

Ficta Fabula

BITS



Stories in this issue

Burning Desire

Wolfskin

Cold Shoulder

Troubled Past (Part II)

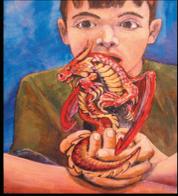
A Walk in the Woods

Riptide

...and many more!

Winter 2014

Turn the page to begin your journey...



SHARD
by Andreas Zimmermann

Imagine...your favourite childhood toy comes to life, talks with you, and plays games with you.

Now imagine that toy is a Dragon.

Join Alex, Jared, and Madison as the gifts they are given become living, breathing dragons! Follow them on their adventures in a land far beyond where they thought possibility could ever take them!

Follow them to Shard.

Andreas has been writing stories of fiction for many years, and while his works have been produced in print or on-line for a number of local and international publications, Shard is his first solo-published novel.

His works are not limited to novels and short-stories. Andreas has written and directed local stage productions, and is looking to produce a stage musical and short film in 2014-2015. A sequel to Shard is currently being written, and is expected to be released in the same time frame.

Look for more information about upcoming projects, and about the author in general at his personal site: www.andreaszimmermann.ca

Available now through your local bookseller or preferred online retailer.

SHARD
by Andreas Zimmermann

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Ficta Fabula

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Publisher's Say

Welcome to the Winter 2014 issue of
Ficta Fabula!!!

This is an exciting time and it's hard to believe it was only a year ago that we were getting ready to announce our return from hiatus. In that time we've been in touch with some tremendously talented authors, gained an editor, an illustrator and most recently a graphic designer. You might have noticed the improvement on the cover! We've put out our inaugural issue and had apps for both Android and Apple created. We sold out of the first printing of the inaugural issue and are well into the second printing. Based on what we've learned the first time around, it's all systems go for this issue.

When you read Laura's write up you'll notice that she extols the virtue and advantages of short stories. And really, who am I to argue with her logic? To further add credence to her arguments, earlier this year some of you may have noticed my excitement when famed Canadian short story author, Alice Munro won the Nobel Prize for Literature. What a coup for short story authors in general! Never before have I seen so much attention given to the short story.

Every book of fiction - regardless of its size - has the capacity to deliver a great deal of entertainment to the reader. A novel can suck the reader in for days on end and make them completely unproductive in other areas of their life (or maybe that's just me?). A series means that I'm out for the count for weeks! Novellas are great for going more in depth but don't require the same time commitment, but a short story is ideal for the busy person always on the go.

Most of our short stories are awesome 10 - 20 minute escapes. The short story means that during your busy day filled with all sorts of responsibilities - you can escape to a fantastic world where all you have to do is read and imagine. It's kind of like meditation but in someone else's head

and imagination. The short story escape is your meditation without the responsibility of trying to quiet your mind. You come back from the read feeling refreshed and ready to get on with your day.

Or perhaps you're the type of person that likes to read before bed (count me in that group!). You can start and finish a story all before bed and not be left wondering what's happening with the characters (or again is that just me?). I regularly forget that nothing actually happens with the characters until I read it. Which is why the short story is perfect for me.

The short stories within these covers - I hope - you'll find to be perfect for you as well. In this issue we cover all different genres of fiction. We have horror, science fiction, murder mystery, drama and romance. We get the next installment of "Troubled Past" and start a brand new serial with "Burning Desire" (that's the front cover illustration). In "The Carpet King" we are introduced to South Africa where you'll see the term "stoep". This isn't a typo - our author describes it as "the covered cement bit outside the house where you would put a bench or a couple of cane chairs and just sit and look at the passing traffic". You'll find a few South African terms throughout that story. Another bit of uniqueness about this issue is that there are two stories told from the point of view of someone that has passed on. This was a coincidence but we get the perspective of both sexes. But that's not all we have inside...turn the pages and prepare for your escape!

2014 will be a busy year for us. We'll start up with regular quarterly issues and have a special ABBA issue come out late fall.

We welcome all comments so please feel free to post on our Facebook page or blog or send an email to me at info@pagesofstories.com.

Take care and happy reading!

