Its long neck gradually came into focus. I stepped closer to the beast. It was vomiting blood from its neck, muscular spasms shooting through the six foot long tube of meat; its long blue tongue drooped to the side flaccidly. Long eyelashes fluttered over its cow-like brown eyes.

Woozy, the giraffe suddenly dropped to its knobby knees, its neck lolled dramatically to the side. The neck snapped over a row of container drums, folding thickly like a bag of sand. The sound reverberated through the hollow spaces in my bones. It wasn't likely to be forgotten, to abandon those spaces, any time soon. I clutched desperately at my stomach, trying not to vomit my liver and onion dinner all over the floor.

I glanced at the kid. Exhalations escaped him in a long rattling breaths. He'd be a goner without help.

"Ah shit," my chest heaved. "Should've listened to the kid, Bavarius."

Sirens screamed toward the warehouse. From the wide doorway, the rain-slicked streets of the Empire City opened their arms to me. I pulled



a Pall Mall from the emergency pack stashed in my pocket and lit it up, muttering to myself, the cigarette bouncing between my lips. "New York. I ream her and ruin her, but the whore keeps taking me back."

Red lights whirled closer. Suddenly, I was sobbing.



## Chapter 93

### Untitled

By ding dang doo

I awoke from my slumber. The breeze of wind gently blowing wind across my face. Sitting in the darkness, I thought of only one thing: Luke Bavarious. The name. Repeating throughout my head, piking it's mantra into my mind. Who was this man? I did not know, but I intended to find out. I lit a Pall Mall cigarette and proceeded to smoke it. Meanwhile, I dressed myself.

Into the dark and dimly lit night I wandered, smoking a Pall Mall cigarette with my iips. I inhaled, and let my hate seethe. I exhaled and let my hatred for love grow. Luke Bavarious. The name echoed in my face. This name. A name like no other. I reached into my pants and gripped my Baretta, and let a long sigh of relief. Sometimes I forgot to put my Baretta in my pants. Tonight, I remembered to do it. Strolling down the street in the dimly lit night of darkness, I began to wander down the sidewalk. Luke Bavarious. Why? Was this part of my grim imagination? Was he the reason teachers and parents were afraid of me? This I had to find out.

Finishing my Pall Mall cigarette, I crushed the butt of it against a newborn baby, and slowly walked down a dimly lit dark alley. I saw a shadowy figure of a man, or maybe it could've even been a leopard. He let out a gasp of shock and started to ran into the opposite direction. I quickly vomited and soon began chasing him. Chase him I did, and I ran as fast as a machine with cyborg legs. The chase was long and hard, and arduous. He ducked through alleyways and jumped rooftops, but I had the scent of blood and murder and puke in my nostrils, I was on his tail every step of the way.

Until he stopped.

I found myself at my lousy apartment. Empty cans of beer littered my floor. Numerous tissues surrounding my computer. The butts of endless Pall Mall cigarettes emptied into countless newborn babies. And he was standing in the corner. I cocked my head like a curious dog, and asked,

"Who are you? And why are we here?"

Suddenly, he turned around, Pall Mall cigarette in his mouth. Luke Bavariou. He chuckled and shot at me. And shot again. Then he shot me again. With a Baretta. Then he shot me with his Baretta.

And as my neck puked blood from my neck and vomit spewed from every faucet in my apartment, I heard the words, "Did you hear Micheal Jackson died?"

With my final breath, I sobbed, "...Don't stop...till...you get enough."

## Chapter 94

# AGAIN

By Dominic Bones

I sat on the edge of my bed, drinking a glass of water I had just gotten from the kitchen. My dog Bud was laying at the foot of the bed. I stared into the glass, watching my own reflection, and watching the reflection of the creature behind me.

With a long face and empty eyes, and a mouth that could only be described as slender. It stared over my shoulder, it's hands at its sides. Sometimes I would think it was speaking to me, only to find that it was Bud whimpering.

It always stared, yet when i turned I could not see it. when I closed my eyes it would be there, clear as day, yet when I opened them the creature would be gone. I could not explain it. The Dogs howls were going through the night sometimes.

Why I could not say. Happened since I moved into this house. My girlfriend and child had left me because I would just lie awake at night. She said I had no emotion anymore. Said i should see a therapist. my kid said he loved me but said that he couldnt have a father that never helped him. he encouraged me to hug him and promise him I'd always be there and to leave the house with mommy. But he didn't really like that idea, so I didn't. Dog barked. Hear the name Luke.

my dresser was an elegant wood paneling, and my floor had a lush red carpet. Sometimes he would seep onto it and make it seem black. i didn't know why, he just told me it would show me the way if i followed him. I always just sat on the bed though. The dog was scratching the bedpost now. heard the name Luke ringing in the back of my head.

my glass of water was almost out. i looked out my window and saw him there, and he asked for me. i would just shake my head, as i had stopped spaeking. i had recieved a letter the other day that said i had to mkae my payments, but he told me it wouldnt be an issue. The dog attempted to lay

on my lap. Heard "Luke", nothing but Luke and white noise.

i told myself to go to sleep, but something was bothering me as if something was buried deep in my head. i kenw that i couldnt just take aspirin to get rid of it. i felt something at my foot but when i looekd down it wasnt there. my bathroom mirror could be seen in the crnoer of my eye, and he could be seen in the mirror. his fingers pointed at the bed, though i didnt turn t see what he was pointing at. The dog jumped on the ground and stared at me.

he came up to me and mvoed my hand. he put it on the dogs back and squeezed. i ddint know what was going on exactly but he asuserd me it wuold all be arlihgt. my hand ddint stop suqeezing for an hour. the dog didnt make any noise except the word "Luke".

soon i had began laying down and fell asleep. i suddenly felt better. he had told me that i would soon be able to go to sleep. i remembered this feeling happening the day before my girlfriend left me. i fgiured that he just knew how to clam me down. i layed down and put my haed to rest.

wehn the men came in the morning, i awkoe and walked down to the mess hlal with them. tehy dont think hes real. the dcotor said i was imagninig thnigs. she ddint know me thuogh. only he understood. soon i flet a relaxation in her office like lsat night,before i saw the lghit coming from the wnidow. he told me taht i cuold be in the lghit. but i ddint want to. i olny wanted to be wehre he guided me to. He spoke but I did not hear.

after i stppoed suqeezing i haerd the men come in and guided me away. but it was oaky, because as long as i clsoed my eyes, i saw his fcae. what did he say his name was? *Luke Bavarius*. as i was dragged, soon i saw my snos face, and it was the same. Luke just flod me it wuold all be alright. so i colsed my eyes, and dreamt of my childs face.

## **Part IV**

# **My God, It's Full Of Stars**





## Chapter 95

# A Cursed Memory

By Quovak

My name is Luke Bavariou. I am a policeman. Recently my wife Vixie Bavariou committed suicide. I've been sent in to deal with Jack Rogue. He was supposed to be at the courthouse. I walked up to the 162nd street mansion where he lived in New York. I slowly walked up the dark creaking stairs slowly. I drew my trusty Beretta. I knocked at the man's door. "Open up!" I said.

"What do you want?" He said.

I screamed. "It doesn't matter. If you don't open this door, I'll shoot the the lock off with my Beretta!"

"Fine. Hold on a second."

"Too late!" I shot the lock off with my Beretta. The sharp kick of the gun was like a wave up my arm. It felt good. I opened the door and went inside. In the entryway I saw a thirteen year old boy standing in the middle of the room.

"Why weren't you at court?" I said.

"You don't want to find out what I know." He whispered.

"I think I do." I said, aiming my Beretta.

"My parents are getting a divorce. I don't want to have to choose who has custody."

The memory of my girlfriend killing herself rushed back to me.

"Did you see your dad kill your mom? Or did you only hear the shot?" I called.

The kid screamed a bloodcurdling scream and ran upstairs. I raised my Beretta and fired the first shot. He pulled out a gun and shot me in my eye. The pain stung as the blood pooled onto the floor. I couldn't help but vomit. The fluids mixed in the pool. He shot again.

"Why are you doing this?" I screamed. The blood kept running down my face. The bullets tore it open. I fired again. The bullets from my Beretta

took the kid's balance. He screamed. I heard the kid scream as he fell off the balcony into his rose bushes. The thorns cut through his skin. His blood oozed out of their holes. I walked over. "You were subpoenaed. That means you should have been in court." I said. My wounds were still terribly dripping rusted blood from the wounds.

The kid was screaming and vomit left his torn lips. As he died he called out. "Vixie Bavariou didn't kill herself. Your wife was killed... by you." He knelt to the floor and screamed again as he died.

I looked back at a mirror. Past the blood. And the scars, And the vomit. And I remembered. The sound of the bullet I fired into my girlfriend's chest. I remembered her blood falling onto the carpet. Her spine snapping from the force of my Beretta. Her cries of pain. Her corpse hitting the ground.

I walked past the kid's cut up body. His blood had dried up. The vomit had caked on his torn vomit-stained pants. A chill rose up my back. I started sobbing. I would turn in my badge the next day and become a private detective. Anything to stop my grief.

## Chapter 96

# Satanic Red: The Third to Last Case of Detective Luke Bavarious

By Anal Surgery

I polished my Baretta with a rust-colored rag. I own both the gun and the rag because I am a private detective. People come to me to solve problems. Problems given to them by others with every sort of type. I am a problem solver for them, the people to whom problems were given. Today (9am on a Monday) was no different than last Monday, until she walked in.

Anastasia Rexenstein. She poured into my office like a sexual cocktail, her dress the color of rusty bulging neck-muscles. Her eyes peered into your soul like a peering soul-seeing sage. Her smile twisted like a grapevine as she threw a stack of cash in front of me. "I want you to find my daughter, Bella-Monica" she intoned. My eyes grew wider than dictionaries as I looked at the financial stuff in front of me.

"Okay" I murmured.

