



---

## Writing Forums info sheet Number 4

---



*Scrapyard Wurm – by WF Veteran Member InkwellMachine*

*Next Page: Cereal Ghost by InkwellMachine*

### Contents

Editorial .....	2
STAFF NEWS .....	3
FORUM NEWS .....	5
Featured Artist: Benjamin Cook – WF member InkwellMachine .....	5
OTHER THINGS (THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT) .....	6
The Dungeons of WF - submitted by <a href="#">Bazz Cargo</a> .....	6
Excision - by Benjamin Cook ( <a href="#">InkwellMachine</a> ) .....	8
The Collector - by <a href="#">Terry D</a> .....	9

## Editorial

People seem to have two very different reactions to the month of October. For some, it means pumpkin spice and ankle-biters in costume, sent out to knock on your door and rob you of all your candy with a crooked smile.

For others, it's the time of year where they have to do a double take of the calendar because they just can't trust their eyes the first time they sweep across the word 'October'.

Growing up in a country that is only just now catching the Halloween bug, I'm left to fall into the second category by default. And it happens every year.

Right now it's at the point where I should no longer be surprised each and every time March somehow morphs into November and the chocolate Easter eggs are replaced by candy canes and mall-Santas.

It happened last year, and best as I can remember it happened in all the years before that too, so there's no real use in feeling surprised or annoyed or anxious

that the year is suddenly rounding third base and headed for home.

I want to pass that sentiment on to anyone else who may be looking at the calendar and feeling that the year disappeared from under them: don't sweat it. If the year went by quickly then that surely means that you were enjoying yourself and working hard.

And that has certainly been the case here at WF. The boards have been on fire all year, and behind the scenes it has been just as hairy with some exciting new developments to bring to you this month, and a promise for more in the future.

Keep your eyes peeled and you'll be able to watch WF do its utmost to become an even better site for us writer-folk.

*popsprocket*



## STAFF NEWS

### Star Staffer of the Month

For her outstanding contribution at all times, but especially during the month of September, [Chester's Daughter](#) has been stuck with a new medal and named Star Staffer of the Month!

---

---

### Netiquette and WF

In our recent rule update we changed things so that any and all moderation was given the same weight, regardless of whether or not there was an actual written rule involved.

This is largely because WF has unwritten rules to complement the ones on the Rules page, and though they haven't been committed into words, they are still an important part of how the site is kept running smoothly.

Not all of these unwritten rules are enforceable on any practical scale but are still in place because they contribute significantly to our forum being as good as it can be.

Among our biggest unwritten rules is the reciprocity of critiques on the creative boards. That means that there is a certain understanding among members that in order to receive good critiques, good critiques must also be given.

Now, we recognise that giving a good, in-depth critique is a time consuming thing, and that's why there is no specific requirement for members to provide feedback for others before they are eligible to receive some of their own.

Other sites require that new members leave certain number of high quality critiques or have all members work on a credit system to ensure reciprocity. WF does not subscribe to

this school of thought, preferring to allow our members to take part of their own free will rather than scare them off at the front door by forcing them to run a gauntlet.

This honour system does occasionally open us up to selfish posters.

By and large, though, the whole thing works smoothly and to the advantage of anyone who is looking for an excellent writing community to settle in.

To our established members – it speaks to the strength of WF as a community that we operate the way we do and you should be applauded for that. Seeing a long-serving and deserving member receive support on the things they post is what makes this place great.

To our new members – just keep this sort of thing in mind. No one wants to dampen your enthusiasm one wit. But, if you'd like more, better critiques on your works, try sticking around for a little bit before sharing your work. The result might surprise you once you get to know the community better.

~ ~ ~

**QUOTE ME!** Cadence – *Everything you write is real writing. Unless you're some demonic spirit... if so, be gone with you!*

~ ~ ~

## Fluff Bunnies

In keeping with the theme of netiquette, this month we have created a new user group to help reinforce the idea of participating properly in the site – the Fluff Bunny.

We recognise that most new users sign up to the site with a piece of writing burning a hole in their keyboard that they would like some feedback on. However, if we did nothing to encourage proper participation in the site then our creative boards would be clogged with all manner of things from one-time posters who got their answers and left.

In the spirit of reciprocal critiques and a helpful writing community, it's in everyone's best interest that the forum upholds its minimum ten post rule – a much smaller hurdle than can be found on other writing forums where minimum post counts are high enough to make anyone groan and a plethora of other compulsory requirements can be found.

Low a hurdle as the ten post rule might be, we

still find ourselves at the mercy of new members who, in their eagerness to share their own work, behave a little selfishly and make fluff posts – posts of little or no value – in quick succession in order to gain access to the creative boards.