Darlene Poier
Publisher, *Ficta Fabula*
Inspiring Creativity and Imagination
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Greetings from the Editor

W elcome to the second edition of *Ficta Fabula!*

As I pen these greetings, it is another cold morning here in Alberta, the kind of day that lends itself to warm socks and hot cups of tea, hopefully beside a wood-burning fireplace. For some, winter is an ideal time of year for outdoor activities—skiing, skating, building a snowman. While I enjoy all of these, when it’s cold I prefer to hunker down indoors with a creative endeavour, penning my own thoughts or reading others’.

When I began reading through this edition’s stories, I was in the thick of volleyball season, driving here and there to watch my daughter play. I often take a book along with me to these events just in case I can snatch a few moments to read. Which is where a short story comes in. Easily picked up and read—on the commuter bus, in the doctor’s office, during lunch hour, and yes, even at a sports tourney—short stories manage to entertain anywhere and anytime.

Regardless of where you are—snowy Alberta or sunny Spain, at work or at home—here in the December edition of *Ficta Fabula* you will find adventure, mystery, revenge, romance, and lots of surprises. Re-enter the world of Alex and Dean in Part 2 of “Troubled Past” as they get closer to solving the mystery of the woman on the racetrack. Take a memorable visit to South Africa in “The Carpet King.” And overhear a very unusual conversation in “Yellow Eyes.”

As always, we are grateful you are joining us here.

Enjoy!

Laura Crowe, Editor, *Ficta Fabula*
www.imagineitinwriting.com

Dreams, unlike we are often taught, are not foolish, unnecessary things. Rather, they are what define us. Especially the ones that linger. This collection of true short stories is a book of dreams. Within its pages, you will share in thirteen personal journeys. You’ll conquer a foreign language, climb a monstrous tree, choose to live, to dance, to laugh when no one believes you can. Most importantly, you’ll dare to dream when all is lost.

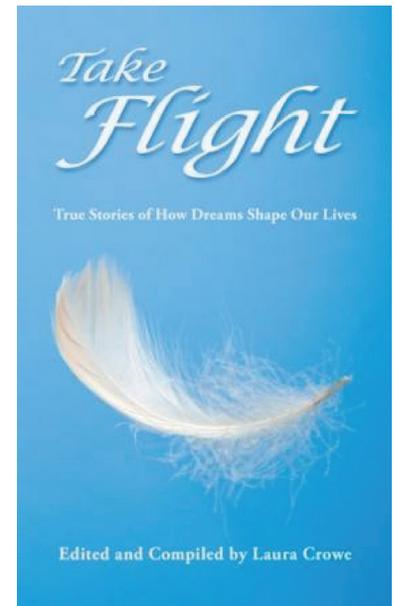
Edited and Compiled by Laura Crowe

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The Doll

By Bernadette James

Illustration by Dan Webster



Today is my day. For many years I have wondered if this day would ever come, but here it is. And I know it is going to be just perfect.

It is spring outside and in the small porch of this lovely country church I wait with my father and my sister, my heart pounding so much that it must surely be visible through the thin silk of my dress. The organ is playing, the birds are singing, the sun is shining—I could have asked for no more.

Although I am unaccustomed to taking centre stage, today I am more than ready for what is to come. I hear the bridal march begin and breathe deeply, and as I step into the aisle my mind floods with memories.

“Alice, would you come here?”

It is Mother calling and I am four years old. She hands me a camera that is too big for me and that I am too small to use. My parents and my sister Eve are all lined up, Eve smiling proudly in her new school uniform.

“This is Eve’s big day,” says Mother. “Please do try, Alice. You’re not a baby.”

I can’t work out which button to press and after a while the camera is snatched away and a neighbour is fetched to perform this important duty. Eve laughs at me.

“Cry baby,” she sneers, as my eyes fill up at my failure.

Now I am five and it is my first day at school. I am wearing Eve’s old uniform and there are no photos.

Alice gets payback. Want to know how? Order your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both **Android** and **Apple** - just search for *Ficta Fabula*! Get your fiction fix with this story and many others in this issue of *Ficta Fabula*.

Wolfskin

By Jane Read

Illustration by Dan Webster



Eli checked the trap. He thrust the rabbit into his canvas bag then trudged on up the slope. The forest stretched in front of him, silent under its sugar frosting of snow apart from a sudden whir of wings as a bird took fright and shot into the air.

He knew Mary wanted to go live in town and see more of Cindy and the baby, but Eli couldn’t imagine living anywhere else. His pappy had lived in these woods, and his grandpappy before him. Why would you want to live in town where folks were nosy and wanted to know your business all the time? He wasn’t moving. The only way he was leaving was in a pine box.

