

**THE
MCNAULTY
HOUSE**

Chapter One

“Clearlake Oaks, California is a small community nestled on the banks of one of the largest lakes in the state and the oldest. Clear lake is millions of years old and acts as a hot spot during the summer for vacationers looking to bask in the sun, go boating, swimming, fishing just about everything you can do in the water. But Clearlake Oaks also is the location of one of the most mysterious homes in the world. On the west side of the town, lies the lake, to the east lies the mountains. It’s in these mountains you will find a house that rivals any movie star or celebrity. But it also holds more mystery and intrigue than you could possibly imagine.”

“On Halloween 2005 a group of thrill-seekers from an internet gaming site decided to explore the house and the enigma it presented. It was a party to beat all parties and people from around the world were going to attend. It was also going to be a party that most, if not all, would not live to regret.”

“It started out innocently enough on the evening of October 30, 2005. The guests had begun to arrive and all of them were in absolute awe of not only the house, but the limousine service provided to bring them. The owner of the house had arranged the get together, everyone knew him simply as Charon. Had they researched this nickname, perhaps they wouldn’t have come. You see, Charon was the boatman that carried souls across the river in hell. He’s the guy with the skeletal body, dark black cloak and fiery red eyes. Unfortunately, no one thought to ask about the nickname, in fact most thought it was a female. It’s amazing how the simplest of mistakes, the slightest carelessness can change your life forever.”

“You may be asking yourself at this point who I am. Who I am is not as important as what I witnessed. The house is unforgiving and cruel. Its rooms go from dark to light, hot to cold without warning. On October 31, 2005 over fifty people found out, most, the hard way. I warn you, this story is graphic at times as there is no way to soften what transpired. Enough from me for now, it’s time for you to see for yourself, the events of that Halloween.”

It was 5:00 p.m. October 30, 2005 when the guests began to arrive and the McNaulty House. Those who had flown in to San Francisco, Oakland or Sacramento were treated to a posh limousine ride courtesy of this year's party host and owner of the McNaulty House, Charon. Of course, Charon wasn't his real name, just his nickname on Iplay.net, an internet gaming site where people go to play their favorite card games. Real names are generally taboo so everyone used a nickname both online and at live parties.

A towering man of 6' 11" stood outside of the front doors waiting to greet the guests as they arrived. In his hand was an alphabetical list of those expected to attend the event.

Ace Warrior	Indiana Rose	Pure Cajun
Adoptapet	Indiana Woodie	Sampire
Biggjon	Irish Eyes	SayNO2sanity
Bjam	JDBing	Scott9343
Bluesky	Jannelly	Skully
Bobbi	Jonilee	Simply Sweet
Botridingbabe	Kcinick	Smokinnn
Briandixon	Lacy	Snappy
Cajun Princess	Ladyace	Softspoken
Candysosweet	Liberty	Stardust
Cardshark2	Little Sugar	Sudit
Clairvoyant	Lolita	Texanna1
Dave	Mares	Trachelle
Deshadow	Mbabyreb	Tweedledee
Ellie	Mcgowan007	Tweedledum
Fancfree	Melon	Wabbitt
Fibber	Mistynite	WPC Flea
Fireangel02	Morsky	WPC Gentleman
Flirt19	Pammie	WPC Medical
Hectic1	Pecoswilly	
ImTrble2u	Punkiegirl	

It was 4:45 when the first guests arrived. Sayno2sanity and Jannelly drove up since they lived nearby and marveled at the house. They went up the steps to the man awaiting them.

"Hi, we're Jannelly and Sayno2sanity. Are you Charon?" Jannelly asked.

"No." The man replied. "I'm Ralph Cantrell, one of the house escorts."

"With a house like this, I'll bet you need escorts just to get from your bedroom to the bathroom huh?" Sayno2sanity laughed.

"No." Ralph answered.

"Ah, well, should we just go in or what?" Sayno2sanity asked

"Yes."

The two of them entered the house snickering to themselves at how polite the man had been. The main hallway had a black marble floor that reflected the cathedral style ceiling located six floors up. To the right was an open doorway, just beyond that was a staircase. To the left there were three doors, all closed and another staircase. Straight ahead, fifty feet away, were two elevators. Looking up there was an open area all the

way to the sixth floor with walkways to all four sides. Jannelly and Sayno2sanity knew there were more than six floors from seeing the outside of the house.

They walked to the stairway and started up only to find a gate halfway between the first and second floors. It was locked. They had the same luck with the other staircase and none of the elevators appeared to be working.

“I guess we go into the open door then.” Jannelly suggested.

“It looks that way.” Sayno2sanity responded.

The two of them walked across the marble floor and into the open door. The room they entered was enormous. At least 100 by 100 feet in size, there were pillars throughout the room supporting the floor above it, each with a strange carving on them. All had one thing in common, there was a serpent climbing the length of them. The ceiling was twelve feet high, the floor was the same black marble as the corridor and it was so glossed that you could look down and see everything above you as you walked. To the left side of the room was a fifty-foot table filled with food and several rows of plush leather chairs. To the right was a small make-shift stage was a podium towards the front and a small eight foot table to the rear. The couple made their way to the food table and helped themselves while they waited for the remaining guests.

Biggjon, BJAM, Melon, Mbabyreb, Scott9343, Ace Warrior, Ladyace, Snappy, Sampire, Botridingbabe, Fireangel02, Simply Sweet, Smokinnn, Softspoken, Texanna1 and Trachelle all arrived at nearly the same time by limousine from Oakland. Everyone of them was laughing as they entered the large room at how hospitable the door man was to them. All except Ace Warrior, who had apparently exchanged some hostility with Ralph over being greeted so coldly. Ralph simply had apologized by saying, “Sorry.” Even Ace Warrior had to laugh at that point.

“Where’s the beer?” Scott9343 asked. He made his way down to the kegs located at the end of the fifty foot table. Ace Warrior and Biggjon accompanied him on the journey.

“I wonder where Charon is.” Simply Sweet addressed a group of eight people chatting.

“I guess he’s going to make a grand entrance at some point.” Smokinnn replied.

“If I owned a house like this, I’ll be damned if I’d let the Iplay crew loose in it for two nights.” Sayno2sanity joked.

“Based on the appearance of this house, you may well be damned.” Melon quipped.

“It does appear to be a little spooky.” Fireangel02 added.

“Spooky hell, it’s absolutely menacing.” BJAM said. “I am already terrified and I just got here.”

Scott was returning from the keg when he heard BJAM say she was terrified and he grabbed her from behind and said “BOO!”

He regretted that decision real quick, once BJAM’s heart started again, she commenced to kicking his ass all over the large room.

The group arriving from Sacramento started coming in at that point. Bluesky, Pammie, Bobbi, Indiana Rose, Indiana Woodie, Imtrble2u, Jonilee, Pure Cajun, Cajun Princess, Little Sugar, Lolita, Mares, Wabbitt, Skully, Flirt19, Punkiegirl, Hectic1, Medical, Gentleman, Adoptapet, Morsky and Mistynite all joined the party in the main room.

They were followed closely by others who had driven to Clearlake Oaks. Stardust had driven down from northern California and Ellie, Deshadown, Dave, Racecardriver all arrived together from the San Francisco area.

“Had I known I would’ve gotten a limo ride from the airport, I’d have just done that instead of going to Deshadown’s house.” Dave laughed.

“Hell, I’d have driven to the airport and rode up with you in the limo.” Deshadown responded.

Tweedledee and Tweedledum arrived next, also by car followed by Perkyone and Bedrmiiz who informed everyone they had driven up from Los Angeles.

Everyone was mingling well in the large hall. It was a large meet and greet festival with people who had known each other for years meeting for the first time. Biggjon was the first to realize there was a problem. There was no bathroom located in the main room. So he made his way out into the corridor and across to the other doors, all were locked. He looked up the stairway, having been told it was gated. He saw no gate and made his way up to the second floor. There were doors all around the outer walls, four on each wall. Only one was open, it was the last room down on the left side and he smiled when he saw it was a bathroom. He went in and shut the door behind him.