Bella-Monica Rexenstein was last seen in the company of noted town drunk, Firth Rockwell, at his sea-side cabin near the sea. Speeding towards the location at 56 miles an hour, I began to hear the giggle of destiny around me. Night spread across the sky like a grape-juice stain, the color of darkness, and other dark things. Rockwell was probably up to no good, so I triple-checked my Baretta, which was given to me when I started my detective business. It was loaded. So was I. With alcohol. The sea-side cabin approached like a sick cat. "Let's do this" I said to no one in particular.

I parked my vehicle and surreptitiously slunk towards the windows. A light was on, red, the color the Devil lists as his favorite. My eyes narrowed — I hate the Devil. There was no sign of Bella-Monica from the first window,

so I approached the second window as stealthified as I had the first. I still didn't see her, so I proceeded to the west side of cabin and looked in that window. I didn't see her there either, so I went to the south side to look in that window. Nothing, just like what I thought came after death, because I am an atheist detective, because of my experiences, which are horrid. But as I came to the east side, I saw movement.

Inside, Firth Rockwell was wearing apparel, apparel which fluttered wavily in the breeze of a fan. He was sharpening a knife, and humming the old Irish folk-tune "I Murder Down a Path". Inadvertently, I hummed along, as it brought back memories of my drunken father, who would hum it after four Bud Lights. I felt steam rising in me, which I wanted to blow off, in the form of shooting Rockwell. But before I could Rockwell left the room.

Sneaking in through the backdoor, I heard footsteps stepping down the steps to the basement. Furtively, I snuck down the same steps, hoping to see something. But when I arrived in the underground chamber, what I saw was a sight which I didn't want to see.

Bella-Monica was tied to a chair, with Firth Rockwell placing a knife to her throat. I yelled at him "Stop right there! Villain!". But he just smiled at me. And then he put on a wig, and I realized the horrid truth. I vomited a rusty stream from my lips, which included burning bile erupting from my nose. For with the wig on, Firth Rockwell was Anastasia Rexenstein.

But then, she pulled the a wig off of Bella-Monica, and I vomited again. For Bella-Monica was actually me! Bella-Monica screamed harshly "LISTEN TO ME-" but I fired my gun at both of them, exploding their faces in a shower of blood, brain matter, skull bits, and gristle. I fled upstairs and vomited in the sink. For I realized, I had just killed my twin brother. I was the last Bavarius now. All I could do was sob.

## Chapter 97

# I, Lucius Baiuvarius

By Hantu

It is mid winter in the year 177 of the Christian god. As I write this, I, Lucius, son of Baiuvarius of Aalen am recovering from my injuries. My grandfather and his father before him fought against the Romans and their foreign ways. Both of them are long dead, slain by Roman sword. My father was no warrior. He is a herder and did his best to bring me up in the Roman ways so that I might ingrain myself with the Romans and profit by it. Yet the warrior blood runs deep. On my 17th birthday, I said goodbye to my family and travelled to the new Roman fort of Castra Regina. There I joined a ragtag unit of foederatus, made up of people of many tribes.

My company consisted of 20 men, only a few I made friends with. We were employed as light infantry or as Uhlan, my Swabian commander calls it, arrow fodder for the Legio Tertia Italica against the rebellious Marcomanni tribes. The pay was not much, but my youthful adventurism was satiated. In my fifth year of service, I have been in many battles. Many we won, others we lost. I have seen acts of extreme bravery, worthy of the old gods. I have also seen villages burned to the ground, the women raped, the men beheaded, the children enslaved. Yet what I saw during my last encounter was beyond anything a mortal should see.

It was two months ago. The first flakes of snow had fallen. The campaigning season was over and I looked forward to a few months of rest. I was sitting by the campfire with several others when a legionnaire guard came to our encampment and talked to Uhlan. They were out of earshot but I saw him gave Uhlan a piece of scroll and left. Uhlan shook his head and walked towards us. "By Belenus and Camulus!" he swore, "A Roman patrol is lost in the Black Marshes and we are to look for them." He spat on the ground and swore again. "It's not enough that we fight and die for them, now we have to baby sit them too! Lucius, Hauff, and Dumnorix, pack your gear and come with me. We will have to go on foot as the ground is

too rough.”

I reluctantly moved away from the comfortable fire and found my longsword, leather armour and metal helmet. For some reason, I also decided to bring along my long knife that I don't usually carry on missions. I tied the knife in its scabbard around my torso and put on my leather armour. This decision will end up saving my life. Our small band of four sets out of the camp just as the snowfall was beginning to get heavy. We made slow progress, even on the Roman roads. After 2 days, we arrived at the edges of the Black Marshes, tired and cold. Uhlan was unusually taciturn during the journey. He was not a jocular man by any means but he seems to be even more troubled than usual. Finally, I decided to ask him what it is that's troubling him. He fell silent, only the condensation from his breathing betraying his thoughts. “Do you know anything about the Black Marshes lad?” he finally spoke. I replied in the negative. “The locals stayed away from this place and for a good reason. None who ventured in ever came out again. Those Roman fools are too arrogant to believe in folk tales and look what happened to them. Yet here we are, on a fool's errand. May Belenus protect us all.”

We camped in a clearing near the Black Marshes for a day while Dumnorix and I scouted around for tracks. The fresh snow made this task even more difficult. The afternoon sun was falling when out of the corner of my eyes, I saw a glint of metal among the bushes, 20 yards away. I silently signalled to Dumnorix to come near and we cautiously moved towards it, swords drawn. There is no doubt about it. It is a Roman scutum, cleaved in half, not cleanly like by an axe or sword but as if it was ripped into two by some great force. On the ground, there were drag marks and copious blood and it led deeper into the Black Marshes. I debated with Dumnorix about what to do next. The Helvetian wants to follow the tracks into the marsh before the snow completely covered it while I wanted to report our discovery to Uhlan. We argued for a while until we decided on a compromise. We will follow the tracks a little deeper until dusk falls and then turn back.

Both of us cautiously moved into the marshes. Why I agreed to this, I never knew. Every ten yards or so, I broke a twig and pointed it towards the direction that we came. After an hour or walking, we came to a small cave where the tracks and blood trail thinned out suddenly. The sun was setting rapidly and an ominous hush descended on the Black Marshes. I told Dumnorix that this is as far as I will go and we should turn back before it gets too dark. He agreed though he wanted to mark the location first. We looked around in search of a large rock or stick that we can use as a marker when the wind suddenly picked up. I was digging through the snow cover when Dumnorix gave a sudden shout. I looked back but he was no longer there. Snow was now being blown sideways and quickly, I could see no further than my hands. I shouted for Dumnorix many times but there was no reply, only the howling of the wind. I clutched my longsword tightly and readied for battle. Warily, I crouched towards the small cave to seek shelter from the storm, my senses on alert for trouble.

The cave entrance was about 7 foot high and just wide enough to let two man through. The surface was covered in lichen and the dank air smelled of rotten vegetation or worse things. Inside was pitch black with pools of stagnant water looking like broken shards of mirrors. I hesitated but staying out here meant certain death by freezing. Muttering a prayer to Lovantucarus, I went into the cave, my trusty longsword drawn at the front. The howling of the wind took on a haunting aspect in the cave, as if thousands of lost souls whispering together. The hairs on my neck pricked up while my heart was beating loudly in my ears. I could no longer see anything, only vague shadows. A movement! Where? Was it my imagination? Calm down. Trust my instincts. Another movement, this time, closer! There is no more doubt. Someone or something is here in the cave with me. "Come out and show your self!" I yelled into the darkness. "Come out you coward and fight like a man!"

A sudden rush of air smelling of carrion and an inhuman growl went directly towards my face. I instinctively crouched but something hit hard on my right shoulder, just missing my head, causing me to fall and end up face down on the damp cave floor. My sense of direction is now gone. In the commotion, I lost grip of my longsword. I grabbed my right shoulder and it was bleeding profusely. My leather armour torn in pieces. I've had enough. I tried to scramble up and run but a vaguely man-shaped thing pounced on my torso pushing me down again with great force while shredding at my chest. I nearly passed out from the impact but I called upon strength buried deep inside me, the strength of a cornered animal and flailed at my attacker with my fists. I must have landed a lucky hit, as the thing jumped off and howled. Remembering my hidden long knife, I tore away the shredded remnants of my leather armour and unsheathed the knife. The thing lunged again with an ear piercing shriek but this time I was ready. I waited to the last second before, with a rapid thrust, I stabbed the thing in its chest. My knife made contact and hot blood spewed on my face.

The full moon was probably out now and dim light reflecting on the pools of water lit up the scene. For the first time, inches from my face, I could see my assailant. The horror that I saw could never be truly described. It was vaguely human but where the eyes should be, there were only blood soaked sockets. Hot carrion stench emanated from the mucus filled holes where the nose should have been and the face was also covered with leprous purple scars. There were no lips, only a gaping putrid mouth dripping with venomous saliva. I let out a scream of horror and kicked the thing away. The thing was breathing heavily and so was I. It clutched at its chest where the knife was stuck while blood sputtered from its mouth. I saw my longsword lying on the cave floor and quickly picked it up. I cautiously advanced towards the prone creature when with a gurgling voice, it spoke. " You have beaten me but I lay a curse on your sons and their sons for eternity. Once every generation, they will face a horrid enemy and that enemy will be themselves!" At the final word, it let out a final putrid breath and ceased moving.

I slumped on the ground and stared at the corpse. I must have stayed that way for an eternity when the pain of my injuries reasserted. I crawled my way towards the cave entrance, trying to understand what had happened. I was almost out of the cave when I caught my reflection in a pool of water. Suddenly I was sobbing.