A snap and a crunch made Eli pick up his gun and turn around. A dozen or so yards away stood a female wolf. Her coat was a glossy grey, thickened by the icy blast of winter. She gazed at him with dark yellow eyes. The familiar thrill ran through his belly. Slowly he raised his gun and aimed, expecting the wolf to turn tail and run. This was the part he liked best. The she-wolf didn’t move. For a heartbeat, Eli paused, then he pulled the trigger and the gun’s explosion reverberated through the darkening trees. There was a faint whimper and he watched as she staggered and fell heavily to one side. It went quiet again.

Eli edged towards the wolf. As he got closer he could see that her yellow eyes were still open. She had fallen next to a tree and her head was resting on a protruding tree root as though on a pillow. He reached out and thrust his hand deep into her grey fur, clenching his fist on its warm softness. She would make a fine lining for winter clothes.

The wolf blinked.

If this startled you, you should read the rest of it. You can find out what happens next by ordering your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both Android and Apple - just search for *Ficta Fabula*! Get your fiction fix with this story and many others in this issue of *Ficta Fabula*.



Burning Desire Part I

By Christine Sutton

Illustration by Dan Webster

Dr. Shah nodded approvingly. “I congratulate you, Michael. The improvement is remarkable and I see no reason to keep you in a moment longer. Is there anyone we can contact for you?”

Easing the hospital gown back over Mike’s still inflamed shoulders, Staff Nurse Middleton frowned. Surely someone had told Dr. Shah the circumstances of the fire in which Mike had sustained those dreadful burns, that he’d lost not just his home but his wife and unborn baby, too?

“There’s no one, Doctor,” Mike said. “At this moment I’m about as rootless as a person can be, no home, no family, no business.”

“What about friends, neighbors?” the doctor persisted.

Again the negative nod. “We’d not long moved to the area. We hardly knew a soul.”

“So what will you do?” The anxious words were out before Steph could stop them. The ghost of a smile betrayed how unimportant the matter of his future was to Mike.

“Oh, I don’t know. Take a short break maybe, grab a few days in the sun. After that . . .” He shrugged.

Dr. Shah nodded. “A holiday would be good, just don’t go lying on a beach all day getting burnt to a crisp.” This time the gaff was acknowledged with a pained wince.

“Sorry, that was crass of me. What I mean is, don’t overdo it. Your skin is very vulnerable still. A little sun would be a good thing, too much positively harmful.”

Mike chuckled. “It’s okay, Doc, no need to tiptoe around me. It’s

thanks to you I’m alive. I’m grateful to you—to all of you.” He held out his hand and the doctor shook it warmly.

“Well, wherever you go, enjoy yourself. We’ll see you next month for a check-up.”

“No problem,” Mike agreed. As the doctor led his team away, Mike reached out and caught Steph’s hand. “A little bird tells me you’re off on holiday tomorrow. Maybe I’ll go where you’re going.”

Across the room, a clatter drew Steph’s attention. Red-faced junior nurse Mandy Kemp scooped up her dropped clipboard and busied herself with studying a patient’s temperature chart. At the ripe old age of twenty-two, Mandy considered any single woman in her thirtieth year to be staring old maid-hood in the face and for months now had been trying to fix Steph up with a series of increasingly unsuitable ‘candidates.’ First was fresh-faced Robbie Hinton, barely out of diapers and a stranger to deodorant. Next came Mr. Rabinowitz, so past his sell-by date the mere act of putting in his dentures could almost prove fatal. But it was the encounter in the sluice room that was the last straw. Six-foot-six-inch body-builder Larry Lloyd hadn’t taken kindly to Steph’s rejection of him and only the arrival of an orderly on the scene had saved her from ending up in hospital herself. Since then, a chastened Mandy had voluntarily curbed her matchmaking attempts—until today.

“What?” she mouthed now, seeing Steph’s glowering look in her direction.

To Mike, Steph murmured, “I hardly think where I’m going would be your style.”

“And what style’s that?” he asked.

“Well, not the Balearics,” she said. “But good luck, Mike, I hope things work out for you.”