Back in the main room the final group of limousines arrived carrying passengers who had flown in to San Francisco. The guests now arriving were: Liberty, Kcinick, Briandixon, Flea, Pecoswilly, Irish Eyes, Lacy, McGowan007, JDBing, Clairvoyant, Cardshark2, Candysosweet, Fancfree, Fibber, Paragod, AJW and the person who had traveled the farthest Sudit from Australia.

The revelers continued to meet and greet until 7:00 p.m. when Charon walked into the room. Scott9343, Flea, Lacy and Clairvoyant all exited the four bathrooms along the back wall just in time to be greeted by their host.

Charon stepped up on the small stage, walked to the podium and spoke to his guests. “Good evening everyone and welcome to the McNaulty House of Clearlake Oaks, California. I am your host for the next 36 hours or so, my name is Charon. For the purposes of our Halloween party, I ask that everyone please continue to use your Iplay nicknames rather than real names to avoid confusion. Please have a seat and I’ll fill you in on the house and the party events that I have planned for you.”

Charon waited while everyone took their seats. “Perfect”, he thought to himself, “sixty-five chairs, sixty-five people.”

“The McNaulty House has history dating back to 1847. It was then that a pioneer named James McNaulty made his way west and staked his claim to 100 acres of mountainous region. For those of you who had a chance to see the view of the lake from here, you’ll understand why he built his four room house right where you are sitting now. Yep, that’s right, this house began as nothing more than a four room shack.”

“In 1851 a family of settlers came across the small house and fell in love with the view. They waited for two weeks here at the small eight room house for the owner to return. After two weeks, the head of the house went down to the small town settled just at the base of the mountains and spoke with the townspeople who told him of the recluse who had lived in the shack and how no one had seen him for two years. It was assumed that he moved back east as more people moved closer to him.”

Charon took a drink of water and continued. “The family moved into the house immediately and took possession of the 100 acres after residing on the property for six

months. In 1854 the sheriff of Clearlake, the small community settled just northeast of the home, came to visit the family. No one had seen any member of the household for nearly four months and he wanted to make sure that everyone was ok. Sheriff Ron Crockett found no sign of anyone living in the fourteen room house located on the property. Once again it was assumed that the family had just moved back east. It was then that Clarence Porter, one of the town councilmen, moved into the house. Everything was fine for the next three years, then out of the blue, then Clarence Porter disappeared.”

“Sheriff Crockett and his deputies began searching the entire area, beginning with the large twenty room house. Clarence Porter was never found, no trace of him moving away or dying, nothing. His disappearance went completely unexplained except for the rumors of the townsfolk that the house was cursed and had somehow claimed the lives of everyone who had lived there.”

“The house sat empty for the following six years. Then Ralph Cantrell and his family moved into the enormous forty-two room mansion set on the one hundred acres over looking the lake below. Ralph brought with him his wife Sonya and their three children, Cathy, Ralph Jr. and Lawrence.”

“Isn’t that the name of the man who was out front?” Snappy asked.

Other murmured agreement before Charon replied. “Yes it is, the man you met tonight is what you could call a descendant of the owner of this house from 1863 to 1866. It was in 1866 that perhaps the strangest part of the house’s history took place. The Cantrell’s disappeared to begin with, but it was the disappearance of Sheriff Crockett when he came to check things out that really raised people’s suspicions. By the time they called off the search, over thirteen people had vanished into thin air after coming to investigate the disappearance of the Cantrell’s and Sheriff Crockett. It was decided amongst the population of Clearlake that no one would go near the sprawling fifty-eight room mansion. And no one did for the next nine years.”

“Since 1875 when yet another family moved in to McNaulty House, there have been twenty-two other owners. I am the twenty-second having moved in three years ago. When I took possession of the house it was one hundred and ten rooms scattered throughout fourteen stories. It is now at one hundred and twenty rooms and fifteen stories high.”

“Why did you add on another floor?” Jonilee asked. “Wasn’t fourteen enough?”

Charon smiled. “Excellent question! You see, I didn’t add on to the house. The house added on to itself.”

He paused as there was a mixture of smirks and confused faces in the crowd. “If you research the house, you will find no sign of any construction that has taken place in this house. No one has ever filed for a permit, there has never been any construction workers here. No sign of anything being built here except that original four room shack constructed by James McNaulty in 1847. I realize that can be explained by possible oversights in paperwork, illegal construction etc. But I have owned this house since 2002 and I assure you, I have not lifted one finger or invested one dime in any construction to this house.”

“So you are saying the house just keeps getting bigger all by itself?” Skully spoke up. “Yeah right, ok, I’m gonna buy that.”

There was scattered laughter throughout the crowd before Fancfree spoke up, “Remember everyone, it’s Halloween. It’s time for ghost stories! Quit picking on Charon, I personally enjoyed his story.”

“Thank you. But, it’s really not a story. That is where you all come in. The festivities I have planned for you are as follows. First, Sayno2sanity and Pecoswilly have agreed to DJ a party for you all to dance and enjoy the night. The food in the back is sufficient I hope for your dinner’s tonight. After the party, you are free to decide what you’d like to do. You can either go to one of the seventy five bedrooms in the house or, you can begin the house investigation I have planned for you. In the right pocket of your chairs is a list of all the people here at the party, each are assigned a different portable radio channel. The radios are located in the left pocket. To speak with someone, simply turn the dial to that person’s channel and talk away. Before you ask, yes the radios have multiple chat capabilities. Also in the right pocket is a map with each of your bedroom locations, your bags have been taken to them accordingly.”

“At exactly 11:00 pm, the elevators will be turned on and the gates on the stairways will open. At which time, you are free to roam the halls of this house as you wish. Anyone, and I don’t care how many there are, who can reach the 15th floor by midnight tomorrow night will receive a check for \$250,000.”

The chatter from the crowd grew extremely loud so Charon waited for them to settle down. “Are you for real?” Deshadrow asked. “If we get to the fifteenth floor you will give us a check for a quarter of a million dollars?”

“Yes, it’s for real.” Charon responded.

“What’s the catch?” Skully asked.

“The house is full of dead end hallways, hidden corridors, hidden doorways, traps and pitfalls. Reaching the top floor is not as easy as it sounds, it will be a challenge for you. You will have to use your minds as well as your bodies to be successful. If anyone chooses not to attempt it, that’s fine, enjoy your stay here at the house. It is not a requirement, it’s a challenge from me to you, it’s up to you whether to accept it or not.”

“But we have a map of where are bedrooms are located. Are these not the actual locations?” Morsky asked.

“Yes, those are indeed the accurate locations of your bedrooms. But if you notice all of those rooms are located on the sixth floor and below. It’s floors seven through fifteen that are a challenge. I must excuse myself, I have some things to tend to. There are no rules to ask about, just simply make it to the top floor of the house and you are a rich individual. I’ll be around periodically. Enjoy the party!”

Charon walked away while people fired questions at him, he walked out of the room and closed the door behind him. Punkiegirl was a mere two seconds behind him and when she opened the door, he was nowhere to be found.

After a long discussion amongst the partiers, it was decided they would break into groups and keep in touch via radio. They would all help one another and cost Charon a lot of money. But for now, it was only 8:00 and they couldn’t access any other part of the house, so Sayno2sanity and Pecoswilly took their places on the small stage, put on the headsets attached to the computer behind the podium and began the party.

CHAPTER TWO

“Good evening ladies and gentlemen of Iplay!” Sayno2sanity began. “Welcome to the Halloween party, the operative word in that sentence being party! Everyone ready to party give me a big HELL YES!”

A loud hell yes rang back from the crowd. “That’s what I wanted to hear, gonna kick things off tonight with a nice classic, ya’ll climb out there on the floor and let us see you jitterbug, here’s the killer, Jerry Lee Lewis with Great Balls of Fire.”

“You shake my nerves and you rattle my brain...” The song began.

“Whew, that was nerve-racking.” Sayno2sanity breathed deeply. “You’re next bro.”

“Oh swell, thanks. I don’t even know what to play.” Pecoswilly replied.

“You have about one minute and fifteen seconds to figure that out.” Sayno2sanity smiled.

