

A Blight Welcome

Blight kills his pain at the cemetery gate; the tube of jube, deflated, lays two steps away. Off keel he staggers, spittle and mud mix down his blood stained chin. His thoughts race and are in last place. He is losing his mind. He feels like he is a joke, and only now is he nearing the punchline.

With senses dull and fuzzy, he hears the same question twice before the owl hoots once more. Cracking a smile he bends to pick up the empty tube of jube "Who?" he snickers, blood mixed with the jube he snorted, run down his nose thickly. "Who am I? A man that's dying to get in here, that's Who!"

"WHO? WHO?" the owl, his only inner critic, asks again.

He walks two steps past the gate, then stops. He stares at a toppled statue of an angel crying. The puzzle, his body burns, thoughts escape out of his brain's cells. Drawing a deep breath, his lungs ache. His protection is the veil of rasping death.

Eaven, the city hovering overhead, floats like an angel's halo on a cloudy blue sail.

A fog swallows the dense industrial burial park. With a sense of unease, he cautiously weaves his way through the plots of strangers. As he steps on their grave's pressure plating he triggers the holograms, alive, like some bad horror flick, he endures each grim reaping, weeping face of purgatory.

The holograms of the deceased, tailored messages warning that life was not what it seems, are unsettling. The pleads with whip cracklings, half-told jokes and one line blurbs of gift card wisdom. How can you fit a lifetime of living in a few choice words? Who are they comforting? The dead continue nagging at him while politely invading his space and requesting more damn flowers. It is all unnerving.

A particularly attractive woman in a devil costume appears jabbing her pitch fork at him "Boo!" and pitching a fit of haunting laughter, follows him a short ways, as with fleeting footsteps, he awakes the dead.

When at last he arrives at his spot, he breathes a sigh of relief. His companion is there, a girl with eyes like lighted jewels on an angelic face, a perfect vixen leaning against the tombstone which simply reads, 'Moon'.

"Hello dear," says Blight, smiling. A buried ball of grief takes hold of him, constricting his throat, choking out tears that his heart bleeds he squeezes them from a dry desert well.

"What are you up to?" She asks slyly, "deviant! No good, I'd say, whatever you're up to forget it! Let me go," she smiles sadly, "till death do us part, remember?"

"I miss you!" he says sadness welling up, "I cannot stand it!"

Her face sours and she sticks her tongue out at him, his pass to paradise is through that doorway, her mouth he longs to kiss just one more time, to pass inside heaven's golden gates.

So alone in a world he now hates- only anger to fill the void- he falls to his knees, eyes welling, he bangs his fist against the ground, "WHY!" he screams. He no longer belongs here.

The crimson moonlight speaks as it breathes along layers of fog, it whispers of secrets buried, secrets only the dead can tell, the granite contrasts well against the lights dancing gravy stew. Moon turns and whispers behind her, she slides a hand over her body, turns, and yells, "Hold on Honey, I'm recording my glorious afterlife- Yes, again- I'll be in bed soon!"

Blight hears his own voice in the recording, a faint, "Hubba-Hubba Hotstuff!"

She faces him again, a mischievous smirk, she gives him a teary eyed smile, "... I love you! But my heart's capturer- you must let me go."

"I love you so much! I need you! I miss you! It is not fair! I miss you!" Blight embraces her, his hands passes through the hologram, empty.

A rose falls from his hands as he turns his back to her.

"What you up to?" she smirks, "deviant! No good, I'd say."

The tombstones rear out of the fog like the peaks of a distant mountain chain.

Using the crow bar and a car jack he lifts the large cement slab up enough to slide into his wife's crypt. Once in he dislodges the jack using his crowbar. The heavy concrete slab crashes down. The welcome and total darkness covers where he now is, and will forever be, alone with his love.