From now on such posters may be dealt with by being labelled 'Fluff Bunnies'.

Fluff Bunnies will temporarily be restricted from posting in the creative boards until they have had a little bit of time to slow down and make sure that their contributions are worthwhile and that they understand the nature of the Green Lady's desired netiquette.

The Fluff Bunny user group will not be applied to regular members.

## Author Interviews

Writing Forums has never strived to be the biggest writing community on the internet – only the best. To quote Cran\*, “Build it and they will come.”

To that end, there is always work going on behind the scenes as every one of our hard working staff does their utmost to make the site better.

And that work extends far beyond our ordinary duties as mentors and moderators and administrators.

Separately we each manage our own little slice of the site. But, collectively, we all work together on new projects and ideas in order that we might provide more value for our members.

Our latest endeavour has been working on expanding PiP's Author Interviews to include authors from outside our membership base.

Have you ever tweeted a question to your favourite author but they haven't gotten back to you?

Well this may be the chance to see them stop in at our little patch of internet and give the Green Lady some of their time.

Some parts of this plan still require a little ironing out, but you can be assured that we will all be hard at work over the next few weeks and months, working at getting this idea on its feet properly.

If there is an author you would like to see us do an interview with then make sure to say something and we'll do what we can.

In addition to being open to suggestions on the *who*, we will also be opening up the *what* to the population of The Motley Tavern where our subscribers and veterans will get to choose the questions that we include in our interviews.

Down the line, the population of the Tavern can also expect to be front line guests of any live chats that we are able to schedule and possibly be in with an opportunity to digitally meet and greet the authors and industry professionals that we manage to steal some time with.

\*Actually, it is a quote of Cran quoting the theme of the movie, *Field of Dreams*.

---

---

## FORUM NEWS

### Literary Manoeuvres

The prompt for September's LM competition was 'Alien Mating Rituals'. Topping the scoreboard was shinyford, with his entry 'Spede, Dating'.

### Non Fiction Literary Manoeuvres

Congratulations to PiP who won 'The Best Way to Travel' challenge with her entry 'Personal Space'

### Poetry Challenge

September held two victors in the poetry challenge '5 Lines'.

Please congratulate Firemajic who won with her entry 'Abstract Beauty', and Terry D who shared the prize with his 'Untitled' entry.

### Colors of Fiction

This month the chosen prompts were 'Therapist' and 'Orange Soda'. In a result that has nothing at all to do with his organising the challenges, J Anfinson won the round with his entry 'Therapy'.

---

---

If you'd like to follow us on social media or just find out what the Media Team has been up to so far, then take a look our pages:



### Featured Artist: Benjamin Cook – WF member InkwellMachine

This issue's Featured Artist is WF Veteran member InkwellMachine.

Inks joined WF in June 2013 and quickly established himself as one to watch, especially around Halloween.

## OTHER THINGS (THAT GO BUMP IN THE NIGHT)



*Hidden Things by InkwellMachine*

### **The Dungeons of WF - submitted by Bazz Cargo**

Deep beneath the popular boards there is an area that is not spoken of. A place of ancient troubles.

Listen carefully in the dark. There is a distant, rhythmic squeak. Along the dusty, cobwebby corridor comes a strange procession. The Admiral, in his wheel chair with a squeaky wheel, is holding a flaming torch. Pushing him is Gumby, elegant as ever, dressed in slinky scarlet.

Beside them is Pip, dressed in a black leather cat-suit; she is pushing a shopping trolley. Inside the trolley a large hessian sack is moving, strange growling, swears issue from it.

They reach a large, iron studded, wooden door. The kind that says 'number three battering ram and at least five hours hard work.'

Silently, The Admiral passes Pip the key. With a mighty clunk the lock turns. The door gives reluctantly. It has a creak like the foretelling of doom. Inside there is a steady tapping mixed with the dripping of water and the scurrying of rats paws.

Carefully, Pip, tips over the trolley. The sack thumps to the flagstone floor. The noise and activity of the contents of the sack increases until it appears a whole pride of wildcats are holding an end-of-term disco inside.

Step-by-step, Pip, drags the sack down the many, steep, stone steps. Thump, thump, thump. By the light of her key ring flashlight she drags it along the narrow corridor. To her left is a row of cell doors. To her right is a wall.

There, in an open cell just beyond the rusty shackles still holding the bones of a long ago ex-member of staff, is a solitary figure. It sits before an Amstrad word processor, gently keying in sentence after sentence. In the eerie light of the screen the papery white skin is green. The eyes, dark pools of shadow. The long, thin, delicate fingers a slow dance across the keyboard.

Pip, puts the sack into the farthest cell. She carefully closes and locks the door. She stands back. From within, the sack is ripped apart. Slowly a mutated figure stands tall.