Willy went through the play list quickly and picked out a classic just as the song ended. “Hey out there, how’s everybody doing tonight?”

From the crowd came a mixture of greats, fines and awesomes. “In honor of what we may all have tomorrow, I dedicate this next song to all of us. Here is Money by Pink Floyd!”

He grinned at Sayno2sanity. “How’s that bro.”

“Outstanding as always my brother” Sayno responded.

“Thank you, Obi wan.” Willy quipped.

“You’re welcome, Padiwan.” Sayno2sanity responded.

The crowd applauded Willy’s musical selection as the conversation scattered throughout the giant room. It was decided that there would be twelve groups of five and one group of six searching through the house. The groups were divided as follows:

Group One: Melon, BJAM, Biggjon, Scott9343 and Mbabyreb.

Group Two: Botridingbabe, Fireangel02, Sampire, Ace Warrior and Ladyace.

Group Three: Pammie, Ellie, Deshadown, Punkiegirl and Paragod.

Group Four: Perkyone, Bluesky, Fancfree, Clairvoyant and McGowan007.

Group Five: Briandixon, Kcinick, Flirt19, Adoptapet and Fibber.

Group Six: Tweedledee, Tweedledum, Texanna1, Trachelle and Softspoken.

Group Seven: Flea, Gentleman, Medical, Skully and Wabbitt.

Group Eight: AJW, Candysosweet, Bobbi, Irish Eyes and Morsky.

Group Nine: Smokin, Lacy, Sayno2sanity, Jannelly and Liberty.

Group Ten: Simply Sweet, Bedrmiiz, Stardust, Lolita and Maresy.

Group Eleven: Cajun Princess, Pure Cajun, Indiana Rose, Indiana Woodie and Snappy.

Group Twelve: Sudit, Little Sugar, Cardshark2, Hectic1 and Imtrble2u.

Group Thirteen: Dave, Racecardriver, JDBing, Pecoswilly, Mistynite and Jonilee.

“We have the best group.” Sudit smiled in her charming Aussie way.

“That’s right.” Little Sugar agreed.

“As long as we get to the fifteenth floor by midnight, I don’t care if the group is best or not.” Cardshark2 intervened. “I just know I want that money.”

Everyone agreed with this assessment.

“Alright we’re gonna do an introduction segment tonight.” Sayno2sanity said over the speakers.

“That’s right, when we call your nickname come on up here and tell us where your from and any other pertinent info you’d like to share.” Pecoswilly continued.

“First up, we’re going to bring up our fellow DJ and everyone’s favorite Hoosiers. Rose and Woodie come on up here.”

Woodie and Rose stepped up on the stage. “Give these people your names and where you’re from.” Pecoswilly instructed and handed a microphone to Rose.

“Hi, my name is Indiana Rose and I live in Bloomington, Indiana.” Rose quickly handed the microphone to her husband. “Hey everybody, I’m Indiana Woodie and I, of course, live in the same town. I just want to say Happy Halloween to everyone and let’s all leave here very wealthy!”

The crowd applauded and shouted agreement as Rose and Woodie stepped down. “Next up we have another fellow DJ, the quakiest, perkiest person at Iplay, my lil sis Perkyone.” Sayno2sanity introduced.

“My name is Perkyone, a.k.a. California Quake and I live in the great city of Los Angeles California! The wonderful city of angels. I think it’s time to take a break from the introductions and rock this joint, how bout a little Aerosmith bro?” Perkyone yelled out into the microphone.

“Coming right at you sis, here’s What Kind of Love Are You On by Aerosmith.” Sayno2sanity replied.

While the music played everyone kept a close eye on the enormous clock on the wall. It was 9:20, only an hour and forty minutes until time to start making way up to the top floor.

Amanda Panda, KittEnkre, Seco, Ladydazzle41, Gracie, Dancinwithwolves, Caresses, Mlilreb, April99, Lady Bug, Real Nut, Calle Kitten and Rex2 all joined the party over the next hour courtesy of limo rides from varying airports.

The new arrivals were sorted out into existing groups making each group six members strong with the exception of group one which had seven members. Group one picked up Mlilreb and Rex2, group two: April99, group three: KittEnkre, group four: Caresses, group five: Dancinwithwolves, group six: Lady Bug, group seven: Amanda Panda, group eight: Gracie, group nine: Ladydazzle41, group ten: Seco, group eleven: Calle Kitten and group twelve: Real Nut. Group thirteen already being six members, did not get any new members.

The time was 10:45 and the crowd was getting anxious. Sayno2sanity and Pecoswilly continued the introductions and there were only three left to do. “Mbabyreb come on up here!” Sayno2sanity shouted.

Mbabyreb made her way up to the stage and was handed the microphone by Pecoswilly. “My name is Mbabyreb. Mlilreb is my mom for those who don’t already know that. I live in Alaska and I’m very much enjoying the warm California weather.”

“Uh, it’s not warm here it’s only 47 degrees outside.” Sayno2sanity spoke up.

“Compared to Alaska, trust me, its warm here.” She responded.

“Next up is my cohort in crime, my Padiwan, my Canadian Brother, Pecoswilly!” Sayno2sanity said pointing over at Willy.

“Yo, I play what’s up? My name is Pecoswilly and I’m from the greatest country in the world, Canada! Before we get to the last introduction, here’s a great Canadian band Sweet with Little Willy!”

The music began blaring out over the large hall as Pecoswilly walked across the stage. “Last but not least, eh bro?”

“Nah, last and least my brother” Sayno2sanity smiled. “We’re just here to make people forget about the clock anyway. At eleven, they will be running for the door.”

The two of them looked out at the crowd some dancing, some chatting, but all waiting with high anxiety for 11:00 to roll around. As the song was ending, Pecoswilly spoke up on his microphone. “Last but definitely not least, we have my Obi Wan himself, my brother and a friend to all, Sayno2sanity!”

“I know its 11:55 and everyone here is anxious to get started on that money chase so I’ll make this short and play one final song to help get everyone in the mood. I’m Sayno2sanity, more than just a name it’s an attitude. I currently live in California, originally from Virginia but also had a six year stint living in the corn fields of Indiana. I like to have a good time and hope that you guys are enjoying yourself thus far! Now, without further ado, its party time, it’s time for some inspirational music, here is Eye of the Tiger by Survivor.”

The party was in full swing as the song began playing over the speaker system. Seventy eight people were partying and glancing at the clock continually. Some were even going out of the room to check and see if the gates were opened yet. But, this was to no avail.

The song began to fade into silence at 10:59. “Thanks for co-hosting with me bro.” Sayno2sanity began. “Best of luck to all of us in getting that quarter of a million dollars. My radio channel is twenty-three for anyone who reaches the top, just so you can tell me and my group how.”

The new arrivals were given radios and assigned numbers by the ever so charming Ralph Cantrell as they arrived. The clock let out a loud chime before Pecoswilly could speak into his microphone. The people started for the door, all in their groups except for group number one who was missing a member.

“Where is Biggjon?” Melon asked.

“I haven’t seen him for hours.” Scott9343 replied. “Let me go check the restrooms.”

Rex2 and Scott both went to the four restrooms at the far end of the room. They came out shaking their heads. “He’s not here.” Rex2 began. “Let’s get started, we’ll try and get him on the radio to let him know where we are.”

“Oh yeah, the radio I forgot about that.” Mbabyreb looked at her list which was revised to include the late arrivals. “He’s channel number sixty-six.”

Mlilreb turned her radio to Biggjon’s channel. “Hey, this is Mlilreb, where are you? It’s time to get going on trying to reach the fifteenth floor.”

There was nothing but static on the other end. They waited another two minutes, continually trying to reach him on the radio and then walked into the main corridor. Immediately, their attention turned toward the front door.

“Wasn’t there a door there?” BJAM asked shakily.

“There was when I came through it.” Melon added.

“I know I’ve had a few beers but not enough to have misplaced a door.”
Scott9343 added.

The entire group walked over to where the doors were and touched the stone wall that was in its place now. It was absolutely solid, as if there never was an entrance.

“Ok, I’m officially freaked out now.” BJAM yelled. “Get me the hell out of this house. I don’t want the money that bad.”

