

2014 MCC Creative Writing Contest

Fiction Category

Honorable Mention: “*White Eyes*,” by Kyle Wendt

The rain stabbed at the man’s jacket like daggers. The weather didn’t slow him down though. He couldn’t exactly recall why, but he knew he had to be at the restaurant by 2:00 am to deliver the contents of the brief case. He stopped under a street lamp to check his watch. 1:49 am, with another block to go. The streets were clear, it would be easy. He continued onto the street, shuddering a little. The cold was beginning to get to him. Finally, he reached the restaurant. He ran his fingers through his dark hair, slick from the rain. Hesitantly, he pushed through the door.

Something wasn’t right. The restaurant was all dark. He began to wonder if his contact hadn’t shown up. Cautiously, he tried the light switch. No power.

“Hello?” the man called out, “This is Jason, I have the package.” Nervousness began to well up inside. He wasn’t sure, but it appeared to be getting darker in the room. The adjacent dining room was completely black. The front desk seemed to be getting further away. Suddenly, Jason heard a whisper that seemed to come from the dining room. “Come here” it called out. Something was definitely wrong. He wanted to drop the case and leave, but somehow he couldn’t.

“I have the package, just like you wanted.” Jason said, trying to sound stern. The whispering started again. Now it wouldn’t stop. “Come here” it kept saying. The voice seemed to be coming from all around him now. Despite the cold, Jason was sweating. The nervousness was gone and fear had taken its place. Something seemed to be moving by the front desk. It was tall and thin, and pure black.

“I just want to leave the case and go!” Jason shouted. He was beginning to panic now. He was right by the door, he could turn around and leave if he wanted. Flee to safety and never return. Somehow, though, he couldn’t. He couldn’t take his eyes off the figure behind the desk. He felt that if he did, something horrible would happen. He might even be killed. His left hand still clutching the briefcase, he frantically grabbed for the jack knife in his suit jacket with his right. The small amount of light seeping in through the gloom glinted off the blade. It gave him a little relief, but not enough. The whispering was louder now, and more frequent. “Come here. Come here. Come here”. The figure behind the desk seemed to be dancing now. Twirling in the air almost. Jason’s eyes hadn’t left it for one second, for fear of what might happen.

He decided to try to make his way towards the dining room, never taking his eye off the figure. Whoever I need to meet must be in there... he thought, if I can just get this brief case in there... but before he could finish his thought, he was suddenly in the middle of the room again. Then the remaining light vanished. Jason began to panic. He could no longer see the figure. The whispering was more intense now. It was almost right in his ear. He could sense movement

around him, rapid and quiet. He thought he was screaming, but he couldn't tell anymore. All he could hear was that whispering. "Come here. Come here". He flailed his knife frantically around him, hitting nothing. Suddenly, the whispering stopped. Before him he saw two white eyes, and a grotesque smile curl below them. The white light seemed to pierce right through him. There was a faint glimmer of something sharp. Then, it rushed at him at an unfathomable speed. In this split second, Jason knew for sure that he was going to die. Just before it reached him, he heard a loud buzzing.

He woke up to his alarm, covered in a cold sweat. To his relief, the sun was out. It was a cold, sunny day in Toledo. There was a thin dusting of snow from the night before. From his bed he could see an icicle outside his window, every now and then a drip of water trickled off. He crawled out of bed, nearly slipping on an empty whisky bottle. The coffee the hotel provided was sub-par, but it made him feel better. Returning to the bed, Jason opened up a journal to record his troubling experience. His close friend, one of the few he had, insisted that it would help. Jason always scoffed at the idea, but he figured it wouldn't hurt to try. The nightmares had grown more frequent lately, and more terrifying.

He reached into his duffle bag and pulled out the small 9mm pistol he had rolled up in an old shirt, suddenly remembering why he was there. It would be another day until the man he sought out returned. With the gun in his hand, he pondered on what exactly he intended on doing when he finally met him. Would it be like the last one? Could he control his feelings?

He thought back to the week before. He had arranged to meet a man named Clay Townsend at a bar in Detroit. The conversation was initially pleasant. Clay had a wife, and had a good career at an office. Jason couldn't remember what exactly, he had lost focus. All he could think about was Clay's face the night he and Jake Orson pulled him out of his car, beat him to the brink of consciousness, and set his car on fire. He thought of how nobody believed him when he tried to get help, how the police told him they seemed capable of no harm and dismissed him. He thought of how they arranged for a girl to ask him on a date, just so they could draw him out and ambush him.

"I'm really sorry for that day." Clay said. "I know that doesn't really go back and fix what happened. I felt so guilty afterwards, I couldn't sleep for weeks." Something about the way he said that didn't sit well with Jason. Something about his smooth confidence, and the nearly smug smirk he seemed to have. Or was he imagining that? Jason didn't remember much after that. He remembered following Clay out after an argument. He remembered a gunshot, and driving Clay's car into the river.