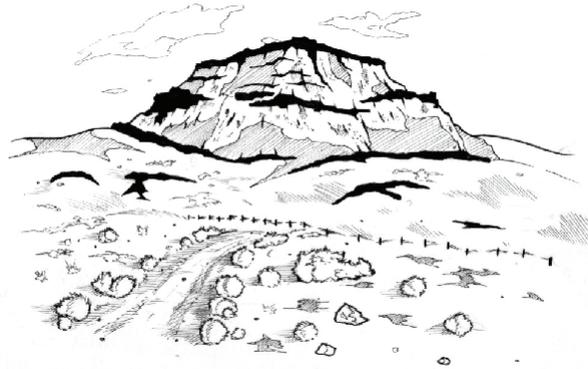
“They will,” he said, “I’m sure of it.”

As he let go of her hand, his fingers brushed her palm and Steph’s heart gave a jolt. Just as well he was leaving today, before the feelings she was harboring for this complicated man grew any stronger.

The fire was devastating and fatal, but there is mystery surrounding the cause. Find out what the police think and where Mike and Steph end up by ordering your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both **Android** and **Apple** - just search for *Ficta Fabula*!

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The Carpet King



By Ginny Swart

Illustration by Dan Webster

The first we saw of the Carpet King was a cloud of dust coming along the road to the farm. My mother was sitting on the stoep, picking stones out of the dried beans in a big enamel bowl on her lap.

“That’s not the Extension Officer,” she said, screwing up her eyes at the shimmering heat haze. “Hansie’s not due until next month. I wonder if it’s the Tax.”

The Tax was a constant dread in our lives, arriving unannounced and demanding a head count of stock and a check on farm equipment. But we’d have known if he was on his way, because he had to pass through Kobus Potgieter’s farm to reach ours, and Mrs. Potgieter would have rung my mother on the party line and warned her.

We watched the cloud of dust stop five times, lurch forward, stop, then carry on as the driver opened and closed the camp gates. My dad sometimes talked of getting stock grids but had never bothered with the expense, as he always had Lang Jan on the back of his truck to jump down and deal with the gates.

Finally a small red pick-up emerged from the swirl of white dust and jerked to a stop in front of us. A dapper, neat little man emerged, smiling with his back teeth showing. Like a jackal, I thought.

“A very good afternoon to you, ladies.”

He bounded uninvited up the steps and took my mother’s hand in his.

“Charles Andrews, the Carpet King, at your service, ma’am.”

“Margriet le Roux.”

“Mrs. le Roux. I’m privileged to meet you. And your delightful little—er—daughter.”

I was already self-conscious about the haircut Ma had given me

and that fatal hesitation slammed the door on any future relationship between me and Charles Andrews. Even if he hadn’t been English.

But in the face of his charm, my mother stood up clumsily, handing me the bowl of dried beans.

“Mr. le Roux is out in the camps with the fencing. Would Meneer like some coffee while he waits?”

“Ah, Mrs. le Roux, that would be too kind, too kind. I thank you. But in truth, it is your good self I have come to visit.”

“Me?” My mother wiped her hands on her apron uncertainly.

I’d never heard anyone speak like he did, using so many words to say so little.

From my perspective anyone that calls themselves the “King” of anything is in sore need of some humble pills. Ah, but if his only fault was that he was arrogant, this wouldn’t be much of a story. And this is a heck of a story. Find out for yourself by ordering your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both **Android** and **Apple** - just search for Ficta Fabula!

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Death by Conscience

By Gordon Arnold

Illustration by Dan Webster



Ivy Holmes was dressed in a beatific smile—a tribute to the undertaker’s skill and devotion—as she peeked through the wreaths of flowers smothering her casket. It was a send-off worthy of the town’s florist, which she in fact had been for the last thirty years.

“That’s not how Mom looked when I found her,” Lexis Jensen whispered to the sheriff as they chatted beside the coffin, the undertaker’s muzak playing in the background. “Someone or something frightened her to death. Can we talk? Please. Not here. Maybe later this afternoon, out at my place.”

Chuck Jordan was within putting distance of retirement after thirty years as Cape Jefferson’s sheriff. For anyone but Lexis, he would have sloughed off her fears on his deputy. But he had been friends with Ivy for more than a quarter century. He couldn’t walk away from her only daughter now.

It seems a little far fetched that someone could be frightened to death, but it all makes sense once you read the whole story. Read this awesome story by ordering your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both **Android** and **Apple** - just search for Ficta Fabula!