A piece of granite chips off the wall of the crypt and bites Blight's chin. He smashes the steel hammer on the spike again, chiseling. The walls of the crypt squeeze against his shoulders as he brings the hammer down making sparks. His knees rest straddling his wife's stomach. Her corpse has been well preserved and her cheeks are cast in a lovely radiance by the glow sticks. Sealed in the tomb, but long before he dies from lack of oxygen, the implants in his chest will explode. Payment is due exactly at midnight, the price for his heart and healthy organs farmed for transplantation, and the rest of his extra meat was auctioned for the fast food franchise the Cow's Head, a fast food of the gourmet burger chain. They will have a fun time tracking down his body, he thinks with a chuckle.

The cement floor grudging gives way to the moist dirt beneath. A little more and he will be free of the stone and able to work his shovel head inside the tight confines, so close to freedom.

When his wife died a month earlier, he had died with her. She a third copy replica clone of the Cow Head lobbyist, she had been called in to do her part, he thinks as his mouth forms into a grimace, make her sacrifice for the fast food establishment and harvest her organs for the CEO of The Cow Head fast food franchise.

Having spent all of their money fighting the clone rights laws, till finally, he took one last loan on the only thing he had left of value, his life. But to no avail... she had died regardless,

because her stomach, lungs and kidneys were a positive match. At least he had been able to preserve most of her body.

He picked out the plot for her to be buried very carefully, oh yes, so very carefully. He remembered the big fuss about the corporate power companies uprooting the dead to plant cables. Their reasoning had been that the dead should not stand in the way of technological progress. They had been court ordered to reimburse the families and had been allowed to continue laying cable beneath the graves.

It only took one look at the city power blueprints and...

Now, a good two feet under the soil, "Please be here!" he prays..

Each day the pain in his heart mounted higher, it grew a little more painful the closer he was to foreclosure on his body. To 'remind' him of his unpaid debt the implant expanded. now it is a pulsating intense agony and he hardly can breathe around it. In a half hour it will detonate.

He digs deeper, and a sense of great peace comes over him, as he thinks about his wonderful life and all the gifts he received.

CLING!

His shovel strikes something. Carefully Blight sifts through the loose dirt with his hands and breaths a sigh of relief. He had learned never trust city blue prints. "Thank God," he says also thanking who ever drew them up so accurately. Now nothing would stop him.

He removes the thick metal tubing plate, a giant centipede rafting through the earth. It is common knowledge that the power companies seal their lines in radiation, to discourage all would-be hackers from breaking through the system, but still Blight cannot help but laugh at the warning, "WARNING RADIATION WITHIN! TAMPERING WILL RESULT IN DEATH! CALL 408392-839-119007 IMMEDIATELY!"

He will have a three-way death pending over him, between the implants, lack of air and radiation poisoning. Some days you just can't win.

"Look at the bright side honey, " he says to his wife while assembling the drill, "at least the radiation will keep the bugs away."

Blight once a network director for CRETEX, one of the largest corporations, where he obtained his skill and a key to the supply room so he could 'borrow' the hardware he needed, stuff of hacker's fantasies. The drill shoots a self-sealing nuzzle type bit into the fiber-sytric cable then detaches itself, allowing him to plug into an outlet virtually anywhere along the line.

Blight puts on his interface and the connection overruns the live defense immune system, tricking the network to accept him as a member of the committee of an over trillion-dollar corporation. He traces the equator and flips the power switch. He feels the so familiar dip in his wife's stomach, it is comforting, his heart aches, in pain, both physically and emotionally. A blur of dolphin clicks as he powers up.

"It is near midnight Blight, Did you forget to brush your teeth?" his wife asks, catching him off guard for a moment, then he remembers, her voice programmed in his interface.

A rainbow of light shoots into his eyes and he falls in a place that lies between a microchip and his mind. A little disorientation and... he is beneath the shade of two palm trees. A bright eye, smiling waitress steps forward, holding her tray, the sun glows off her golden skin.

"Blight from the Cows Head Franchise," she says with a wink. "Hello and welcome! What can I do for you? Anything?" she smiles.

"Ah yes, Moth. Give me a milk shake and tell the people upstairs that today I will be working on the Sprock Transcendental Credit Union Account System."

Moth bursts into tears, "Oh BlighT!" she cries, "you do not have proper user access!"