Jason spent most of the day thinking about his next move, and keeping an eye on the parking lot. There was a light snowfall, it helped put him at ease. He found snow strangely comforting. He saw on the news that Clay had been announced missing. There were reports of an argument in a bar, but nobody could identify who he was arguing with. Finally, night descended. After Jason checked his pistol one more time, he turned out the lights and fell asleep.

He was back in the restaurant. It was all dark again. This time, however, there was no figure and the whispering was gone. There was nothing but the dark and the cold. He walked towards

the dining area again, sure that whoever he needed to meet was in there. Then the whispering started again. This time it was saying "I'm here". The dining area was completely dark. Jason couldn't see his hand in front of his face. Still, he pressed on, determined to find his contact and end this madness. Suddenly, before him, he saw the white eyes again.

"You can't stop me!" Jason shouted. "Get out of my way!" The smile curled under the eyes again. Jason gripped the brief case tightly, prepared to stand his ground. He reached for the jack knife again, but before he could, the figure rushed at him. The knife it held seemed to point right at him. Jason raised up the brief case to block, just in time for the knife blade to pierce the clasp, sending the contents tumbling out. Suddenly, it was gone. A light was coming from the open brief case. Inside was a picture of Jake Orson. Also, beneath the picture was the pistol. Then, the lights came on. In a booth at the end of the restaurant, sat Jake Olson.

When Jason had finally woken up, he saw that it was late in the afternoon. On a midwinter day like this, he knew he didn't have much daylight left. He quickly showered and dressed, tucking the pistol in an inside pocket of his coat. He was just about to shut the TV off when he saw what was on the news. A witness of the argument had come forward. There was no identification, but there was a description. Dropping the remote, he frantically packed his things. It didn't take long, he didn't have much to pack. He headed out the door, being careful to avoid anyone who might be out. When he reached the first floor, he slammed his key on the front desk and walked out, trying not to look suspicious. Luckily, no one was at the desk. When he reached his car, he threw his bag in the back seat and made his way for the park he had arranged to meet Jake in.

He was in the park for what seemed like hours. Night time had now fallen. He began to think Jake had seen his description on the news. Finally, he saw him approaching. This is it Jason thought. He knew what he had to do now. If Jake died, the nightmares would die with him. He started down the path to intercept Jake. When they were close, Jason got right to the point. He pulled the pistol from his jacket and pointed it right at Jake.

"This is it!" Jason shouted. "This is where it ends!" Jason could feel tears welling up. All these years he spent stewing in the hatred he felt had taken their toll.

"Jason? What are you doing?" Jake asked. There was a hint of fear in his voice. His eyes widened. "It was you that killed Clay wasn't it?"

"I just wanted to talk to him. All I could think of was that night!" The pistol began to tremble. "The nightmares haven't gone away since that night." Jason was filled with anger now.

"I'm sorry, I really am! I was a stupid 16 year old! We wanted to fix it, we wanted to make it right, but we could never find you." Jake shouted frantically. "I can give you money, Just please don't kill me!" He could see a tear rolling down Jakes cheek. "I have a daughter now. She's only a few months old."

"It's too late for that," Jasons finger began to tighten on the trigger "I have to do this." Jason readied for the gunshot, unsure of what would happen next. Everything else seemed to vanish

from the world. It was only him and Jake. Something was shouting behind him. He couldn't quite make it out. It all sounded muffled. Suddenly, he felt an impact in his leg, and the world rushed back. He twirled around and saw a cop standing about 15 feet away from him, smoking gun in hand.

"You don't understand!" Jason shouted "This has to happen!" He turned towards the cop, suddenly realizing his leg wasn't working.

"You have one more chance to drop the weapon! Put it down or I will shoot!" Barked the cop. Jason raised his pistol in the air as if to drop it. His mind raced. He thought he heard the whispering again. So it's just a nightmare he thought. He leveled the gun at Jake's head. Before he could pull the trigger, he felt another impact. This time on his chest. The world started fading. He could see the restaurant, with Jake sitting in the booth in the dining room. Only it wasn't Jake. This time it was himself. He could hear the whispering. It was you it called. He felt his body hit the ground. Then, everything went black.

JUDGE'S COMMENTS

This piece has a nice, cinematic quality about it moving from dream to reality back to dreams. It would have more depth of feeling if we knew a bit more about each of the characters. The opening line "The rain stabbed at the man's jacket like daggers" is exactly the right way to open up material like this.

Jim Fatka served as judge for the 2014 contest. Mr. Fatka is a recently retired MCC English instructor who taught numerous writing and literature courses, including creative writing.