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Riptide

By Rekha Ambardar



Illustration by Dan Webster

“No eight-month emergency funds for you, young lady,” Everett Stanton, my financial advisor, told me when I met him at his high-rise office building in downtown Duluth. “Your father provided well for you. You have a great job as a PR consultant for a biotech firm. Everyone else should be so lucky in this economy.”

“Thanks to your financial wizardry, Everett.” I slipped in the name with a caress in my tone. After all, the man was successful, mature, handsome, and confident. And I was looking for a husband. Enough with those young wannabes who were dazzled by my inheritance and didn’t care a fig for me. You see, I had more money than looks. I’d been to a cosmetic surgeon or two, but at twenty-nine, I didn’t look any better than I did at twenty-two. I was a reasonably good swimmer but I relegated my exercise to swimming now and then at the pool at home.

My father had left my mother, sister, and me quite rich, but I was his favorite. We had the same temperament—we went after what we wanted, and we cultivated people. I’m Jocelyn Durocher. My sister, Elise, at thirty-five, was as serene and graceful as a Siamese cat. She was content to be an elementary school teacher, and she and my mother lived together, satisfied for the rest of their lives. She was adopted when my parents thought they might not have any children. Then I came along, the temperamental equivalent of my father. I was his princess although Elise was the selfless one.

It’s one thing to go after what you want, it’s another thing to lose perspective of that which you seek. Find out what I’m talking about by ordering your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both **Android** and **Apple** - just search for Ficta Fabula!

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Troubled Past Part II

By Andreas Zimmermann
Illustration by Dan Webster



In the first part of our story, Private Investigator Alexander Knight was asked to take on a strange new case. It involved an accident at the local race track, and a phantom woman that only the injured driver could see. Alex and his assistant, Dean, are now back at their office, doing background research and discussing the evidence gathered thus far.

It was late afternoon, the scent of Bar-B-Q hot dogs and hamburgers permeating the entire neighborhood as everyone took advantage of the nice weather. Alex and Dean sat at their desks, pouring over everything they could research on their new case: history of the Cochrane family, video footage of past races and the one this morning, and hundreds of text messages, emails, photos, and other Internet social media from the crash.

Dean sat back and rubbed his eyes, and then his stomach. Glancing at the time, he realized they'd been at it for several hours without a break—no wonder he was hungry.

"You're always hungry," Alex said plainly as he saw Dean patting a seemingly empty belly.

"True," Dean agreed. He nodded towards Alex's computer. "You find any earth-shattering revelations in your research?"

Alex shrugged, leaning back in his chair and rubbing out sore muscles in his neck. "A few tidbits here and there, but nothing concrete . . . yet."

"I'm telling ya, man," Dean replied through a stifled yawn, "we're chasing shadows here. You shouldn't have taken a case that points to voodoo."

"Voodoo?"

"Voodoo, man! Witchery, ghosts, spooks, whatever you want to

call it, it's ridiculous! We have nothing to go on, and what are we even trying to prove here? There is no case in court, no evidence of criminal action, there's . . . well, nothing. I guess that's my biggest challenge here...what are we even looking for?"

"We're doing what we always do. We're looking for answers."

Dean spun slowly in his chair, holding a hand over his eyes. "Answers to what question? Is Gordon losing his mind? Do we believe in the laws of physics, or the non-existent laws regarding the supernatural?"

Alex pursed his lips and squinted. "You did see the video, didn't you?"

Dean let out a huge breath. "Yeah."

"And you want to tell me how to explain that?"

Dean stood up and paced in front of his desk. "Explain what? Seriously! Alex, you've made a name for yourself over the last four years, having accomplished some amazing things for private citizens, corporations, and police and government agencies, here and in Hamilton, and many places in between. And each of those cases has been based on science, fact, evidence. You have so much respect in the investigative community . . ."

Dean trailed off and stopped pacing. Alex quietly folded his hands in his lap and waited, but Dean didn't appear to know what to say next. After an uncomfortable silence, Alex cleared his throat.

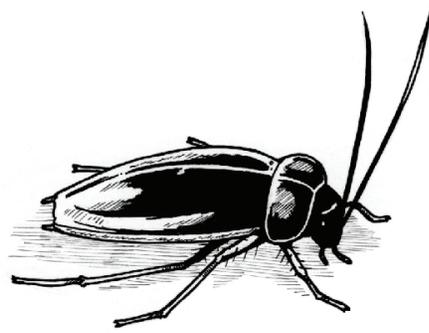
"Yeah, you know you're annoying when you do that ever-so-patient-psychologist kinda look."