## Chapter 98

# Chamber Pop

By Brushingworth

Feebly, Luke Bavarious reached into his mouth and pushed on his molar. He winced as it shifted unpleasantly in its socket. Pain shot down his jaw and Bavarious clenched the edge of the sink. The dried blood caked onto his hand cracked and fell into the sink in large flat scabs. Bavarious raised his head and turned on the water, hot all the way. Steam rose from the large sink. Bavarious was in the basement of his office building. The door he had just stumbled through was still open, letting in the night's biting cold air; Bavarious didn't notice. He spat twice, three times, into the sink and plunged his hands into the water, clenching his fists at the near boiling temperature. The liquid was quickly polluted to a dark red.

"Shit," Bavarious let out as he finally opened his office door on the sixth floor. Inside the lamp on his desk lit the dim room. Someone in the plastic chair preceding his desk turned. What the fuck, Bavarious thought suddenly, but he let out no sound. "Ah, you're back," said the small boy sitting in front of him. "I've been waiting almost an hour." "Well sorry kid," Bavarious responded as he trudged to his desk chair, "I've just about had enough people for today." The kid stared at him unblinking. He was probably thirteen or fourteen. "Mr. Bavarious? I need to speak with you about an important matter. Don't you think it's a little funny that a kid like me is here to see you? Let me introduce myself, I'm Oscar Crowley." While the kid was talking, Bavarious unloaded his Berretta and gave the kid a sarcastic glance every now and then. "Alright listen punk." Bavarious gestured with his Berretta as he spoke, "Today's over. Finished. All that's left for me is a bottle of Jack back home. If you've got some sort of way of paying me outside of Monopoly money and lemonade stands than tomorrow you can come back and give me your sob stories, tonight go home. It's passed your bedtime anyways."

Bavarious was spread eagle hanging upside down on the moldy couch.

He watched Law and Order on the TV upside down in front of him and sipped whiskey from a bottle, most of which by this point dribbled down his forehead. He didn't hear anything when the figure slid open the kitchen window. From the fire escape a dark and dim figure in combat boots stepped into the apartment. Bavarius, due to an insurance commercial that annoyed him even in his inebriated state, lifted the bottle for another swig and saw in the reflection of the moving glass a dark figure lunging toward him. Bavarius raised his hand to stop the intruder but the figure quickly batted away his drunken defenses and closed two gloved hands around the detective's throat. Bavarius' eyes bulged and he coughed a mixture of alcohol and vomit. Flailing, Bavarius saw that he was still holding the bottle of Jack and quickly smashed it over the head of his assailant. After gasping for several minutes, Bavarius got up to check on his unconscious prisoner. The man, if it was a man, was clothed only in a long brown overcoat. His head and face was covered by the coat's large hood. The man's head was completely devoid of hair, Bavarius couldn't tell if he was shaved or simply never grew any. His face was what made Bavarius recoil. Under what should have been the man's eyebrows (which were also missing) was nothing but a series of gashes and burns. Large scars ripped up and down the man's face, the larger ones continuing down into the robe that Bavarius didn't want to look under. The only human feature about the man's face was a vertical gash, about three inches wide and four inches tall, where the intruder breathed harshly.

*I need some coffee.* Bavarius walked unsteadily in the gutter. He had left the man/thing in his apartment exactly where he had fallen. Probably not something he would have done sober but, tonight he wasn't in the mood for procedure. His boot caught the edge of a storm drain and he tumbled, scraping his hand on the concrete. He sat that way for awhile. Watching the dirty water funnel into the sewer. When he was ready to keep moving, he looked up. Standing right next to him was Oscar Crowley. "I told you," said Oscar disappointedly. "What the fuck are you talking about kid," Bavarius spat, feeling only slightly embarrassed at his language in front of the boy. Turning, Oscar walked away from Bavarius. "You're gonna lose yourself in darkness, man."

*What?* Bavarius watched the little boy walk away and thought about the cryptic message. Did the boy know something about the monstrosity that had just attacked him? He had to find out. Getting up, he stumbled down the street and turned into the alley he had seen the boy enter. Suddenly, he halted. Down the three foot wide alley was nothing but a couple of garbage cans, a dumpster and some wires running through the water on the ground. What slowly dawned on Bavarius was that this was the very same alley that he had encountered the monstrous noise violator early that day. He slowly walked to the end of the alley and back three times, looking for any way the boy could have left the alley without him seeing. On the third trip back he gave up and decided to go for that coffee after all, but stopped halfway out. He had been running his hand down the eastern brick wall of the alley

and this time he felt a faint vibration in the stone. He put his ear up to the wall and listened. At first he didn't hear anything and the wall seemed to have settled, but a few seconds later he heard a slight thudding sound and felt the wall shake once again. Bavarius scanned the wall for a window or drain that might lead inside the building. Seeing nothing left the alley.

From the street the building didn't look like much. He couldn't hear the thudding from this far, and the front wall didn't seem to be shaking. The front had an old-fashioned lighted sign that read "Larry's RR" and offered a jukebox, soda fountain, and coffee. The front windows were broken but had been boarded up by strong looking wood. BLACKOUT ARMISTICE was splashed across the left board in black spray-paint. After trying and failing to make sense of this felonious abstrusity, Bavarius looked up to examine the upper floors of the building. Most of the windows were boarded, plenty were broken, through a few he saw a spare bookcase or desk but nothing was moving in any of them. The longer he contemplated the lofts; he began to notice something about the rooms. He couldn't quite focus on it immediately, probably thanks to the last of the Jack still digesting in his stomach. Suddenly he caught it. In a few of the rooms he could see the same orange-tinted light faintly. Every so often the light would flicker or go out altogether for a few seconds. While this could have been attributed to a bad electrical line, Bavarius noticed that in every one of the rooms the light responded identically, as if the same bulb was burning out at the end of every kitchen socket.

Bavarius pulled his Beretta. *I'm going in.* He wasn't sure why he was going in, but he was sure he was going. He leapt up onto the right display window and landed on broken glass. With the butt of his gun, Bavarius smashed into the wood. Chips flew away but the barricade seemed unharmed. He tried several more times and then went the front door. Bavarius couldn't see through the glass door but it seemed to be blocked only by paper. *I hope I'm not gonna regret this.* He pulled his leather sleeve over his right hand and slammed the butt of the gun through the glass door. It shattered and the glass fell on both sides of the door. Through the paper he could see the decay of an old café and the same orange light. He reached through the tear and tried to unlock the door. The lock seemed to be rusted. Sighing, Bavarius steeped one leg then the other through the door, kicking away the rest of the paper.

On the other side of the dining room the orange light poured underneath a door that Bavarius thought looked like a bathroom. He crossed the space quickly and approached the door. It was indeed a bathroom, but the sign had been defaced. What had once been a standard female figure had some sort of black stain on the front of her skirt and was dripping black liquid from between her legs. Bavarius thought it was the same spray-paint as the outside proverb but he didn't examine it closely. He stood with his hand on the door for a moment and suddenly he heard the same thudding, much louder now, and a shuffling murmuring. Inhaling, Bavarius opened the door with his Beretta drawn.

Inside Bavarious took one and a half steps before stopping dead in his tracks. His eyes glazed over and the orange light of the room shined off them like blisters. The room was cavernous. The entirety of the building had been hollowed out and Bavarious could see the rooms he had seen from the streets above. They seemed to be perfectly untouched until they simply ran out of floor. They gaped out into sepulchral like pockmarks as if someone with a wrecking ball had tried to demolish the building from the inside out. On the floor of the room were fold-out metal chairs arranged in rows giving the building a church-like atmosphere. The chairs were almost completely filled with people. Bavarious couldn't tell much about them due to the brown hoods they were all wearing. Somewhere in his brain Bavarious recognized them as the same that the man who had tried to kill him had worn. The same part of his brain that realized there were over four hundred of them. That part of his brain wasn't really important to Bavarious at that moment. In fact he barely even noticed the room or the people in the chairs. His eyes swept past them and were drawn to the sight they were all apparently there to witness.

At the far end of the room, a few yards to Bavarious' left, was a man standing like an accursed teacher at a rusted wooden fold-up table. Lying on the table were various medical instruments and a small girl. Bavarious thought she might have been seven. She had long tangled blonde hair that stretched past her shoulders and ended soiled in the puddle of blood that she was lying in. The girl had been split open vertically from neck down; the cut had not been clean. The man at the table had removed most of the contents from inside her but apparently left the connections. Spare blood vessels and muscle ligaments crisscrossed over her and draped down to various organs that were spread out on the table. Terrified, Bavarious noticed that the girl was breathing slowly into a mask that was connected to a makeshift airtank below the table. Bavarious looked away and saw that at the front of the table, a few feet from the first row of chairs, was the body of the man he had shot earlier. The body was similarly dissected and seemed to be waiting for some sort of terrible transplant procedure.

Bavarious stood frozen. His mouth was slightly open. Suddenly, he saw a door across the room open and Oscar Crowley step out. He was also petrified by the scene and stood standing for several moments. When he saw the girl on the table, however, he shouted "Sam!" and charged up the room. The onlookers seemed shocked as well and Oscar made it almost all the way to the front of the room before one of the men in robes reached out and grabbed the back of his shirt. He was stopped dead by the strength of the man. Slowly the nearest of the congregation raised from their seats and helped subdue the boy. He kicked and bit at all that came near him but eventually they dragged him to the front of the room in custody where the standing man removed the mask from the girl and placed it over Oscar who spat into the mouthpiece but eventually slowed his thrashing and eventually closed his eyes. From there most of the group returned to their seats while a few laid Oscar next to the splayed corpse. Suddenly, Bavarious realized

he was sobbing.



## Chapter 99

# Luke Kills An American

By duck monster

Luke Barvarious stumbled into his classroom in Ho Chi Minh city. Today they would be learning about the teachings of Chairman Mao, the great Oarsman.

It was different here, ever since he was abandoned by his pot smoking hippy father back in the 80s, nothing was the same as it was back home.