Blight gently reaches and pulls Moth's head apart, he pushes his hand opening her mouth and emerges with a red glowing ball, he sticks an orange marble in it and watches as it turns from purple to blue, then he returns it, and her face folds back into her head. An exceptionally good bridge, anything can be found in the black market, if you were willing to pay.

"Ah yes," Moth purred, "Good." She smiles and juggles the ice cream and milk for his shake before bending down to serve him, "comfy? Is there anything I can get you?"

"Just the trail."

Moth frowns, "Follow the sand crab to Sprock transcendental Corporation," she sighs and then waiting for release, Blight places his hand on her shoulder, clicks her off with a pat. There is a flower in his drink, it is black.

"Why Blight, I never knew you cared!" she calls out as the sand crab digs free of its hole and waving its large claw spurs him on.

"It's just right over this dune Blight," the sand fiddler rasps, "here follow me!"

Blight approaches a blue door labeled #3, and enters an elegant library.

Rows of books, in all sizes and colors imaginable, line the walls of this is the file archive.

"Find the main book of menus," Blight speaks softly to his system computer's invisible presence, as he scans the shelves.

His wife replies, "Dear it is over here," he follows a bouncing ball, "aisle 11 fifth shelf up, there.. There.. Here," a thin book glows.

It is a red binder with a 7-digit title of '0000111' inscribed on the cover. Blight opens his belly and pulls out a book of his own to replace the menu file.

The menu system is the weakest link for the most access, so much coverage and use, and with no monetary financial information, it is a lot more accessible and not as well guarded, just perfect for a subliminal implant.

Now that the menu is switched it is time to fry the system, he hopes not also his soul for all eternity, so there are no traces, he calls up the end program, the 'Mosquito Man'. The room dissolves in the liquid mirror-like substance of the inner building blocks of mindville.

He has to smile when he sees Moth, now wearing a black funeral dress approaching and with static ripping through her sizzling voice say, "radiation is blifing through, you mu rifm leave, you must disconnect, zipt harmful umppfh and gamma rays."

"Thank you Moth," Blight says. The urge to be with his wife is very strong, to die in her arms, to spend all eternity with her, and he knows she is waiting. He kisses Moth as the background back drop began to sink, he places his arms around her and holds her tight, feeling her breath sensing her well round touch.

"You wanTTt me now?" Moth asks in disbelief, breaking up, "NOWow that the damEDm place is going to hell, NOW you waONEnt me?" she shakes her head.

"Bye bye Moth"

She smiles as she begins to seep though his fingers. "bye bifye Blight! You zar a realll dEvilil you know, replaalcing the menu wiphth a hypnKNootic stim... yoUu NNNknow what yAesou hfaave done?"

Blight puts his finger to his mouth and says, "Shhhhh... ."

Her legs drain, her body sags like an empty glove she slips out of, as her head is almost flush with the floor she winks in laughter.

Blight disconnects and finds himself in his wife's arms in their crypt. He rests next to her slowly closing his eyes, GOD the pain is so intense, yet it takes back seat to a new feeling of great peace and love washing over him, he chuckles a little thinking of his plan. It will change this world, he thinks. The program he installed, a simulation stimulator, he had found in a house of ill reputes and spent the last month tweaking it. It is now what the corporation would call a conditioner, illegal to death, it stimulates each pleasure point of the brain and roots inside, producing such high content of pleasure morphemes that it is very addictive, extreme intense euphoria that grows more with each use, nothing can touch it. It submits a hypnotic implant, a trigger to release the morphemes. In this case two words, two words the user will NEED to hear. He just wishes he could be alive to see it.

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Magnolia lifts the visor off her head allowing her darkly subdued black hair to shimmer back in place down her shoulders. She scowls with a silent curse and throws her remote control against the far wall where its bounces and clanks to the marble floor.

Damn those corporate programmers, all their stim injections do is make her sleepy. They do not indulge her feelings of need the way she desperately craves, not like the way they used to. She needs more potent mind craves! She needs MORE!

Magnolia looks down at her reflection in the tele-table. Her face is paler then usual, eyes sunken in, skin stretched looks wet against her forehead. Damn! She does not eat, doesn't sleep. Now instead of dreams she fabricates channeled REM, she has no patience to sleep, she lives in a world devoid of dreams.