"You weren't finished. Looked like you had a grand finale coming there, I didn't want to interrupt."

It's a risk for sure... but can you really stop when you're following something this interesting? Find out what they decide to do and what their investigation reveals by ordering your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both **Android** and **Apple** - just search for *Ficta Fabula*!

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Soundtrack



By Sheryl Normandeau

Illustration by Dan Webster

The boy was pretty sure his mama didn't listen to classical music when he was in her womb; no way—he sloshed around in amniotic fluid to the honky tonk they played at that strip club she worked at. When the boy was born he was already hollering for rock 'n' roll, feeling the thump and rhythm of breathing air and living life. He might have had a chance then, just maybe, but things don't always work out like you think.

The boy and his mama and his half-sister were poor, really poor, one-step-away-from-a-cardboard-condo poor—no white picket fence for them. The boy's earliest memory was watching a cockroach climb up the iron rails of his crib, and he screamed for his mama, for nothing. She was sleeping it off again, and he was as good as an orphan. The boy wished he was somewhere else even then, as he lay there and listened to the tiny grinding of a music box his half-sister had yanked out of the dumpster behind the 7-Eleven. Those warbling, metallic lullabies could not put the boy to sleep, but they taught him to listen. *Really* listen. Listen so that his heart stilled to a single slow beat, the thudding in his ears falling away, the blood thickening in his veins so that time had no meaning. Listen so that the insects scuttling across his ratty wool blanky and the sound of his half-sister's voice became nothing. *Nothing*.

That's when the boy left town. Not in his head, mind you, the boy wasn't crazy. Nope, he simply headed out—*really* headed out—to the Other Place he could inhabit, where he could hang out for awhile.

Yikes! You just know that this child is going to have a dramatic life. Find out what the drama is by ordering your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both **Android** and **Apple** - just search for *Ficta Fabula*!

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A Walk in the Woods

By Bernadette James

Illustration by Dan Webster



Sometimes Lizzie wished that she had never noticed the tree. It must have always been there, as her visits to the woods only began a few years ago and the tree was much older than that. Maybe on this particular day

the light had been different, or the call of a bird caught her attention and drawn her eye in an unusual direction. Whatever, the tree was now a part of her life and Lizzie wasn't sure if it was a blessing or a curse.

It was almost an overstatement calling this place 'the woods' at all, although that was how Lizzie always thought of it. A path winding along the edge of a riverbank cutting through a bank of elegant tall grey trees was hardly the image conjured by that expression.

Nowhere here for wild animals to lurk at night, secreted behind gnarled roots, their sharp eyes glistening yellow, waiting to pounce. No room for a gingerbread cottage, a house with bears or a big, bad wolf. But the light through the trees, the bluebells and garlic flowers in spring, the sound of the water—it all made Lizzie feel a long way away from her life and it gave her time to think.

It had been autumn when she first saw the tree, a cool day with light winds, and Lizzie had risen early after a bad night. Worries weighed heavily on her and she wasn't the type to write them down and leave them 'til the morning.

Something significant happens with this tree. Find out what it is by ordering your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both **Android** and **Apple** - just search for *Ficta Fabula*!

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Yellow Eyes

By Allan Kalupar

Illustration by Dan Webster

“Hello, please come in.”
“Thank you. Wow, you have quite an office. I bet you never get tired of that view!”
“It comes with the position.”
“I appreciate you agreeing to see me on such short notice.”
“You were apparently quite convincing when you spoke to my staff. Most people going on like you would have been tossed out by security.”
“Speaking to you is very important for our planet.”
“You must have done some homework since most people don’t even realize this branch of the UN even exists.”
“I would consider myself an informed individual.”
“From my briefing, it sounds like you are saying we can expect some visitors?”
“Yes sir, the Yellow Eyes are coming.”
“Yellow Eyes?”
“Yes.”
“And what exactly are the Yellow Eyes?”
“The Earth term would be extraterrestrials.”

This isn’t your typical Science-Fiction type of story. You should read what they say the Yellow Eyes have already been doing! Find out by ordering your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both **Android** and **Apple** - just search for *Ficta Fabula*!

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To Save the President

By Brendan DuBois

Illustration by Dan Webster

So, come on in, come in . . . so glad you didn’t get lost coming over here . . . my, it’s been a while since I’ve talked to a newspaper reporter, so do come in, have a seat. Can I get you a drink? No? Perhaps later, then, all right . . .