“Calm down.” Mlilreb comforted her. “It’s just some kind of trick, we all know the door is still there, it’s just covered over cleverly somehow.”

The group tried to calm BJAM while getting a grip on their composure as well.

Group thirteen stood on the second floor looking at sixteen doors and two other groups on opposite hallways. The middle of the floor was wide open and along each side was a narrow four-foot wide hallway, each with four doors leading off of it. Only three doors were open, the rest were closed and most were locked. Group thirteen was checking the hallway located to the west side of the building. JDBing opened one of the closed doors and saw that it led to a bathroom.

“Whew, I have to go too. I’ll catch up with you.” He said to the group.

They continued down the hall as he entered the first room on the west side.

He closed the door behind him and turned around. The bathroom was now gone, what he was seeing now could only be described as a masochists dream. There were several hooks hanging from the ceiling and the walls were soaked with what appeared to be blood. He rubbed his eyes, knowing that he must be seeing things. But the torture room was still there. He turned to exit quickly. Unfortunately, the door was no longer located directly behind him. Before he could turn back around he felt a sharp pain in his genitals. It was one of the hooks that were dangling from the ceiling sinking into his flesh. He tried frantically to pull the hook out, screaming as loud as he could in agony. But before he could free himself, he was yanked across the room by the chain and left dangling from the ceiling by nothing more than the hook in his genital region. The searing pain caused him to lose consciousness just before a second hook tore into his bottom lip and came out through his top lip sealing his mouth shut.

Meanwhile in the hallway the rest of the group was saddened to find there was nothing behind any unlocked door but a few bedrooms. There were however, four extra rooms that were not located on the maps they were given. All of them were locked.

“Let’s head up to the third floor.” Dave suggested.

“Sounds good to me” The group was in agreement. They walked back down the hallway to the bathroom where JDBing had gone in and knocked on the door.

“We’re moving up to the third floor, are you done yet?” Pecoswilly asked.

There was no answer. Dave turned the doorknob and opened the door. The bathroom was empty. No sign of JDBing anywhere. Jonilee turned her radio to channel sixty-five, JDBing’s number. “Hey, this is Jonilee, we’re looking for you. Where are you?”

There was no reply, only static.

“Maybe the radios aren’t working.” Racecardriver said. “There’s AJW and his group, what is his number? Test it and see if he answers.”

“AJW? This is Mistynite45 checking to see if the radios are working, can you hear me?”

AJW looked over at the group across the way on the second floor, lifted his radio to his mouth and replied. “Yep, I hear you fine.”

“Okay, thank you.” Mistynite45 lowered her radio.

“He must’ve moved on without us.” Pecoswilly suggested. “Let’s go on and we’ll just keep trying his radio as we move up.”

The group moved to the elevators located on the north side of the second floor, got in an available one and pushed the button for the third floor.

On the south side of the second floor group six was examining a strange room that was locked but Trachelle was able to open. The room was filled with doorways. The dimensions of the room itself were no more than twenty by twenty, but there were four doors along every wall including the one they had entered through.

“Ok, did we just enter a fun house or am I losing my mind.” Texanna1 asked.

“I don’t know. I’m all confused. How can there be four doors along this wall when there was only one door into the hallway?” Lady Bug asked.

“Better question is who shut the door that we just came through?” Softspoken added.

Slowly they began checking all of the doors starting with the one they thought they had just come through. All of the doors were locked and no matter how hard Trachelle tried, she could not open any until she got to the sixteenth and final door in the room.

“Hey, this one came open.” She yelled excitedly. All of the group members walked into the next room, it was pitch dark. Texanna1 pulled out a lighter and illuminated the room with a small flickering fire.

The group’s eyes grew large with what they were seeing. The floor was covered in what appeared to be body parts. Not large body parts, small ones. Like someone had run them through a butcher’s meat grinder and sliced them neatly. The only full pieces were legs all detached from their bodies at or near the kneecap. They all turned to exit the room, but the door they had come through, was no longer there.

“Oh shit, now what do we do?” Tweedledee asked.

Before anyone could answer, Tweedledum fell to the floor, having apparently fainted from the site she had just beheld, Lady Bug, Texanna1 and Trachelle also fell to the floor unconscious.

Softspoken put her hand up to her mouth and nose to not breathe in the foul air that had permeated the room now as did Tweedledee.

“What’s the noise?” Tweedledee asked.

“I don’t know, it sounds metallic whatever it is.” Softspoken responded.

Before either of them could say anything else or even have another thought hundreds of small, razor-sharp horizontal wires came flying out of the walls.

The only thing not sliced thinly were their legs which were cut off at the knees and fell to the floor.

Minutes later the four women who had fainted began stirring. Texanna1 was the first to open her eyes and was pleasantly surprised to find they were no longer in a room filled with a bloody mess. The room they were in was almost sterile. The walls were painted a bright white and the fluorescent light in the ceiling showed an empty bedroom and an open doorway into the second floor hallway.

“Wow, what a nightmare.” Lady Bug exclaimed looking around the room.

“Yeah, if it was a nightmare how come we all felt it?” Tweedledum asked. “And where are Tweedledee and Softspoken?”

Trachelle was the last to fully awaken, she shook her head to try and clear out the cobwebs from what seemed like a long nap. “I don’t know. Let’s call them on the radio.”

Effort after effort to contact the two women met with failure, there was no answer, only static. After several minutes of searching the entire second floor, they decided to move on up and try to contact the women later.

AJW and the rest of group eight were trapped. They had entered one room on the second floor only to find there was no exit, not even the one they had come through. They were beginning to panic now, banging on the walls, trying desperately to create an exit.

“Hey, we’re a member short.” Bobbi noticed. “Where is AJW?”

They looked around the twenty-by-twenty room. There were no doors, no windows but yet somehow he had managed to get out. Candysosweet turned her radio to AJW’s channel. “Where are you?” She asked.

There was no response, merely static. The group frantically began trying every channel to find someone who could come and help. No one answered until Irish Eyes managed to get Softspoken on the radio.

“Softspoken can you hear me?” Irish Eyes began, “This is Irish Eyes.”

“Yeah I hear you loud and clear. How are you?” Softspoken replied.

“We’re trapped on the second floor. We went into the second door down on the east side of the floor and we’re stuck in here. Can you help us?”

“Sure can, I’ll be there in just a bit, sit tight and don’t panic. We’ll help you real soon.” Softspoken’s voice reassured the group.

With the reassurance that someone was coming to help them, they sat up against the wall and waited.

CHAPTER THREE

Group twelve began their initial investigation of the house on the third floor. Mainly because Sudit was tired from her long trip and had decided to get some sleep while the rest of the group moved upward. She would radio them when she woke up. From the elevators they moved to the left and down the eastern corridor. They then turned left up another corridor and down to the end. Sudit's bedroom was down another hallway off to the right.

"Boy this place is a maze." Sudit said.

"I have a feeling we haven't seen anything yet." Cardshark2 responded. "You get some sleep and radio us when you wake up. Instead of you trying to find us, I'll come down and get you."

"Thank you honey" Sudit smiled.

After everyone hugged her good night, Sudit went into her bedroom and closed the door behind her. She was happy to see her bags were on a stand beside her bed and that she had a private bathroom. She took one of her bags and went into the bathroom whistling happily.

The remainder of the group explored the third floor further. It was even more of a maze than they could have imagined, it seemed that for every door they went through, there were two more to explore. Door after door they moved around the third floor until they came to a doorway that led nowhere. Hectic1 was the unfortunate soul who walked through the door first, only to plummet down into the darkness below.

Little Sugar stood back from the doorway screaming, while Cardshark2 and Real Nut leaned out to try and see Hectic1 below. They could not see the body, the area was pitch black and they had no flashlight just a lighter and it wasn't nearly sufficient.

"Hectic1! Can you hear me?" Imtrble2u yelled. Her voice echoed in the darkness as if it was a large canyon. There was no answer. "What are we going to do now?"

"The radios, let's try and get help on the radio." Real Nut pulled her radio out and started at channel one yelling for anyone to help them. She and the rest of the group went through every channel, but no one answered except other members of the group when they were called.