And most of all he missed his father. Luke stayed up at night, dreaming of the adventures through europe he took as a child with his father, the musty streets of Spain, the wonderful aromas of Paris, the cosmopolitan airs of venice. He enjoyed too the journey through south east asia, visiting the big old temples and watching father get blind drunk on Laotian rice wine.

But then one day father disappeared , and Luke was taken by the police and given to a stern family in the Vietnamese communist party. He tried to be a good son to his new family, but they would never let him forget that he was from the people that had murdered so many before.

And at school the children would taunt him, mocking his skin, his eyes, his accent and his poor language skills. He couldn't remember much of america, it was so long ago, but they'd never let him forget he wasn't from here.

But one day Luke was walking into the local bar, where he was earning some pocket money serving the Japanese businessmen and local Communist party officials, when a white man called him over.

"Hey kid, you look American. Wheres your folks?", the man said.

"Uh. I was orphaned and I live with a family here now."

"Oh, thats too bad. Tell ya what kid, meet me after closing and we'll have a talk about America!"

Lukes heart skipped. Maybe this kind man could tell him about the land he could barely remember. Maybe this man could tell him what happened

to father.

Later that day Luke met the white man, and they went up to his hotel room. The man showed him photos of Disney land, the white house, and Luke marvelled at how rich and happy every one seemed.

"If only.." , he said, ".. If only I had a way to get there."

"Well son, I guess that'd cost money".

"Yeah... " said luke.

"I know, I can give you money, but first you must do something for me."

The man hesitated then,

"Kid. Ever heard of a blowjob?"

With that , the man unclipped his belt, and his pants fell to his feet. Luke immediately froze up. He might be a naive kid, but he knew what this meant.

**"Down down American pig! Down with imperialism! Down with yankee perverts"** Luke shouted as he stuck the man in the groin with his fist and suddenly a team of Viet Cong burst into the room and pumped the old pervert with lead.

As the man lied dying he looked up at luke and whispered "I never stopped loving you son.". His eyes shed a tear, rolled back , and he passed away.

Luke realised then, that America is the father of the world. But now he was growing up, truly a child of vietnam. Having defeated the Imperialist, the adults would surely respect and honor him now.

**Make My Day**

By Orgasmo

The telephone rings. The cacophony breaks through the utter silence of my New York flat overlooking Times Square.

I can barely move. Even breathing hurts. These late night bar fights are getting rougher each night and one of these nights I'm going to wake up at a hospital instead of my warm bed.

I recalled earlier events. I was at a bar doing some recon on a street gang by the name of the Dark Hawks, a gang of murderous thieves. Their leader tried to make off with Lori's handbag before I intervened. I grabbed the large man before he could make off with it.

"What is your name, villain?!"

"The name is Brickwall. Let me show you why." All of a sudden I was thrown through a brick wall. Through the rubble I grabbed a sleek, unyielding object and showed him the business end of my pool cue, cracking him and his four goons out cold. These bar fights are often brutal. But I always win. My name is Luke Bavarius.

The phone rings again. I let it go to voicemails.

My rippling muscles ached as I turn over to address the device that is emitting the noise.

The caller ID showed that it was Marty. Who left the message. I hit play.



"Luke, listen, I don't have much time. I'm down here in the South Street Seaport and shit's about to go dow--"

Click. The line went into an eerie quiet like a tombstone. He sounded frantic. Perhaps I should have taken his call.

I got up, careful to not wake up Lori, and headed to the restroom. I take a rough inventory of the various bleeding cuts and bruises Brickwall had incurred upon me the night before.

Back in the room, I grabbed my Beretta from the nightstand. The sleek black metal filled my hand and I felt its power coursing through my veins. I cocked the hammer and chambered a bullet. Who knows what evil darkness will be faced.

I set out into the dark and macabre night. I turned on my Walkman and played the same song I listen to before I embark on all my dangerous missions. I howled into the night:

*"Pump up the jam*

*Pump it up*

*A pump it up - yo pump it*

*Pump up the jam*

*Pump it up*

*A pump it up - yo pump it*

*I don't want*

*A place to stay*

*Get - your booty - on the floor tonight*

*Make my day*

*I don't want*

*A place to stay*

*Get - your booty - on the floor tonight*

*Make my -*

A kid stepped out onto the path. His clothes were in tatters and he smelled like an outhouse. Snot ran profusely down his nose and he slurped it with his tongue.

"Sir, please don't go out to the docks. I foresee something terrible happening."

"Beat it, kid." I glared down at the rapscallion and pushed him aside. He lost his balance and fell backwards into an open manhole cover. His yelp was cut off when he landed on a mangled shopping cart that lay at the bottom of the sewer and blood flew out of the open manhole, landing all over Bavarius. The noxious mixture of blood, snot, and the liquefied shit of the entire Lower East Side sewer system covered my face and I vomited back into the sewer. I lost control of all bodily function and for several minutes vomit came out of my mouth and shit came out of my ass. Everytime I turned around I resembled a human sprinkler of shit and vomit. With the help of a lemon-scented wipee I regained my composure after this unexpected ordeal and continued on my way.

At the Seaport, an eerie quiet abounded. One boat had some lights on but it was offshore. I rappelled down the Brooklyn Bridge and back-flipped

onto the deck. I lay crouched for a few minutes, my duster billowing in the wind, eyes scanning the deck for movement.

I maneuvered towards one of the lit ports. Inside, several thugs were playing poker. The guy nearest me had a deuce and a seven off-suit. "I'm all in," he growled.

I announced, to their shock, "and I'm all out..." and proceeded to open fire into the room, spraying metal and lead into their shocked bodies. My Beretta rang into the still night.

"...of bullets."

The scene before me was of utter horror. Dead or dying men lay everywhere. Where chips used to be, brains now covered the table. One man was choking as rust-colored blood sprayed intermittently out of his neck. He looked at me in a shocked way and giggled. This grotesque scene played out for a few minutes. Suddenly, he was dead.

After the carnal scene was complete, I made my way down the stairs stepping with my feet sideways like a ninja would take a flight of stairs. I grabbed the sides of my duster so as to not give away my whereabouts.

In the darkness, a hand gripped down upon my shoulder. Suddenly, I was thrown through a brick wall and blacked out. The last thing I heard was a terrible laugh that sounded like a burp.

When I awoke Marty was standing over me with a sneer. "You stupid son of a bitch. Did you think I'd really turn informant? You've pissed off a lot of people, Bavariious. A lot of people who wouldn't be sad if you took a long drink in the Hudson."

I tried to move but was stuck. My feet were incased in cement.

"Ok, Brick, drop 'im."

With a sneer, the large man behind him pulled a lever and the floor opened up beneath me. The cold water shocked me as I hurtled to the bottom of the riverbed. When I finally hit bottom the force was so large that my cellphone flipped open and accidentally called Lori.

Back in the flat, Lori groggily picked up her cellphone in the darkness.

"hello..?"

"MUGLARHGHARGH"

"I'm sorry?"

"RHUGLUGLRAH"

Click.

When her phone rang again, she let it go to voicemails.

## Chapter 100

# White

By kerimeton

When the white ward doors opened on that chestnut autumn day I was reminded of the front doors of my garden shed in Vermont. I remember feeling cold the same way I did that day, not in a classical sense but down to the bone. I was feeling an abominable chill as if I had been pumped full of antifreeze the moment the doors came into view. And also, much like my garden shed, I was afraid was what was there. Whether my fears were tangible or not was to be proven, I myself, I no longer cared for the suffering trumped any fear or loathing I felt.

I walked down the plasticine hallways and kept my head down; chin on chest. It was as if a weight of shame had been strapped to my neck and my only option was to walk like a sorry prisoner.

"Admission," the barrel-chested nurse asked behind her oak podium.

"Yes"

"Which ward" she continued with the expression of an aghast ape.

"Psychiatry"

"Name." She was curt and unwavering. No doubt the brain behind that placid face was as rudimentary as a record player.

"Luke Barvarious" I paused. "Barvarious, Luke"

She nodded curtly as if to suggest that I had somehow made that record player run more smoothly.

"Reason for admission"

It was neither a question nor a statement. She prattled it off as if she was in bored haze.

"I don't know"

She paused and stared at me. It was hard and cold as if she was trying to read my ill intentions. She failed due to a lack of any.

"Mr.Barvarian"

"Barvarious"

"Mr. Barvarious" she repeated, still saying it wrong, "I suppose I can admit you to a psychologist but I cannot do further for now."

"I see"

"You understand" she said with a matte expression, "that is the procedure for all self admissions"

I took a seat in front of the office and waited. I was soon called in and immediately expressed my distaste for the poor classical music on the loudspeakers. The psychiatrist ignored me on that point. She reminded me of a wooden plank in personality and stature.

"The report says your 25?"

"Yes"

She seemed puzzled.

"Well, can I ask why you admitted yourself?"

"It started years ago" I said in deep thought, "I remember that my mother was ill and the doctor was recommending some futile medicine. I was barely 12 then but I knew he was wrong."

"I see"

I proceeded, "I insisted and insisted but I failed to be heard."

"Interesting", at this moment her assistant came in and a word was whispered into her ear. I failed to realize the significance of this and continued.

"It turns out I was right, but due to the fact of my age my words were ignored and cast aside."

The psychiatrist seemed puzzled again but told me to continue.

"It's been going on even since a younger age. Nobody takes me seriously. When I was young it was due to my youth and in my older years it was because of my youthful appearance."

"I see"

"I recall observing a fire being put out on a Sunday evening. I remember pleading the firemen to take the back route but I was continually ignored," I paused in repose. "Do you see what I mean, where I'm coming from?"

The lady got up and treaded lightly on the floor. It appeared as if she had taken a tome of information from what I had said. She walked to the alcove and poured herself a glass of water. She told me quietly that she wondered why this was affecting me now and why it took so long for me to come to her. I replied that I didn't think that was much help, to which the doctor replied that she was the trained psychiatrist here.