“Three days, Potty,” she says.

WerePotty growls. He lunges, paws tipped with razor sharp claws swing at Pip. A smart Pip who has done this every full moon for months and knows exactly how far to stand back.

“It is peaceful down here, you can work on your competition entry.”

Growls and spitty hissing.

“Take care my friend.” Slowly Pip turns and walks away. Behind her there is the sound of werePotty drinking from the toilet bowl. Pip is glad she cleaned it properly the day before.

\* \* \*

At the top of the stairs, Pip, pushes hard to close and lock the door. Silently the key is

returned.

“You alright, my dear?” asks Gummy.

“Sad.”

“He will be safer there.”

“Now I am part of the team, can I ask some questions?” Pip puts the trolley upright and the group move on.

Gummy, smiles. “You can always ask.”

“You have an amazing range of stunning dresses, but why always crimson?”

“Well. A properly designed dress allows me to wear my holdout pistol in a garter holster. And crimson is the best color, it hides blood splashes most effectively.”

Pip, mulls this over. “Who is the woman typing in the dungeon?”

“My dear, you have been blessed. Not many have seen her. Very few know about her. She is-- The Ghost Writer.”

*(Happy Halloween)*



*This Oil by InkwellMachine*

*Being that October is a time of pumpkin and horror, this month we have two brilliant horror shorts, courtesy of the LM Fiction challenge.*

## Excision - by Benjamin Cook ([InkwellMachine](#))

“Chaaaarliiiiie,” the boy whispers, rocking back and forth on his gurney.

A small, shriveled package rests in his cupped hands, plastic gleaming under the fluorescent lights. “I like your bubbles, Charlie.” He squeezes the package, watching the fluid gather around the fleshy lump at the center. Smiles. Brings it closer to his face. “They’re very good bubbles.”

The woman looks through the window into the room. She stares at the boy, soaks him in as best she can. “How long has it been since he arrived?”

“Less than a month. Probably a week and a half.”

“Really?” She raises her eyebrows. “I would have guessed longer. He’s making a speedy recovery, isn’t he?”

Tabatha nods, a bit surprised herself. “He is. It feels like it’s been so much longer. Between operations and therapy...” she sighs and shakes her head. “Poor boy.”

“I’ll say. Trapped in a closet for... how long?”

“The pediatrician says he’s ten.”

“Jesus. Did someone just leave him there?”

Tabatha shrugs. “Don’t know yet. He wouldn’t talk until we gave him the tumor back, and that was just this morning.”

“So strange.” The orderly stares at the child for another long moment. She smiles, giving her best impression of a

worried parent, and turns to leave. “Well, I suppose he’s in good hands. I’ll leave you to it.”

“See you.”

Like everyone else, Tabatha is a ghost. She floats past the boy, invisible, and settles into a nearby chair. “Hey you,” says her disembodied voice.

The boy sits upright, staring in a seemingly random direction. “Hi pretty voice lady.” He smiles excitedly and holds the package up for her to see. “Look! My brother found me! Charlie’s such a good big brother.”

“That’s good,” says Tabatha, her voice a soothing monotone.

The boy squeezes the package, tilting it toward the wall opposite Tabatha so that she can see. “He found bubble-clothes. They’re fun to squish.”

“Are they?”

“Mm-hmm. They’re lots more fun than his skin-clothes.”

“Do you mean when Charlie used to be inside your shoulder?”

“Snug as a bug in a rug.” The boy wheezed, something like laughter. “That’s what mother used to say.”

[Full text here.](#)





*Things Forgotten by InkwellMachine*

## **The Collector - by Terry D**

“You said you are a collector.”

He heard the woman’s voice, but only in the way you sometimes hear voices coming from a television in another room.

He was looking at the children. Oh! The glorious children. Ten of them. The same number he had at home. Ten children lined up in this cellar room, five to a side, as if preparing to play Red Rover.

“Do you have anything like this?” Her tone was smug.

“Yes,” he said. “And no.” He placed the plastic bag containing the photograph and figurine he’d purchased in the shop upstairs on the floor at the feet of the first child. He could see the Nike swoosh embossed onto the cream-colored sneakers on her cream-colored feet.

“Isn't she pretty?” The woman stood at the base of the stairs leading up to the shop. Her gray dress blended like camouflage with the concrete block wall behind her.

“She is,” he admitted. “She looks...” He almost said ‘like Audriana’. He needed to be careful. It wouldn’t do to say that name. No worry, he thought. You’re always careful. You wouldn’t have your collection if you weren’t.

But she did look like Audriana, or, at least what Audriana had looked like before the salt and formaldehyde. She looked like what he remembered. Audriana was, after all, his first.

**[Full text here.](#)**