"The reception must be bad where we are." Little Sugar thought aloud.

"It must be." Cardshark2 agreed. "Let's go and find help."

The group left every door open behind them as they made their way back through the third floor maze. They walked for what seemed like forever retracing their steps until again the wrong door was opened and Imtrble2u fell into darkness after walking into a room with no floor.

Across from where they were standing they saw the other doorway where Hectic1 had fallen. There was no light below and no sound. "Are you ok?" Little Sugar asked into the darkness. Again it boomed an echo back at her as if in a canyon. But no answer came from below.

"How the hell did we go in circles and end up here?" Real Nut yelled out. The echo boomed back through the open doorway as if someone else was yelling it back at them.

“Okay, just calm down. Let’s try and figure this out.” Cardshark2 said with a very shaky voice. “We obviously turned somewhere along the way.”

“But we never turned.” Real Nut said. “Not once, we just kept going straight and we ended up making a complete circle or square, depending on how you look at it. Explain to me how that happened and then I might calm down.”

The group decided to go back slowly and try to find where they made the error, each being extra cautious when entering a dark room.

Also on the third floor was group five. They had casually entered one of the small rooms off the main corridor, when they opened the door to return, it led into another room.

“This is insane.” Briandixon yelled out. “How can this be happening? Is this some kind of funhouse?”

“Charon said no one had actually built the rooms, they had just appeared.” Flirt19 responded.

“Yeah and you believe that bull?” Kcinick asked. “It’s obviously just some kind of illusion.”

“So how do we get off this merry-go-round?” Fibber queried. “If it’s just an illusion you’d have thought that at least one of the fifty doors we’ve opened would have led back to where we needed to be.”

“If you don’t like my choices, go in a different direction.” Briandixon said. The stress was starting to get to everyone in the group now and it was growing increasingly difficult to hold it in.

“Okay everyone, let’s just calm down and get out of here. Sooner or later we have to open the correct door. All of these rooms look the same though, just a bland pale white with white acrylic floors.” Dancinwithwolves began. “I have some M&Ms starting now I’m going to leave some at every doorway we go through. That way if we are going in circles, we’ll know it.”

The room they were standing in had two doors on every wall. All were shut except the one they had just come through. Dancinwithwolves placed two M&Ms at the doorway they had come through and rejoined the group.

“Okay, let’s go through this one.” Adoptapet suggested pointing to the door to the left on the opposite wall from where they had entered.

“I say we go this way.” Kcinick argued pointing to the door to the right.

“Why don’t we just open every door in here and see if any looks like the path to civilization?” Fibber asked.

Everyone seemed to like that idea and they opened every door. Beyond then all were separate white rooms with white acrylic floors. “So much for that idea” Flirt19 sighed.

“I say we split up into groups of two.” Briandixon suggested. “We can go in more directions that way and whoever finds their way out can get help for the rest of us. Maybe we’ll all find our way out.”

“I don’t know if I like that idea.” Adoptapet said worried. “We know the radios work with just us, but they don’t seem to reach anyone else. We assume that means it just picks up people on the same floor. What if it only picks us up because we’re in the

same room? If we split up we risk not having any future contact with the rest of the group.”

“Why don’t we simplify this” Dancinwithwolves began. “I have an enormous bag of M&M’s I say we go ahead and split into three groups. Each taking a different color and we leave these two every doorway we pass through. That way, if one of us makes it and radios the others, all we have to do is backtrack and follow the right color.”

“That sounds great, but what if the radios don’t work right like Adoptapet said?” Fibber added.

“Ok, we’ll just have to keep constant radio communication going. Charon said they had three-way capability. Kcinick suggested. He then switched to Flirt19’s number. “Okay, can you hear me now?”

“Duh” Flirt19 responded.

“Now use yours and switch to Fibber’s channel.” Kcinick instructed her.

Flirt19 dialed up Fibber’s channel and found that it worked perfectly. The three of them were able to communicate freely. Adoptapet, Dancinwithwolves and Briandixon repeated this action and they too were able to communicate.

“Ok, let’s divide into groups of two and get the hell out of this maze.” Kcinick said.

Briandixon and Kcinick split off into one group, Dancinwithwolves and Flirt19 went another direction and Adoptapet and Fibber went off to the left of where they had come in.

Although it was annoying, as they passed from room to room they continued to ask, “Can you hear me now?” Everything was working great as the smaller groups explored the third floor. Until there was a loud popping sound on the radios and they went silent.

“Now what do we do?” Kcinick asked Briandixon.

“I say we keep going until the M&Ms run out or we come across someone.”

“Sounds like a plan.

Kcinick opened the next door in front of them and yelled out happily. Briandixon, who was placing M&Ms at the door they had just come through looked up to see that Kcinick was standing in what appeared to be the main hallway. “Awesome dude” He shouted. He started for the door and before he could get to it, it slammed shut. He reached out, turned the handle and opened the door. What was beyond the door was no longer the main corridor. It was an enormous mirrored room. He stepped into the room completely confused. “KNICNICK” He yelled out only to have his words bounce back at him from off the mirrored walls.

“United they stand, divided they fall. For making my task so easy, I thank you all.” A voice began behind him. He turned to see some sort of creature walking toward him. But it appeared to be in the mirror. He spun around and in every mirror it seemed the beast was moving toward him. It had one eye that moved constantly back and forth when it walked. The body was like that of a large dog and its head was enormous, at least three times too big for the body. Underneath of the large eye was the worst feature, a very large mouth displaying two rows of razor sharp teeth.

“Ah the look of fear, it fills my heart with warmth and brings back memories that are just so dear.” The creature continued.

“What, who are you? What do you want?” Briandixon asked terrified. “Leave me alone!”

“Alone you say, alone you already are. Would you prefer to spend eternity in this mirrored room? Surely you would go insane within days, but if that is your choice, Pyro will oblige.”

“Pyro? What is pyro?” Briandixon asked.

“I am the awe-inspiring, Prince of Falsehoods, Pyro.” Enough of this chatter, I have others to tend to. “Do you choose to me a meal for me or suffer in this room for eternity?”

“I’ll stay here.” Briandixon said. A split second later, the beast was gone. But now suddenly, his reflections began to multiply. It was as if there were 100 of him for every mirrored panel. He spun around getting dizzy and dizzier. He moved toward one of the walls hoping to lessen the number of reflections but it only grew worse. He closed his eyes but even then he could see his reflection multiplying. He put his hands over his eyes hoping to darken the image, but it was to no avail. Open or closed his eyes were seeing clearly his reflection. The room began spinning, his reflections turning around him and growing in number. He screamed and insane scream and charged one of the mirrored walls, he couldn’t take it anymore. As his body hit the glass panel it went straight through tearing his body to shreds. He screamed a final painful scream and fell to the ground in a puddle of blood dying slowly.

Kcinick couldn’t believe it. One second Briandixon was heading toward him, the next thing he knew, he vanished. He was nowhere to be found. He walked back through four of the rooms following the M&M trail carefully and yelling out Brian’s name. He didn’t want to get lost again. He turned and walked back toward the main corridor. He smiled big as he saw the open doorway leading to safety. He walked through the doorway and immediately knew he had made a mistake. He looked down and saw the floor was no longer beneath his feet, his body crashed down to the marble two floors below. He heard his legs snap and screamed out in pain holding his legs and writhing on the floor. That’s when he realized, he wasn’t the only thing writhing on the floor.

The snakes that had adorned the columns were now alive and slithering around the floor. They were all enormous at least twenty feet long with piercing eyes and mouths that seemed to grin evilly. “Yessss, dinner iss ssserved. Eat my babiessss, enjoy the firsst feasst of the night.” A voice hissed from behind him.

He spun around and saw a fifteen feet high serpent with a cobra’s neck and the facial characteristics of a man. “Who are you?” He asked.

“I am Leviathan, the lassst thing you will ever ssee.” The creature hissed.

Kcinick let out one final scream as the snakes tore into his flesh. He was silenced when one ripped off his head and swallowed it.

Candysosweet was getting restless as were the rest of group eight. “Where is Softspoken?”

Irish Eyes spoke into her radio. “Softspoken, can you hear me?”