Well. From what you told me on the phone, I guess you want to do a story about my career in the Porter police department. Not much of a career, you know, started out as a bachelor patrolman and thirty years later, ended up as a bachelor patrolman, but you know what? Maybe I could have made a little more money as a sergeant or a captain or a detective, but what for? More aggravation, more headaches, more people causing you problems. Not worth it. My daughter, she’s an honor student studying pre-law at Harvard, she once told me this funny saying from a French philosopher, about hell being other people. True, but I always thought that hell was bossing other people, which is why I never had the taste for it.

So. My career. Not much to talk about but since the poor man passed away yesterday, I guess you want to hear the real story about how I saved the President of the United States, the day he came to visit Porter, about . . . Jesus, nearly twenty years ago. Can you believe that?

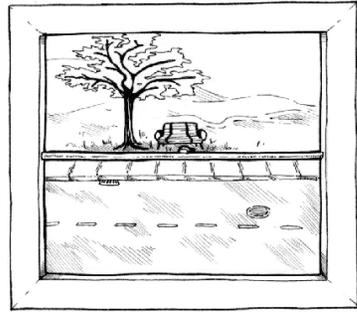
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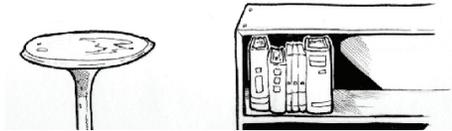
Emily's Date

By Jody Lebel

Illustration by Dan Webster



She found the cell phone tucked behind a couch cushion. Shiny and modern, it felt surprisingly heavy and pleasantly cool to the touch. But it didn't belong to her. A chronically ill person who doesn't leave their home but twice a year to see their doctor doesn't need a cell phone. If she hadn't sat on it, Emily would never have known it was there.



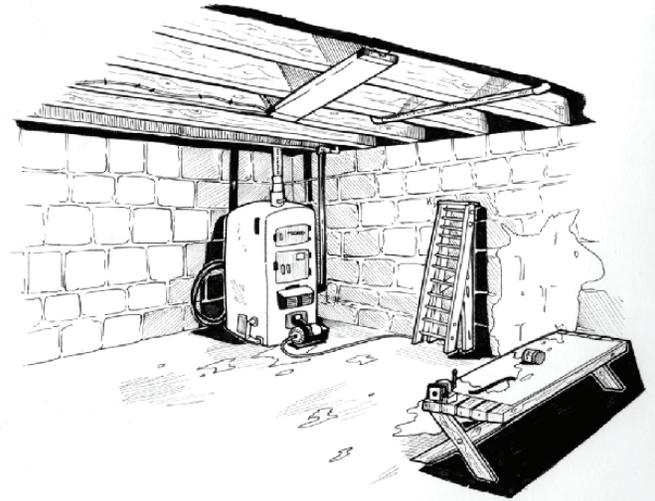
Upon questioning, the security office in her apartment building informed her that no one had entered her unit while she was out yesterday for her six-month visit. They had a hi-tech system that logged in a time and date whenever any door opened in the entire structure.

The phone didn't belong to a friend of hers because she had none. It was hard to be friends with an invalid. People want to live normal lives and not have to face the unpleasantness of lung disease. More than half the time Emily was bedridden. There were a few days a week where she was able to maneuver from bed to bath to living room, if she did it slowly. Making breakfast was hit or miss. Impossible to have dinner guests over. Or invite someone over for a movie. This had been her world since she was in her teens and she had come to accept it.

The question is now about the title. How does a chronically ill, bedridden individual get a date? And what is the mystery of the cell phone? It's a surprise - but don't let me tell you that! Find out for yourself by ordering your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both **Android** and **Apple** - just search for *Ficta Fabula*!

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The Dream House



By Donna Fawcett

Illustration by Dan Webster

“Good morning, Mr. Parker. And how did you sleep last night?” Candy put on her chirpiest voice for the septuagenarian. It always brought out a wistful smile and a softening of his usually unreadable features.

“As good as could be expected.”

He gave the same non-committal answer every time she asked. She mentally shrugged and moved through the task of washing and dressing him before sitting him in his wheel chair.

“Today is the euchre tournament. Are you going?” She already knew he likely would, if for no other reason but to watch the other nursing home residents bicker and natter over the games.