We paused in stifling silence and I realized that the meeting was over long before I came in. I felt choked in the stuffy room as if I was wearing a sweater in a sauna. There was an uncomfortable aura around the couch and the plants that I felt uncomfortable with. The urge to stand up ran through my legs but was confronted with the sound of a knock on the door.

The doctor stood up and led the uniformed men in, they held me down and I knew resistance was futile. I could not understand the predicament though I understood the pain of the tightened straitjacket. Once again I was muffled and thrown in the room leaving them only to wonder how I had escaped in the first place.

## Chapter 101

# The Pus-Stained Email from Hell

By Zahgaegun

The sweat dripped off my forehead, running down my face and forming salty pools on the ground. Pools like the pools of blood that always form after I kill someone. I have seen a lot of blood pools in my lifetime for I have killed a lot of people in a lot of very messy ways.

It's what I do. My name is Luke Bavariou; hitman, soldier, *killer*.

I had been called to this sweaty place, Arabia, to kill some guys. This was an honorable job, a soldier's mission. "We need some guys killed so we called you", they said on the phone. And here I was, in this God-forsaken hellhole, hunched over this screen, hoping for a morsel of communication from Home, something to feed my rotting brain, to let me know that there was a Reason To Fight, To Live.

Suddenly, the machine screamed out a bing-bong. New mail. It made me smile because it reminded me of the time that I told that hooker "You've got Male!" while we did the sex. Now she's dead. That wiped the smile off my face.

"I'm from the Internet", the letter moaned onto the screen. "We have found your Hidden Stash of Writings from Long Ago." Dang, I thought, I had hoped that no one would find that. The sweat drips came faster now, the pools getting bigger like a child vomiting blood...red cherry slurpees from the fear of riding the Viking Ship at the county fair.

"Hurry", it continued to moan, "there are already many people here pretending to be you." I typed fast as I could, pus-filled blisters rising from the friction of the keyboard on my gnarled fingertips. "I am coming", I typed, "Prepare the way." I tried to log in, but the passwords they used were too long, too complicated for my gnarled brain. I may only be thirteen, but my soul is almost 100 years old, due to all the killing.

Before I could get there, the sergeant bellowed my name. "It is time to kill", he said while handing me a beretta and a knife. "This is all we have left. Are you a bad enough dude to kill everyone with just this?" "Yes", said I, the cold steel of the knife blade glinting off my eyeballs. "Did you warn them?", I asked. "Yes", the sergeant burped. "We flew over them and dropped fliers warning them in whatever language they speak." "Good. Then it is fair.", I said and walked off towards the gate of the compound, the gate of my future and their destiny.

As he walked away, a private leaned towards the sergeant and said "Warn them of what?"

"I warned them that The Writer is coming.", he said. "God have mercy on their souls."

## Chapter 102

# The Horrid Reflection II: Horrider Reflections

By Bonaventure

The screamers screamed past with a screaming scream that screamed in the ears of Luke Bavarious Junior. They were horrid and horrible beings of indescribable horror. But if you had to describe one then they looked exactly like Ghost Face the famous killer from the *Scream* movies. Luke Bavarious Junior woke up with a scream because he had been screaming in his dream when he was dreaming of the screamers. "What are ya screamin' for?" said Luke Bavarious Senior who is the protagonist of the story and who is Luke Bavarious Junior's father and who came into the room where Luke Bavarious was screaming.

"I saw the screamers again dad," Luke Bavarious Junior whimpered.

"Gah!" his dad Luke Bavarious, paranormal P.I. said. He said "Gah! You've been watching too much *Scream*. I told you that stuff rots up your brains into blood. Now I'm going to burn your *Scream* DVDs so you stop having nightmares."

"No! Not my *Scream* DVDs!" screamed Luke Bavarious Junior. "I'll show you, dad... I'll show you that kids should be respected and listened to" he grit his teeth until they bled blood all over his chin.

"I'm off to work honey" Luke Bavarious said to his hot wife who was still in bed because—heh, women. Am I right, fellas? Then he put a donut on his pillow next to the wife, he got the donut from the donut shop across the street and every day he put a donut on his pillow for his wife to eat, this is important information to remember because it foreshadows the twist ending that's coming up.

Luke Bavarious had been known as the paranormal detective ever since *The Case of the Horrid Reflection* where he killed a doppelganger. "So

you're Luke Bavarious." The words vomited out of the mouth of the police chief. "I hear you've been known as the paranormal detective ever since you killed a doppelganger." Luke nodded and chewed on his noir-as-hell cigar. "That's impressive stuff. Dopplegangers are tough to beat cause they have the same moveset and equipment you do."

"Tell me about it, chief." Bavarious crammed a fist into his mouth that was full of peanuts and then he chewed down the peanuts into a horrid gloopy paste that slid down his disgusting horrible throat.

"Well, you're just the man I need," said the chief. "We got reports of a doppelganger factory that's taken over the old Frankenstein-making factory out on I-45."

"Say no more, chief." Bavarious cocked his Beretta and doffed his really sweet fedora. Then he drove to the doppleganger factory.

The doppelganger factory was filled with bile and amniotic fluid and all sorts of gross blood and vomit. The dopplegangers were being made in sacs of pus. Bavarious shot up the sacs of pus and was covered in sheets of vomit and fat as the baby dopplegangers writhed on the floor in a scary way. "Luke Bavarious" said the head doppelganger who had set up the doppelganger factory. Bavarious narrowed his eyes. The doppelganger was horrid with horrible pus scars all over his purpley face screwed up looking gross.

"I thought I killed you, Luke Bavarious," said Luke Bavarious, when he recognized himself as the doppelganger he thought he killed but he didn't really.

"You thought you killed me, Luke Bavarious, but you didn't really. I just feigned death by copying a dead guy at that moment. We dopplegangers are good at copying stuff. Here, I'll copy a guy vomiting acid at you!" then he vomited acid at Luke Bavarious, and boy it just stank to high heaven, ugh! Bavarious was ready though and he shot the doppelganger making machinery above the doppelganger and then the factory started to explode in sparks and blood and black bile and white pus as the doppelganger sacs all exploded and a billion baby dopplegangers screamed out in dying death forever. The head doppelganger screamed as all the blood and pus and bones exploded out of him like in a Mortal Kombat fatality.

"Another day another time the earth was saved from dopplegangers by Luke Bavarious" said Luke Bavarious as he walked away in slow motion. Behind him, the factory exploded.

That night in his home Luke Bavarious slept asleep, but Luke Bavarious Junior was up and he sneaked off to the kitchen and turned on the deep fryer. He had evil red eyes and he laughed, "Haw, haw!" He raised a voodoo doll in the air although more accurately it's a European witchcraft doll because the idea of sympathetic magic used through dolls doesn't have anything to do with traditional voodoo but was instead an idea from European ideas about witchcraft that was conflated with rumors about voodoo okay but ANYWAY he takes the doll and he raises it over the deep fryer and then he monologues: "Haw, haw! Dad, you might have saved the world from those dopplegangers but I'll teach you to burn my Scream DVDs. Now



when I want to watch Sarah Michelle Gellar get killed in *Scream 2* and masturbate to it I'm going to have to search for "Sarah Michelle Gellar death *Scream 2*" on youtube and like half of them are going to be music videos and none of them are going to be good quality and it's going to be a real pain in the neck! I'll get revenge for that! You're going to learn a lesson, dad. Kids should be respected and listened to, because if you mess with them, maybe they have a voodoo doll—although really it should be called a European witchcraft doll but I'll get into that later—and then they'll do THIS!" and he threw the doll into the deep fryer and uproariously began to cackle softly to himself with a silent "Haw, haw, haw!"

The next morning, Mrs. Bavarius woke up and found a donut on Luke Bavarius' bed. "Oh, he must have already left!" she pooped, and then she bit into the donut. A scream of horrid terror burst her throat open as she bit into the donut and, like in a sex scene starring one of the Wayans brothers, she was splayed against the wall by a torrent of blood, guts, and Bavarian cream.



## Chapter 103

# Wicked Workout

By Akbar

Luke Bavarious was on the prowl. Earlier that night, the detective had received notice from the chief that some unidentified killer was stalking the Upper East Side. Already five had been found dead. Each was murdered in the same gruesome fashion: arms hyperextended, hair ripped out to the follicle, legs bowed at the knees as if the ligaments were carefully torn, and finally, a smile carved across the face wide enough to completely cover the corpse in its own liquid life force.

*What kind of goddamn maniac are we dealing with here? The Joker?* Bavarious thinks to himself as he carefully primes his trusty Baretta, referencing the recent Batman film. He tenderly fingers the safety. He steps out of his Ford Pinto into the cool New York night.

He stalks the sidewalks seeing nothing but the steam rising out of the sewers onto the dim streets. His eyes are optic daggers, piercing into the darkness. His muscles are taut, ready to unleash the leaden payload of his sidearm into villainous flesh. He sees the telltale trail of fresh blood on the pavement.

*It's on.*

As he follows the sanguine highway into the alley behind a 24-Hour Fitness, he begins to hear a slow pounding in the night air. Slowly but surely, it grows louder and louder as he approaches the wellspring of the molten vein-magma. Before, it was just a thumping. Now, however, it is more recognizable: a beat. A melody. A hot sensation rushes through Bavarious' body.

"Dance music!" he ejaculates softly as he creeps to the source: a partially-open doorway flooding the shadowy alleyway with light. He nudges the door with his foot and peers into the hell below. Bodies! Dozens of them. Strung up by the arms on chains attached to huge meathooks, their feet barely reaching the ground. The bodies were jerked hardily up and down to the

cadence of the music. Their arms strained against the tension. Their legs slapped against the concrete floor over and over, as if horrifically tapping along to the beat. The battered limbs heaved droplets of blood and pulverized bone into the air. In front of them all was a horrid taskmaster.