There was no response now, just static. “Maybe AJW is getting help also.” Bobbi muttered quietly.

“How did all of the doors just vanish it’s not possible!” Morsky yelled. “I mean we came through that wall...” Her voice tailed off, she couldn’t believe her eyes. Where

it was a solid wall before, now there was a door. Quickly she jumped up from the floor and ran to the door.

Gracie saw the door at the same time and did the same thing. They both reached the door simultaneously and threw it open. What was beyond the door was another room with three doors. They all quickly left the room they had been held captive in. In the next room they opened the door to the left first, it simply opened into yet another white room. They opened the door that was straight in front of the one they had just come through. Again it was nothing more than a plain white room. Morsky opened the door to the right. Everything happened so quickly, no one in the room was sure exactly what did happen. A powerful suction wind like an enormous vacuum cleaner pulled Morsky and Gracie through the door and out of the room before the door slammed shut.

“What the heck?” Candysosweet stood shocked.

“I have no idea.” Bobbi responded. “But I don’t think that’s the right door.

“We have to go and help them.” Irish Eyes said. She pulled the door open again before anyone could stop her. There was no suction this time, just the main corridor of the third floor. The three of them ran out the door and toward the elevators. They had seen enough and were getting out of this house. The elevator doors opened and they stepped in and pushed the number one.

“Patienceeee paysss off my children, more food iss on the way. Leviathan hissed from below as he and the other serpents slithered to the sides of the elevator awaiting their next meal.

Charon walked into a dark dismal room on the second floor. The last time he was in here the person he had come to visit was unconscious. This time, he was wide awake.

JDBing tried to ask for help when he saw Charon but his lips were held together by one of the two hooks into his flesh.

“Tsk tsk tsk” Charon shook his head slowly. “That looks awful painful to me. It seems that Sonneillon is enjoying his work once again. Who is Sonneillon you ask? He is the demon of hatred and you will be getting to know him very well. You must’ve been a very naughty boy for Santa to have given you this gift.”

Charon turned as a light came from behind him. “Here’s Sonneillon now. I’ll leave you to your work.” Charon left the room so quickly JDBing didn’t even see him move. It was as if he vanished into thin air.

What stood before him now was no man. Its arms were enormous and dragged the ground like an orangutan. The creature appeared to have no head. Its eyes, nose and mouth were part of its upper torso. He wanted down from the hooks that were tearing into him, but his pain was just getting started. The beast walked toward him and grabbed two more hooks. He shook his head and cried, the sound muffled by the hooks in his lips. The fiend stuck one hook through his left shoulder and the other through his right.

JDBing began to move wildly but with each movement the pain grew more intense. Just a few seconds later, he was mercifully unconscious once again.

CHAPTER FOUR

Cardshark2, Little Sugar and Real Nut had been walking varied paths on the 3rd floor for hours, no matter which path they took, they came back to the same dark pitfall. Every time they got to the pitfall, it was pitch black down below with only the light from the door across from them visible. This time they arrived at the pitfall, it was different. It was dimly lit to where they could see the first floor below and going down the wall was a ladder. There was no sign of either Hectic1 or Imtrble2u down below, but the first floor sure was a welcome sight.

Real Nut started down the ladder first, followed by Little Sugar and Cardshark2. Each arrived safely on the floor below. In front of them was a doorway that led out into the main hallway they had all entered the house through.

“I wonder if Hectic1 and Imtrble2U are okay.” Little Sugar asked as the trio walked towards the brighter light of the main hall.

“There’s no sign of any blood and they aren’t down here.” Cardshark2 began. “Maybe they just got bruised up real bad and are now with the other groups.

“And maybe their dead bodies were already removed by a hearse.” Real Nut added. “We’ll know when we see them anyway or if we don’t.”

“Such a ray of sunshine you are.” Cardshark2 laughed. “But, you do have a point.”

The three of them walked out in to the main hallway where big Ralph Cantrell, now affectionately known as Lurch, was leading a group of late arrivals into the building. SwtGaGirl, Auntie, SpaderM, Jade1255, Sunflower78, Whatstrips, Boris, Hawkeyes, Cabbie, Greeneyedblonde and ImalilAngel were being instructed that everyone was now to meet on the sixth floor. Apparently there was a problem on one of the other floors and for everyone’s safety they needed to take the elevators.

As Real Nut, Cardshark2 and Little Sugar approached Charon appeared from behind the group entering the house and walked towards them. “I have been looking all over for you three, are you okay?” He smiled.

“Yes, but that third floor maze thing you have is enough to drive someone insane.” Little Sugar smiled.

“Yes, it is.” Charon agreed. “But it’s generally all in good fun. Unfortunately, two of your group members were injured. Hectic1 and Imtrble2u received minor injuries. Both are on their way to the hospital for treatment.”

“Are you sure the injuries were minor?” Real Nut asked. “What did the paramedics say when they arrived?”

“Apparently Hectic1 has a broken ankle and a minor concussion and Imtrble2u dislocated her shoulder. She also has a minor concussion.” Charon responded. “Please join your fellow partiers on the sixth floor now so we can begin the maze of the upper floors.”

“More mazes?” Cardshark2 asked. “Is there going to be more two story drop offs into darkness also?”

“No, no more of those I assure you.” Charon smiled falsely. “Also, the other member of your party, Sudit, is waiting for you on the sixth floor.”

“Okay, thank you.” Little Sugar said and the three of them walked across the black marble floor to the elevators.

Charon and Ralph watched them walk away then disappear into the elevators. “Personally escort any new arrivals to the sixth floor. Do not send them out on their own as you just did. Two of those late arrivals are now wandering the fifth floor.”

Ralph hung his head and took a small step backward. “Yes, master.”

Strolling around the fourth floor were three groups, groups three, nine and eleven. Group three was investigating a strange sound coming from the end of one of the multitude of corridors on the fourth floor. It was an odd ticking noise. It would tick rapidly and then slow down steadily. The sound was coming from inside a room located at the very end of the hall. Paragod was the first person to the door and he turned the knob and opened it very cautiously. When it was open just a couple of inches everyone could see a light flashing in sequence with the ticking sound.

Paragod opened the door a little further slowly, suddenly the ticking and the flashing light stopped. The room went completely black.

“Please come in.” A whiny voice called out from inside the room. “I seldom get visitors. Would you like the light back on first?”

“What do we do now?” Ellie whispered.

“I say we don’t go in there.” Pammie whispered back. “That voice sounds kind of creepy.”

“Creepy?” A shrill yell came from inside the room. “Creepy you say? Well fine then, I asked nicely, now I insist that you come in.”

The door flew open and a powerful suction came from within, the more powerful the suction became the quicker the lights blinked and the faster the ticking noise was. Paragod was the first to be pulled into the room followed closely by Ellie and Punkiegirl. Pammie and Deshadow held on to the doorframe with all of their strength as KittEnkre went flying into the room. The suction grew more and more powerful until finally Deshadow and Pammie were pulled in.

As soon as they were all in the room, the door slammed shut, the lights went out and the ticking grew very slow and methodical. Ellie was unconscious on the floor after hitting her head on the wall with plenty of force after being pulled into the room.

“I hear your hearts beating.” The voice sounded in the darkness. “They beat rapidly, like this.” The ticking grew faster then steadied off.

“Patience is a virtue you know, you exhibited great patience in opening the door. Quite frankly that pisses me off!” The voice grew louder and shriller. “My name is Verin, for those who do not recognize this name I am the demon of impatience. Yes, that’s right I said demon. I like things done quickly, so therefore we are going to play a little game. When I open the door you run towards it. The first three to get out will live, the next three, well, you won’t be so lucky.”

The door flew open immediately after Verin finished speaking. Punkiegirl was the first one out the door followed by Deshadow and Pammie. KittEnkre was in the doorway when the door slammed shut on her tearing her in half vertically. “Ah ah ah, I said three, not four.”