“It wouldn't hurt, I guess.”

She plopped him into the padded chair and wheeled him toward the dining hall. “You'll be happy. They're serving bacon and eggs today.” Indeed, he did seem to perk up at that. He reached a strong hand over his shoulder and patted hers as it gripped the wheelchair handle. It was as good an answer as he would give but it pleased her nonetheless.

Candy didn't often share personal tidbits of her life with her patients but for some reason words always leapt from her tongue when she

was around Mr. Parker. She didn't question why. She didn't need to. She openly admitted to herself that she found the seventy-year-old attractive and at fifty-five she didn't feel the fifteen year age gap was a big deal.

"So I'm buying a house. It's in a great old neighbourhood. On the corner of Maple and Pine. It's going up for auction Saturday and I'm going to buy it."

She heard the faint gasp before the hand came up and gripped hers again.

"That was my house."

Mr. Parker didn't often volunteer information. Candy stopped the chair and leaned over his shoulder. "Are you kidding me? Double story brick? Dormer window in the front? Hedges all around?" Was it her imagination, or did he look rather pale?

"Are you all right, Mr. Parker?"

He coughed, then nodded and gripped her hand tighter. She straightened up and began walking again.

"Well isn't that just providence. Almost like I was meant to have it." She couldn't stop grinning. "I've saved for years so I could have the house of my dreams. I didn't imagine it would be the house of such a special . . . friend." She felt the blush as the words left her mouth and the panic that followed.

Staff weren't supposed to fraternize with the residents. It didn't matter that Mr. Parker was only there for recovery after falling down stairs and breaking his hip.

What's so special about this house? Find out how Mr. Parker reacts to the news that someone he knows is buying his house. You can order your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both **Android** and **Apple** - just search for *Ficta Fabula*!

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Cold Shoulder

By Richard Home

Illustration by Dan Webster



As he watched Angelline busily replanting the giant cactus in the utility room, Marcus felt a wave of closeness. Her slim and youthful body was dressed in an old, pink T-shirt and battered denim jeans, and on her feet she wore a pair of faded trainers. A pair of Donald Duck socks intermittently peeped out from beneath her jeans, giving the briefest hint of her mischievous nature. Her close-cropped, dark hair shone in the early morning sunlight, emphasising her slim neck. Despite everything that had happened, Marcus loved her with all his heart. If only he could let her know how he felt.

Because the spring morning was so beautiful, the patio door was wide open and several birds trilled their early chorus from the surrounding hedges and trees. As he walked slowly across the neatly trimmed lawn towards the apple tree, Marcus looked back at the house. He could still see her through the window, fussing around the plant pots. It was not clear to him why she was so keen to re-pot all the house plants on this specific, bright, spring day, but Marcus assumed it was simply a way of keeping herself busy, avoiding the need to think about anything else.

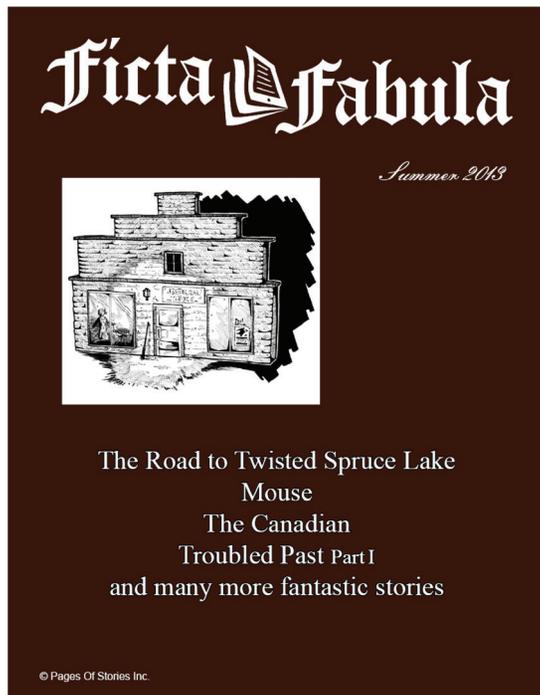
Find out what Angelline is avoiding thinking about and how much of it has to do with Marcus. The answer will surprise you. You can order your printed copy of *Ficta Fabula Winter 2014* by sending an email to info@pagesofstories.com. Or, you can download it from both **Android** and **Apple** - just search for *Ficta Fabula*!

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