"Up and kick and down and step and up and kick and... REMEMBER TO SMILE!"

Bavarious could only see the back of the man, but he was already repulsed to the point of vomiting. Dressed only in a red jersey, dolphin shorts, and running shoes, the short man runs to and fro in front of his victims, only a handful of which that were still conscious or alive. The tormentor's bouffant hair bounces as he taunts the wounded. The killer then takes out a wicked curve blade out of his shorts and carves open a pleading woman's face, laughing as he watches her throw up her fluid existence.

*What the hell is this?* Bavarious thinks as he makes sure that his Baretta is locked and loaded, regurgitated chicken dinner still spewing out of his mouth. Jumping up, he yells out:

"FREEZE! THIS IS DETECTIVE BAVARIOUS OF THE NYPD! I HAVE A BARETTA LOCKED ONTO YOUR HEAD AND I WILL FIRE IF YOU DO NOT COMPLY!"

The demon in front of him does not. Instead, he leaps otherworldly to the right, launching his disgusting body at approximately fifty-five miles per hour. Bavarious reacts with equal speed, letting loose with half a score of death slugs. All of them hit as the swiss-cheesed body hits the floor with a thud. Bavarious races up to confirm his kill, wiping away the now-crusty sick on his chin.

Rather than a cadaver, however, he sees only the man, still facing away from him. Still on his feet. Still alive. Filled with dread, Bavarious unloads another barrage of rounds from his only true friend, the Baretta he keeps on his hip. The bullets zip through the gym teacher from hell as if nothing was there. In their wake, they leave gaping holes that eject a clear liquid. The vitreous material tumbles out of the entry wounds like a rain. A shower of translucent gymnasts somersaulting through the air. The gashes slowly close and leave no trace of their former existence, even in the man's clothing.

"WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU?!" the detective screams as he discharges the rest of his lethal cargo, again to no avail. The man finally slowly begins to turn around, revealing his bloated face.

"Richard... Simmons...?" Bavarious murmurs into the air, putrid with aerosolized human body parts.

"No," the man says as he fully presents himself, and then rips off his face revealing another underneath. It is an oddly familiar visage. "I'm you."

Both Luke Bavariouses vomit. Tears.

## Chapter 104

# Gold Ribbon

By Swanky

"Those things will kill you, ya know", Percival growled, spitting up blood onto his rope-bound hands.

"Don't worry; they're filtered", Bavarious coyly said as he blew smoke into Percival's battered face.

Luke Bavarious wiped his hands of blood, as he had spent the better part of the past six hours trying to coax the safe combo out of this man. The night before Bavarious received a clean manilla envelope on his doorstep. Inside that envelope was a picture of a boy, inside a large safe, a bandana in his mouth with the words "Wednesday, 8 PM 50,000 in a duffle bag at 1st and 1st or he runs out of oxygen".

Bavarious knew he was a go-to guy, but nothing got his gib like an innocent kid whose life lie in his hands. Especially little Johnny Powell, a doe-eyed kid he knew through a local Big Brother's, Big Sister's program he used to participate in. Johnny loved to talk, and just ramble on about science and school. He was one bright kid. He might as well have been his own brother. Or even his own son. Percival didn't have the money, and he knew that if he went to the police that kid would be as good as dead. This kid wanted to be a scientist when he grew up. Not a ball player or astronaut, but a guy who does experiments. He was just a kid, after all.

He recognized the handwriting of the note, and the brown shag carpeting on the bottom of the picture clenched it. It was Percival Johnson's house. Timmy Johnson's father. A good man, a family man, but who knows what was going on in his head. Could have been just money problems or even something worse. But that doesn't matter. What's important is that he knows the guy behind that picture. And where he lives.

Shortly after receiving that picture, Luke got in his black, tinted-window sedan and scoped out Percival's house. The plan was to camp out near Percival's home, then when Percival was coming home from work, catch

him while he's getting undressed. Luke had his trusty sidearm and no regrets, save for what poor Timmy might see. Scarring one life is better than ending another, he repeated to himself.

Once he made his break into the house, everything was a blur. Percival was shocked, but gave up a curiously easy fight. Bavariou's heart was beating out of his chest as he dragged the man, having been pistol-whipped and dazed, towards his basement and that unmistakable brown shag carpet. Sure enough, as he threw Percival down the stairs, he could see the safe out of the corner of his eye. He just hoped poor Johnny was still alive.

He dragged Percival's laughing and oddly limp body over to the safe, bound his hands and started a routine of inquiry as to the combo of the safe.

He put the cigarette out on the shag carpet.

"I'm running out of patience, and soon my knife will begin to ask questions. And he makes me look like a gentleman."

Percival began to come to a bit out of whatever stupor he seemed to be in.

"Wait, what? Where...where am I?"

"You're a few minutes away from losing your life unless you give me your safe combo, pal."

"But I'm...oh, god, I'm so sorry...okay, 35...35, 29, 53"

Luke looked at Percival like a lost kitten covered in flour, but he had no time to ask why this man suddenly came-to. He propped up Percival against the wall, but wondered if there was something even more fishy than he originally thought. He positioned himself near the safe expecting his journey to be nearly over.

He tapped on the safe like a father-to-be gently tapping on the pregnant belly of his wife.

"Don't worry buddy, I'll get you out soon". He heard nothing.

"35...29...53".

Click.

He turned the handle and opened the safe. Just as he was about to look inside, expecting a sense of relief unlike anything he had heard before, something happened.

Thud.

Luke slowly came back to consciousness, he found himself sitting next to Percival, his hands, legs, thighs all bound very tightly with wire. His head was pounding to hard to try to move, but he knew he knew small, nimble fingers tied those knots. As he struggled to raise his head to see the two figures coming towards the lit part of the basement, he noticed it was little Tommy holding a clip-board and, perfectly healthy, holding a wrench, was little Johnny.

"Johnny...what is this?" Luke whispered, his eyes begin to tear with his inevitable realization.

"Tommy and I are doing our science fair project, remember? He was testing the effects of his mother's pills on Mr. Johnson. We ground it up in

his orange juice."

"But...what...about..."

"Part of my experiment was testing the effects of fear on head injury"

"*Part?*", Percival asked, his tone ever more hopeless.

The unmistakable sound of a dentist drill could be heard in the background.

"Yes, Mr. Bavariou. Part."

Bavariou wept uncontrollably.





## Chapter 105

# The Smoker

By Cruo

I stepped up to the door. The smell of the smoke was leaking through the door. I was at the front door of Gus's Bar and Grill. My hand started to shake a bit as I reached toward the handle. I paused. I reached for my Beretta instead. My name is Luke Bavarius, I am a private detective called in to investigate a smoking complaint. I love my job.

I kicked in the front door with my boot, my Beretta ready for any trouble I might find myself in. All I see is the bartender washing out a mug at the bar with a terrified look on his face. With his head he gestures to the corner. I follow his jerks and find my eyes looking on the face of a boy. The boy was the age of a fifth grader. At last, the source of the smoke has been discovered. I yelled to the boy, "Hey you! Yeah you in the corner, drop the cigarette now!" The boy only smiled and waved me to come closer.

As I walked closer I got this horrid feeling that I knew the boy, but I couldn't quite place it. I asked him why he thought it was okay to smoke in this bar when the law clearly says it is against the law. He flashed me another of his mischievous smiles and asked, "What's the matter Luke you don't recognize me?"

Suddenly the thought came to me but I couldn't believe in my own thought. "I.. I.. wha.. who are you?"

"Really Luke, when was the last time you've looked in the mirror?"

"No! This is impossible! You can't be!"

"Oh but I am Luke, I am you and you know it. Well... I was you."

I was staring into the face of myself as a fifth grader. I tentatively asked, "Why are you here, what do you want?"

"Luke, I was sent from the future to warn you of something."

"What do you mean the future, you're from the past?"

"Shut up Luke, I was sent from the future, you wouldn't understand so let me get back to my warning. I was sent to warn you about finishing your

little project." I was building a robot in my garage in my spare time, that had to be what he was talking about. "Your little project may seem innocent enough now, but it will be the end of mankind as you know it, and you must destroy it before you finish, you must!"

Suddenly I saw a blue flash next to the boy who was myself from the past but from the future. Some acid like substance sprayed out through the flash instantly and the boys face started melting in front of my eyes. It was terrifying, the skin and the blood and his eyes and his tongue were all fusing together in a horrid tangle of disgusting gore. I could see his bones through his melting face and his screams were the stuff of nightmare. I started to intensely vomit all that was held in my stomach, so intense that blood started pouring out alongside the sick substance. My eyes were bulging and my ears were pumping hard with the beat of my heart. The boy was now a pile of melted flesh and blood and gore.

I dropped to my knees and scooped the pile of the once past future self into my arms. Suddenly, I was sobbing.