Ellie was now regaining consciousness and the room was light enough for her to see. She saw KittEnkre first and let out a loud scream in horror then she saw Verin standing beside her smiling. He was short, only three feet tall, but his features were incredibly large. His arms resembled those of a gorilla and his legs were as big around as

tree trunks. His face was contorted, one eye was larger than the other, his mouth went diagonally instead of horizontally and his nose was bulbous. "Poor sleeping beauty, what shall I do with you?" He said.

"Let me go?" Ellie suggested.

Verin broke out in loud high-pitched laughter. "For making me laugh, I will do just that. However, you can not leave by the door in which you came. You must leave through the door behind you. You have twenty minutes to find your way to another floor, after that time, I will find you and you will die."

Ellie darted quickly out the door behind her, wasting no time at all. "I like that, nice and quick." Verin chuckled. "Time to find more victims."

Group eleven was lost. There was no other way to put it. After going down a long corridor they had entered a room only to exit into another corridor leading the opposite way from which they came in.

"This would have been much simpler had the elevators just gone to the fifteenth floor." Indiana Rose said. "Of course, then it wouldn't have been much of a challenge."

"I would have been happy with a staircase on the sixth floor instead of twelve locked doors." Cajun Princess responded.

The group continued to walk around the fourth floor searching for a staircase or an elevator leading up to the seventh floor. There had to be a way to get there, they just had to find it.

When they turned the corner at one of the corridors they heard a strange ticking sound coming from a room at the end of a long one-hundred-foot hallway. There were no other doors along either side, just the one down at the end.

"What is that noise?" Snappy asked.

"I have no idea." Pure Cajun responded. "Should we go check it out?"

"It's either that or back track down all of these corridors." Indiana Woodie did not like the idea of going backwards one little bit.

"Let's be democratic." Calle Kitten began. "Majority rules, show of hands, who wants to go find out what's in that room?"

She raised her hand after asking the question as did Indiana Rose and Indiana Woodie. It looked like it was going to be a tie until Snappy slowly raised her hand.

"Looks like we're going to check it out" Snappy said.

"You mean that it looks like you four are going." Pure Cajun corrected. "We'll have our radios on in case you need us. We're going back the way we came."

The two Cajuns turned and walked away before anyone could respond. "Okay, it looks like four of us are going." Indiana Woodie said.

The larger group of the now divided group eleven started down the hall to explore the strange ticking noise. When they got to the door and turned the knob, the ticking noise stopped. Calle Kitten pushed open the door. It was pitch black in the room except the beam of light from the corridor.

"Anybody in here" Indiana Rose called out to the darkness.

There was no response, but slowly the ticking noise began once again. Way in the back of the apparently large room was what appeared to be a staircase leading up. The foursome started into the room quickly, nearly running through the darkness to go up

the stairs. Suddenly, the light came on and a very short, disfigured man stood between them and the staircase.

“Going somewhere?” The little ogre-like man asked in a shrill voice that resembled nails on a chalkboard.

“We’re going up the stairs to the seventh floor.” Snappy smiled even though she was terrified.

“You mean you thought you were going up the stairs.” Verin smiled back. “You see you have a conundrum. Behind you is a maze of hallways that lead to nowhere, in front of you is the stairway to safety. But between you and the staircase stands me which means you have to get past me to get out and I really don’t see that happening.”

“You aren’t going to stop us.” Indiana Rose said and started for the steps.

The little man began running around in circles. Then he moved over slightly so he was running in circles around Indiana Rose. He ran faster and faster until he was just a blur. Rose began to spin around faster and faster, she opened her mouth to scream but nothing came out. She tried to stop spinning but it was useless, she couldn’t. Indiana Woodie ran to her but was thrown backwards fifty feet by the force of Verin running in circles around Indiana Rose. Snappy and Calle Kitten watched in horror as Indiana Rose began spinning so fast that she too was a blur. Verin suddenly came to a complete, dead, stop. Indiana Rose was still spinning. He pulled his leg back and kicked forward launching her into the air like a rocket taking off. She went up and smashed hard against the ceiling. No one had noticed until that point that the ceiling was made of metal. Indiana Rose was spinning so fast and moving so quickly that when she struck the ceiling she disintegrated. Pieces of her body flew throughout the room, blood spewed over Snappy, Calle Kitten and Indiana Woodie.

Snappy leaned forward and vomited from the sight of the disaster. Calle Kitten was about to join her when Verin once again began running around in circles. This time the circles were larger encompassing all three of them. His speed increased rapidly and before any of them could move, he had them trapped in a tight circle spinning around absolutely helpless. Again Verin stopped and this time watch as his three prey continued spinning wildly. He took a deep breath and blew out as hard as he could the force of the wind sent them hard up against the metal wall. They met with the same tragic end that Indiana Rose did, all three disintegrated, small pieces of their bodies and blood flew all over the room.

“I love impatience, unless it pisses me off.” Verin said. Then he started whistling as he moved across the large room to the door.

Group nine were also walking through a maze of rooms and corridors but unlike the other groups, their doors had writing on them. Most simply said “This Way”, but others said, “Keep Going” and “Don’t Give Up”.

“I’m getting a little tired of this game.” Lacy said.

“You and me both” Jannelly agreed. “These doors have to come out somewhere don’t they?”

“I’m still trying to figure out what direction we are heading in after the twentieth door I got all turned around.” Smokin added. “Maybe we should stop following the signs and just go back the way we came. I don’t have the patience for much more of this.”

“We’ve come this far.” Ladydazzle41 added. “We may as well keep going.”

They continued from room to room, reading the signs as they grew wearier and wearier. Then they came to a room with a different sign than the ones before. It said, “Almost There.” The next one said “Just a few more doors”. This put a little bounce back in the group’s step.

“Thank God we’re almost there, my feet are killing me.” Liberty was excited to be nearly through with this journey.

Finally, they came to a door that was only twenty feet away across a plain white room and it said, “You made it”.

Ladydazzle41, Jannelly, Liberty, Lacy and Smokinnn all hurried towards the door, SayNO2Sanity walked along behind them. They opened the door and rushed inside, the room they had entered was quite large, at least fifty feet squared. The lights were out in most of it, except on the opposite side of the room there was a small wire fence with a gate in the middle and behind the fence was a staircase. As they neared the fence they realized there was a small man standing in front of the gate. They all stopped about five feet away when they got a good look at the queer little man.

“Good morning everyone, how are you today?” Verin started but continued before anyone could respond. “My name is Verin and I am the stair keeper. To pass by me, you must answer a question correctly. Who would like to go first?”

“I will.” Ladydazzle41 spoke up first.

“Ah, very good, impatience, I like that.” He motioned for Ladydazzle41 to come forward. She moved up to him and he motioned for her to lean down. “I must whisper it in your ear so that the others don’t hear. We can’t have any cheating you know.”

She leaned down and Verin whispered to her, “You are driving along the left lane of the freeway and the car in front of you slows down to wave at his buddy in the next lane over to the right. For the next five minutes the two drive side-by-side at only forty miles an hour talking to one another with their windows down. Do you “A” Blow your horn and motion for them to get out of your way or “B” wait patiently for them to end their conversation and move on?”

Ladydazzle41 smiled and whispered, “A”.

“Very good choice, you may pass.” Verin opened the gate and let her through.

“Next?” Jannelly stepped forward. Verin asked the same question only he reversed the A and B answers just in case Jannelly cheated. But she said she would blow the horn impatiently and he let her pass.”

Liberty, Smokinnn and Lacy all passed the test as well and moved up the stairs. “I notice you seem to always be last.” Verin said. “You were the last to enter the room and the last to step forward to answer a question. You must be a very patient man, huh?”

Sayno2sanity smiled and said, “Yes, for the most part.”

“I’m sorry, that’s the wrong answer!” Verin yelled in a shrill voice. “You shall not pass.”

Sayno2sanity shook his head at what he saw next. The stairway was no longer there, it was now replaced with a solid wall. “What the hell is going on?” He asked.

“Well, you got the hell part right.” Verin smiled and started moving toward Sayno2sanity. “Have you ever wondered if there really is a Heaven or a Hell?”

“No, I’m sure there is.” Sayno2sanity responded taking small steps backward to get away from the freaky little man. “Look, I don’t know what is going on and I really

don't think I want to know. I'm just going to go back out the way I came in. You have a nice day."