She feels sick, sulking she pouts, princess on the prowl, she wants some escape, just any escape, from the realm of eternal life, her plastic coating stomach, fresh from yesterday's clone, does not sit well with the mundane pills any longer. Sex? Hah what a joke, she gave that up long ago, no she needs something, something strong inside her is wailing is screaming in deep pitched avalanches of full body sensory overdrive, she NEEDS more stims!

The sound through her ear implant is like a mad ravenous growl, her secretary doles on and on lately, about being so nice to strangers and sending people up to see her, who quite frankly do not meet her standards and are a big waste of time, but if she can just.. just.. get them to say OH GOD! What is happening to her?

"A man named Morge is her to see you, and he is a STRANGER," says Salad, her SyCo.

"Send him in," she says in delight, surprising herself for being so happy about this trivial thing.

The sectional floor rises and the wall opens in three section stairs. A man walking through the mist of sanitation, greets her, as he approaches she notices he is wearing the corporate emblem on his blue webbing and he has a tranquility of surreal Martian sunrise. He smiles at her, and then as if remembering something nagging at him he bites it off in a frown.

Before he can talk Magnolia raises her hand and stifles him. "Dispense with the formalities, come straight to the point, what you people downstairs classify as urgent I eat for lunch with two dissolvent pills. Oh I love your hair, the monk circle? It looks so good on you and your eyyyyyyyy..." she stops talking and looks at him puzzled. "I mean take a seat." She says waiting.

He sits down across from her.

She draws in her breath and smiles viscously, "Now what do you say?"

"Nice." Says Morge.

She frowns. "What brings you here?" she asks.

"Oh.. I don't know.... " says Morge, "maybe the END OF THE WORLD AS WE KNOW IT!"

Magnolia frowns again her lips rounding well.

"Someone has infiltrated security and implanted a virus in the network, it has spread to the very heart of our system, a conditioner program, very strong, very well written, it uses a power word to evoke and trigger a hypnotic orgasmic reaction, there is no telling how far and deep it has spread, how many rungs up the ladder it has climbed, but already our people are giving away free credit, free time, and doing anything they can to hear the trigger words, part of the conditioning is they must hear the power words from the mouth of a stranger.

"And you.." Magnolia pauses then slides her leg down, "You know what the word is? Is that right?"

Morge stares at her yet his eyes betray him and he finally says, "Yes I do. It is a word built deep in the psyche of society."

"Tell me what the word is!"

Morge shakes his head and laughs, "ah the beauty of it, it is so... so.. Innocent yet, yet it will unravel our very society and bring us back into barbarisms.. He laughs again. "and there is absolutely nothing we can do."

"Your promoted to level three, how about that?"

"That is very nice of you," says Morge a little half-warily.

"What do you say when someone gives you something, something special, like a foot massage, come over here and take off those shoes of yours. What will you say if I give you the best foot massage of your life?"

"I would be very grateful." Says Morge slowly backing up.

"Come here you! I want to whip you up some fish cakes, we can eat them with no hands, how about that, what do you say?"

"Sounds like you're hungry," says Morge.

Magnolia pouts then pulls a thin strand of her hair behind her ear where it has become displaced, "Really now, your dramatics are killing me, what will it take?" She looks at him and smiles, "You look like you want to dance," and she claps her hands and stands up on the desk, "Well let's get our groove down!" she yells and the background music begins to have a funky vibe and an edge of jive to it.

"I cannot fight it, really, it is impossible, you're conditioned too, sure let's dance."

And together they dance on the square desk, together sharing the time in an age where time is already too expensively spent, and their worries fall off like the leaves of a hickory in fall. Man and woman.

Morge leans over and whispers in Magnolia's ear, "thank you, thank you thank you."

Magnolia's eyes roll back and she convulses in pleasure, her body on fire swallows the sun, trembling, feeling the universe tilt, she shrieks louder, breath work full and more light, she climbs higher, climaxing in overflow, longing for ecstatic perfectly quenching, those two words break her, she needs to hear it again, "Ohhhhhh," she moans, "Your Welcome."