## Chapter 106

# The Homeless Monster

By TarDolphinorShark

Luke Bavarious sat weeping in his rust colored apartment. The kind of apartment that wept pain and vomited sorrow from every bowed ceiling tile to every dinged and dingy wall. It had been three weeks since that fatal night and he just couldn't get it out of his head. His once normal life was twisted into a tormented and nightmareish existence. As he sat cleaning his Beretta, the very Beretta he was issued from the precinct, he remembered that fateful evening. Rain was vomiting from the sky and it sounded as if a thousand wounds were spilling mucus and pus from their pierced membranes. Luke walked down the street when suddenly he saw a sobbing mess of a man. Homeless scum he thought. This man was wearing a disheveled burlap sack with tears that looked like the ripped flesh of a person who was left for dead long ago. Luke grimaced at the homeless man, thinking to himself "I'll bet this is the guy the chief told me about, I won't have any noise complaints on my watch!" Suddenly he exploded into action drawing his Beretta he steadied it at the homeless man who whimpered at first, but gradually started to let loose a blood curdling scream that smelled of death and reeked of vengeance. "YOU LET ME BECOME THIS MESS OF A HUMAN!" the homeless man shouted. He leaped at Luke arms flailing wildly and razor sharp fingernails digging into Luke's arm and revealing the rust colored life force within him. Luke's Beretta skittered across the alley just out of reach. "Without my Beretta I will have to handle this mad man using my bare hands" Luke thought to himself. As he exploded forward lungs heaving and arms outstretched he made contact with the man. Wrapping his arms around the homeless man's neck he wrenched and wrenched until the neck split like a ripened banana, spilling a vibrant rouge all over the asphalt. The gore was thick, and layered in between Luke's fists which made it harder to grip his now reclaimed Beretta. As he steadied his shot, he kept feeling a nagging suspicion in the back of his Anger filled mind. He

knew this man once, but he could not place it. "No matter." Luke thought, This man is a burden on society and must be dealt with. Luke cocked the hammer of his Beretta and as the hammer of justice falls on those who do wrong, so did the hammer of the Beretta fall on the firing pin launching round after round into what Luke considered human garbage. The man's skull exploded and his chest lit up with the continuous barrage of hot lead pouring from the only real friend Luke had, his Beretta. The homeless man winced one last time as snot and spit and vomit erupted from his mouth, eyes, and nose like a morbid fountain. As he rolled over to die, Luke saw something in his hand. Luke crouched down to gaze upon the item, and noticed it was a picture, a picture of a familiar person. LUKE BAVARIOUS, but who was the man in that picture? Luke stared at the man, and then the photograph, the pieces finally coming together. "Father" he thought, as he clutched the picture in his hands like a hawk clutches a dying mouse. If I would have known you'd end up like this I would have dropped out of the academy, but I made my choice, and you made yours. "Nobody makes noise on Luke Bavariou's watch!" Luke said as he chambered one last round, and placed it right between his rotting father's eyes.

e: for title

**Monstrous**

By Blurry Gray Thing

In the shadows of our overcrowded cities lurk unspeakable horrors. No one knows or can imagine the horrid reality that lurks beneath our wholesome facade. I am one of the few people who does. I am a private detective. My name is Luke Bavariou. These are my stories.

I was investigating a brutal serial killer operating in the bad side of New York. When I saw his latest victim, I was stricken by the horrid brutality of his violence. The murderer cut out the homeless man's heart, stabbed him through the eyes, and carved him open from buttocks to head. Vomit forced its way past my teeth, and poured into the gutter, mixing with the unfortunate victim's blood. That night, I went home and drank whiskey until the alcoholic poison killed all the feeling in my brain.

I used my detective skills to track the murderer to a warehouse in the worst part of the city. I knew the killer had to be there. All of the monstrous murders pointed to it. As I walked there, I felt nauseous. The people all around me were garbage. Prostitutes and thieves. They did not deserve to live. But they did not deserve to be brutally murdered.

I stalked carefully into the warehouse. My combat boots carried me silently through the shadows. I heard a man ranting and I saw a dim light coming from a small room. It had to be him.

"Why are there so many of you now? Where are you all coming from!?" The man was insane. Whoever he was talking to grunted.

"You can stop pretending! I know what you really are. I won't let you get away with it! I'll kill all of you!" he was screaming. I had to save his victim.

I smashed open the door with my shoulder. There was an old man in horribly ragged clothing tied to a chair. There was also a thin, pale man with pitch-dark hair, holding a knife. The knife was rusty and fat from all the blood it had drank. I raised my Beretta at his head.

"Hold it! Let him go!" I ordered the killer.

"No! Please, you don't understand," he said. His face was twisted by tears and rage. He raised his knife to impale the victim's face.

"No, you don't understand. Put down your weapon, or I will shoot you," I ordered again. The rust-colored knife fell out of his hands. He was sobbing. I started untying the old man. The old man smelled like blood. I thought it was because he was injured.

"No!" screamed the murderer. "Don't let him loose! He'll kill us both! He's a monster! You don't understand!"

"You are the only monster here, pal!" I untied the old man completely.

Suddenly, the homeless man let out a horrid roar. It almost deafened me. I could not do anything to stop him. He flew at the murderer teeth-first, like a human-sized vulture, and tore at his neck. Blood the color of ripened apples exploded all over the tiny room, and shone bright red in the light of a single bulb. I fired my Beretta at what I had so incorrectly assumed was a victim. The recoil shot through my arm but he did not stop. He tore apart the man's skin, muscles, and arteries with horrible strength, even as I squeezed round after round into his back. His growls mixed with the sound of shells hitting the floor. Soon, the murderer was a pile of ruined meat.

He turned around and looked at me with eyes dark as dry blood. I knew my gun could not stop him. I dove to grab the murderer's knife. I knew what I had to do. The old man dove to grab my throat.

No one had ever solved that crime. I told the Chief of Police that I found two more victims in an old warehouse, but couldn't handle working the case any longer. The murders continued. Every month, a new homeless man was found cut open, with his heart carved out. The police knew it was all done with the same knife, but no one knew who was doing it.

**Deja Vu By The Bananana**

Luke awoke in a bed. He stared at the ceiling and searched his mind for his surroundings. He couldn't remember a thing. His head ached, pounded as he struggled to sit up. He was in a clean white room.

There was a noise. Familiar. Welcome.

Beneath the door drifted the smell of home. Of warm bread. Of eggs. The sounds and clatter of morning seeped through as well. He swung his legs over the side of the bed. His head was still aching, but it was lessening.

He stood.

The sun's beams had warmed the floor. He stretched, lost his balance, and fell back to the bed. He lay there, lying in the light, when he began to listen.

A voice, He recognized it. Then another. He knew them both.

No, he thought, he must be dreaming.

He got up and turned towards the door. Behind him, through the windows, the trees began dancing lightly in a sudden fresh breeze.

He inched to the door, and reached for the knob, and recoiled in pain, as the hot door burned his hand.

"What are you doing" asked a young boy from the corner of the room, surprising Luke.

He was small. Pale. He looked unwell.

"Wha...who are you"? Luke said, studying the stranger.

"That wasn't part of the deal" the boy replied.

Deal? Luke didn't know what the kid was talking about.

"Don't open the door" the boy warned.

Luke knew what was on the other side. His family. His wife. His son. Sitting, waiting. Her red locks swaying and bouncing as she prepared their breakfast. His boy, sitting at the table, his feet dangling from the chair, smiling and laughing.

The young boy persisted.

Don't open the door." He said again.

The room grew dark.

Luke looked outside, and watched as the trees now shook and swayed violently amidst an angry grass sea, heaving beneath the dark sky, as rain began to pelt the glass.

"What are you doing here? Who are you?" Luke tried again.

"You're not listening." the boy's eyes narrowed and he continued,

"Enjoy it. Lay down this time. Stay and enjoy it."

The kid must have been sick. He wasn't making any sense.

"I've got a son about your age, he's right in there" Luke said pointing to the door.

"Do you have any friends? I'm sure my boy will play with you. Do you like pancakes? My wife, she makes the best pancakes."

"Luke", the boy cut him off, "Your son and wife are dead. They've been dead, since the fire. You know the deal. Stay here. Enjoy it."

"What do you know about my wife and son? What do you mean they're dead." He stared at the child

"Boy, I know your sick but you can't talk like that, it's not right. Listen, listen to them, can't you hear them, they're in there right now, look I'll show you" Luke turned to the door.

"Please Luke," The boys face was unchanged, his voice placid but firm and sure. "Don't open the do..."

"Hey!" Luke interrupted, "now I don't know what in the hell you're going on about, but it ends right now. Get out of here you sick freak, get out"! And the boy was gone.

Luke rubbed his eyes. Had the boy really just vanished? As he wondered what had just happened, he noticed that his head didn't hurt any more. Outside the air was now enraged, thrashing about flinging rain and debris everywhere. It made Luke more even more uneasy, but he remembered

the door, and he shook the feeling off. He reached once again for the knob, as the roar filled his ears.

And he grasped the knob and suddenly it was deafeningly quiet. He turned and looked back outside. It was bright, very bright out, and the trees and sky were calm. The door was cool to the touch, and Luke pulled open the door, eager to see his family.

Black. Charred wood. Everything, all of it, consumed. HE steeped through the crumbling doorway. The burnt skeleton of walls now surrounded all the ash and rubble that was once his home. Outside, surrounding the house were hundreds of people, just starring. Near the pipes where the sink had been, lay the dark remains of a woman clutching a child.

He couldn't breathe, he couldn't swallow. Grief and sorrow were throttling him, and suddenly he let loose in heaving spasms as he ran to his family. He knelt, sobbing, over what was left of them.

"No" he uttered

The crowd erupted in a bellowing barrage of whispers

"You did this"

"This is your fault"

"They came for you"

"Why did you let them die?"

"They came for you"

"No...NO!" Luke screamed, "I couldn't stop them..."

"I tried to save them", he continued.

Amidst the churning crowd suddenly stood the boy again.

"I asked you not to open the door this time. I asked you to stay on the other side."

"I...I tried to save them" Luke sputtered out

"No" reasoned the boy, "no, you damned them. You dug too deep into our affairs; you stuck your nose in our business. It was you that did this to your wife. To your son. You are responsible."

"I tried...I came home...the flames, they were everywhere" Luke carried on, distantly.

"There's more." Said the boy, "there's more for you"

"No, it doesn't matter now", Luke said sitting up, looking at the boy

His hollowed eyes and emotionless gaze should have terrified Luke.

"You can't do anything to me now...just kill me. Kill me"

The boy's brows furrowed, his face twisted, pulled and broke. He smiled, and then began to laugh.

"Kill you?" He said regaining his composure, "Why? Why would I kill you? No. We have something much worse for you." And the crowd's accusing chants began to bleed through the boy's speech. They screamed now. Angry, haunting, they pierced through Luke's hands as he covered his ears.

"No, NOO!" he screamed as he began to beat his head against the rubble. But it did nothing to lessen the shrieking crowd. He had to end it. He saw

the pipe, sticking out of the foundation. Its jagged end would easily drive through his head.

He stood, the cries and screams still pursuing and punishing him. He took a breath and slammed his head down.

Luke awoke in a bed. He stared at the ceiling and searched his mind for his surroundings. He couldn't remember a thing. His head ached, pounded as he struggled to sit up. He was in a clean white room.

There was a noise. Familiar. Welcome.

**The Truly Horrid Reflection By and Into**

The shadows trickled through the alley like the breath of an aging, slightly obese hard-boiled cop in the middle of extending an over-wrought metaphor. But even in the face of a dark alley opening up like the maw of blackest Death itself, I wasn't afraid—I have a Beretta, and I have the name Bavarius. Luke Bavarius, NYPD.

My partner Rogue was busy working a tough murder case. Rogue was chosen as part of a task force to catch the Bronx Butcher, a serial killer with a hobby of hunting and taunting his would-be pursuers. Some men have all the luck. I've been put on the toughest beat of all: noise complaints.

There are noises out there—a car door slammed, an alarm in the night, a clown horn comically honked too loud—noises that wait in the shadows, only to surprise and rape the sweet ears of the innocent citizens of New York. But not if Bavarius has anything to say about it. Luke Bavarius.

The alley off 42nd street is home to many things. And apparently some of them make noise, because I've been called to investigate. Staying just inside the cold cloak of the shadows I edge down the alley. I saw a figure perched on a dumpster, his back to me. He was sobbing and crying.

It's for nights like this I joined the force.

"New York Ordinances state that excessive noise is punishable by fines not exceeding one hundred dollars for the first offense," I said, smirking. "But I bet that you're a repeat offender, huh? You should have picked just one: sobbing OR crying. But you've just gotta be a loud son of a bitch and do both, don't ya? Well, I guess you just weren't planning on the icy justice of Bavarius—Luke Bavarius—were you? Now turn around."

I raised my loaded Beretta, cocked it, and pointed it directly at the figure's back, as per the NYPD protocols for how to handle the grief-stricken.

"I said, 'Turn around,'" I repeated, more loudly and even more smirkingly. But still at a reasonable decibel level, so as not to disturb the peace. The peace I've been hired to protect.

"Excuse me, sir," the crying figure said between, frankly, unnecessarily loud sobs. "But you don't want me to turn around..."

"Sure I do. I have a loaded, sleek, cocked Beretta pointed at your back, so you better turn around," I said. I went ahead and cocked the Beretta again, just for the effect, and because I goddamn love me a good Beretta-cocking.



"Okay, you asked for it," the thing mumbled, uncharacteristically low in volume.

From the gutter above, water-trickles breezed through the alley as it turned toward me, and began slowly inching into the light.

First its combat boots emerged from the darkness. Then its knee. Then its leg. Then its pelvis and hips. Then its chest actually seemed to emerge slightly before its stomach, oddly, but its shoulders came out next, just as one would anatomically expect. Then its neck (it is kind of limboing now, for some reason). Finally, its head came into clarity in the dim light.

If you could call it a head. His face was horrid. There was a superfluity of purple scars. There was blood trickling from an empty eye socket and his sole ear was ugly. There was no nose. There were no lips. There were bruises and lumps all over the cheeks. There was only thin stubble for eyebrows. Although there was a well groomed and handsome mustache, this could not make up for the fact that there were deep gashes and uneven scar tissue across the forehead, the chin, the mandible...

I really could go on, but the point is, he is an ugly motherfucker, like burn-ward ugly, and the still-sobbing thing stared at me for quite some time while I noted, like an obsessive cartographer, every curve and contour of its face. In *excruciating* detail. The thing's neck was a bit small in circumference compared to its body, too, by the way. About 17

My exhaustive cataloguing of the ugly bastard complete, I finally took a step back, in narratively delayed astonishment. I had to grit my teeth to keep the vomit down. Damn bourbon and peyote cocktails.

He took three more steps forward. "I told ya," it said.

If there's one thing Luke Bavariouos hates more than loudness, it is people or things that rub it in your face when they are right. I shot the sad, monstrous I-told-ya-so in the jaw a few times, adding more holes to the disfigured jerk. The bullets hit the face terribly powerful. The gunshots rang out, more audible than I would have preferred—but it is a necessary evil. Lifeless, the beastly thing slunk anticlimactically to the asphalt.

But at his side some object fell—what is this—Strunk and White's *Elements of Style*? Its pages unfurl, revealing a check, signed "Luke Bavariouos, NYPD."

I now recognize at my feet the broken body of the copy editor I had hired to read over a draft of my memoir, the man who had disappeared after receiving my papers and my first payment, the man I thought had conned me and run off. I see him and what I have done to him, what every mixed metaphor, switched tense, and redundant adjective had driven him to become, what it drove him to do to himself.

I tasted my tears and vomit mix into a martini of misery. I saw a horrid reflection. Suddenly, I was sobbing. And crying.



## Chapter 107

# The Horrid Realization

By Baron von Eevl

I stepped from the glare of traffic. The time had come again. I was in the police station on 42nd street in New York. My hand shook slightly with the bic pen I held in my hand. The matte white pen had leaked in my pocket. Another shirt ruined. I am a desk jockey. My name is Detective Luke Bavarious. I dislike this work.

People had been complaining about a drunken officer in their neighborhood on his beat. I was transferred off the streets because of these disturbances.

I edged into the Sergeant's office. I saw the tall, handsome figure of the man I once respected sitting in his chair, facing towards me. He was sighing. I raised my finger and slurred a series of vulgar insults at the sitting figure.

"Bavarious, you drunken fool." The captain bellowed.

"Turn around!" I shouted.

"Beggin' your pardon, Detective," he said, "I'm already facing you. If I turn around I would be facing a wall."

"Sure I do. I'm a better cop than you could ever be, McClenaghan" I replied.

"Okay, that didn't even make sense," the sarge mumbled as he began to turn red.

Fabian McClenaghan was my Sergeant. He and I joined the academy together years ago and quickly became friends. He and I would share all our secrets together at the shooting range and promised when we died we'd be buried together there with our trusty barettas, shiny sleek and deadly.

"Give me your badge, Bavarious."

I inched forward and began to sweat all over. My ductile muscles clenched and began to shiver. First my feet, deep in non-uniform combat boots. Then my legs. Then my chest. Then my head. If you call it a head. My head was

so clouded with liquor I could barely think. Was that what you called it? A head? It's that thing on top of your neck. The one with all the holes.

I took a step back in astonishment. I gritted my teeth to keep the vomit down.

McClenaghan stared at me with unbridled hate and shame. Ashamed of hate.

"You look like you're going to be sick, Bavarious" he grumbled, concerned. "Do you need me to grab my trashcan for you to throw up in?"

"Hey buddy!" I screamed. "I don't need no trashcan from the likes of you!" I then vomited. The horrid cocktail of blood and last night's spaghetti dinner came up and spilled all over the Sergeant's floor, looking like some alien had died and it's guts were spilled all over the floor of the Sergeant's office on the floor.

"I told ya," he said.

I screamed and began to run away from him. He waved his hand high in the air and screamed after me.

"Bavarious, give me your gun and your badge, you drunken fool!" He screamed.

"McClenaghaaaaaan!" I screamed right back at him.

It was too late. I was running through an endless maze of cubicles each as similar as the last. I ran faster. As I ran, I vomitted a horrid smelling liquid of putrefaction all over my pen-ruined shirt. Pen and vomit ruined. And spaghetti sauce. As I ran, others began to run too, running from the awful weird vomit. The first person ran faster than the second. The second person ran faster than the third. The third person was not running very fast because she was a woman and I'm not comfortable describing her further. The second person slipped in the vomit and the first person easily outpaced him. The third person was elsewhere at that point. Maybe vomiting.

Being drunk, I began to see horribly awful images. A spider. A person who is also part spider. A butcher's knife. A young boy, to be respected and listened to, lit from below and looking very much serious and respected. These were the typical hallucinations I had when drunk, which causes horrible hallucinations.

My head smashed into the door terribly powerful. Muscles were strained and torn as my head jerked to the side, smearing the glass. I fell and landed on the hard linoleum flooring. Dazed I vomited again and again. I felt the surge pushing back rhythmically. I ran outside but continued to vomit. Spaghetti hitting the pavement. Splatter hitting my shirt. Blood showering me. I felt my own blood from the side of my mouth fall and drip. I kept vomiting. My stomach was empty. I staggered. I tasted my dinner and blood mixed into a horrid cocktail. It tasted like vomit. My badge sparkled on the side of my waistband. Bavarious.

I picked myself up and stumbled over to a mirror. Suddenly, I was in my apartment. Suddenly, I was sobbing.

**Part V**

**Inflamed Appendices**



## Appendix A

# Colophon

This book is a collection of stories from the Something Awful Forums, inspired by the 1991 book *Horrors* by Ben Biddick. Most were written as a response to a challenge by forums moderator AYBraham:

Your goal: Write a short story in the theme of *Horrors*, the collection of short stories written by Mr. Ben Beddick when he was 13 years old. Each story is encouraged to feature the tragic protagonist Luke Bavarius, and must be more than 500 words each. Each story must show that "kids need to be respected and listened to."

This book was typeset by the  $\LaTeX$  document preparation system, using the book class.

It was set in the Antykwa Toruńska ("Antiqua of Torun") typeface, the most horrrifying of all the standard  $\TeX$ live typefaces. The face was designed by Zygfryd Gardzielewski (1914–2001), and first cast in metal in 1960 in the Grafmasz typefoundry in Warsaw. The variant used in this document was digitized by Janusz Marian Nowacki, a tremendously cool dude from Poland, based off of photocopies of the original design.