Sayno2sanity turned around and Verin was in front of him once again. He looked back over his shoulder and the man was there also. He closed his eyes and shook his head, obviously he was seeing things. When he opened his eyes again Verin was just a foot away from him, smiling. "Look, I don't want to have to hurt you. So just get out of my way and we'll part company peacefully."

"Ooh, hurt me. I'd really like to see that." Verin chuckled and thrust out his arm hitting Sayno2sanity in the right leg. He fell down to the ground and let out a pain-filled scream. He put his hands down to his leg, but it was no longer there.

"You were saying something about hurting me?" Verin chuckled once again and raised his arms in the air. "I don't think so."

Verin lowered his arms with all of his strength and smashed Sayno2sanity's head like a pumpkin falling off a truck onto the highway. "Patience is a virtue. Good things come to those who wait." Verin said smiling. "What a crock of shit that is."

At that very second, Ellie came running into the room. She saw the stairway first and then she saw Verin and a person lying on the floor with no head or leg. She stopped dead in her tracks.

"Why are you stopping?" He asked. "You have twenty-one seconds to get to the stairway. Twenty, nineteen, eighteen..."

Ellie took off running as fast as she could across the large floor. She heard Verin counting down as if he were right behind her every step of the way. "Five, four, three, two..." She jumped forward onto the stairway.

"Congratulations." Verin said. "Best of luck to ya now."

Ellie ran smack into Jannelly who was coming back down the steps to find Sayno2sanity. They both fell down on the steps. "Don't go down there." Ellie yelled.

"I have to find Sayno2sanity." Jannelly responded. "What's wrong?"

"He's dead!" Ellie yelled and got up and continued running up the steps past Ladydazzle41, Smokinnn, Lacy and Liberty.

Jannelly ran in the other direction. She ran down the stairs, she started down the turn to the left in the stairwell and stopped suddenly. There was no room, the stairs ended in a solid wall. She stepped forward and began pounding on the wall. It echoed like it was made of steel but she was pounding on drywall. She beat furiously on the wall the other four members of group nine joined her, but they had no luck in finding an opening. The wall was indeed solid.

"I'm sure Sayno2sanity is alright." Liberty comforted Jannelly.

"Wait. Let's see if he answers the radio." Lacy said and pulled her radio and list out of her pocket. She switched to channel 2, which was Sayno2sanity's number and pushed the button to talk. "Sayno2sanity? This is Lacy can you hear me?"

At first there was nothing but static and then a voice came from the other end. "Yes, I can hear you Lacy. I got detoured another direction because I answered the question incorrectly. I'll meet you guys on the next floor."

Jannelly had switched her radio to his channel by now. "How are you going to find the next floor? The passageway here is closed off and now you have to go all the way back the way we came."

Again there was static at first. "No, Verin gave me a map. I won't be long."

Jannelly tried to speak to Sayno2sanity once again to say goodbye for now but his end was nothing but static now. "Piece of crap radio." She said in disgust.

Group nine walked back up the steps to the fifth floor. "Now, I wonder what the heck Ellie was all excited about?" Smokinnn said.

"Yeah no doubt, she was all fired up about something." Liberty said.

"I guess we'll find out when we see her again." Smokinnn finished.

Back on the second floor JDBing had regained consciousness. The pain was excruciating and at this point he was hoping that he would just die.

"Not yet." Sonneillon said. "I can read your mind. You will not die yet."

JDBing closed his eyes and tried to stay motionless to decrease the pain of being suspended by hooks five feet off the ground.

"OPEN YOUR EYES!" Sonneillon screamed.

JDBing did not. He didn't want to see anymore, he didn't want to hear or feel anymore. He was trying to put his mind in another place instead of on the pain. Sonneillon pulled JDBing's eyelids up and stuck a small hook through both of them so that he could not close his eyes any longer. He tried to scream, but it was muffled. He felt sharp pains in both of his feet as two more hooks stuck into them. He writhed in pain despite himself and again fell unconscious.

CHAPTER FIVE

The last of the guests arrived at 3:00 a.m. Dutifully, Ralph Cantrell led Lady Turtle, FastEddie, SlicenDice, AdorableJoe, SherryKat, Shar, Gordplays here, First Class Pard, NobodyzChild and Rosie up to the sixth floor. To the left of the elevators, one large room was open to everyone and inside was all of the new arrivals from the previous group with the exceptions of GreenEyedBlonde and Auntie both of whom decided to walk around the fifth floor. Also in the room were remaining members from groups who had explored floors one through four.

“The total is now at one hundred people.” Charon said to Ralph as they walked down the stairway to the first floor together. “Very good, very good indeed.”

“Yes master, the turnout is nearly twice than we expected.” Ralph agreed.

“Try and move along any stragglers who are not occupied and get them into the sixth floor room. I want to address everyone at precisely 4:00 a.m.”

“As you wish master” Ralph responded dutifully.

The fifth floor was filled with partygoers. Groups two, four, seven and ten were there as was the two wayward new arrivals. The fifth floor layout was very different from previous floors. The east side of the floor had only one door and it opened into a long dark hallway lined with rooms on both sides. At the end of the hallway it branched into a “T” with rooms lining the hallways to the left and to the right as well. The west side of the floor had three doors, the first and last of which also led down dark passageways lined with doors on each side. The middle door was a restroom. There were no doors on the south side and the north merely had elevators.

Groups two and ten both went down the east side corridor, group two went north at the “T” and group three went south.

“It’s so dark in here and I haven’t seen a light switch in any room.” Botridingbabe said shining a flashlight from room to room.

“I feel like I’m blind. It’s a good thing we have flashlights or we would be seriously shit outta luck.” Ace Warrior added.

“Don’t jinx us.” Fireangel02 said. “Don’t even think about these flashlights dying. If I have to walk around this place in total darkness I’m going to have a heart attack.”

Door after door opened off to their left, a solid wall was off to the right. After what seemed like one hundred yards there suddenly was a door off to the right.

“I thought that we were walking along the outer wall.” Ladyace said looking at the bright red door. “Certainly is an ugly door considering the rest are plain black.”

April99 was the first to walk into the room. It was lit up nicely and appeared to be some kind of storage facility. There were at least a hundred long narrow crates stacked four high throughout the room.

“These look an awful lot like coffin crates.” Sampire spoke what everyone else was thinking.

“There’s no way.” April99 said. “Is there?”

“One way to find out” Ace Warrior said grinning. He found a metal rod leaning up against one of the crates and began to pry one open.

The others stood watching intensely as the box lid slowly pried upward then with one last hard shove the lid flew off. Everyone's eyes grew large at what they saw, it was indeed a coffin. At the very second the reality hit them, the lights went out in the room and it was pitch black.

"Oh shit!" Botridingbabe yelled out and flipped the switch on her flashlight. It did not come on. Neither did anyone else's.

Fireangel02 freaked out and ran, screaming through the darkness toward the area she believed the doorway to the room to be.

"No don't run off." Sampire yelled.

But it was too late. Fireangel02's screams ended quickly and was replaced with an echoing thud. It was the sound of something hitting either a wall or the floor very hard.

"Oh my God" Botridingbabe shrieked and began moving quickly in the direction Fireangel02 had ran off in. Seconds later and eerie cracking sound echoed through the room.

"Botridingbabe? Fireangel02? Can you hear me?" Lady Ace called out into the darkness.

There was no answer. "What are we going to do?" April99 whispered in the darkness.

"I don't kn..." Sampire's sentence was cut short and replaced with another cracking sound and a thud.

"Sampire?" Ace Warrior said in the darkness. "Are you ok?"

Again there was no answer just another cracking sound and a thud.

"What is that sound?" April99 asked.

"I don't know but it's freaking me out." Ladyace responded.

Again there was a loud crack and a dull thud.

"That sound is not good news" April99 began, "Especially since it's so dark in here."

At that split second the lights came back on. April99 rubbed her eyes as she adjusted to the brightness and started to focus. Her eyes grew wide when she saw Ladyace lying on the floor, her head twisted completely around and facing backward, she screamed and stepped back against the crates and let out a scream when she saw Botridingbabe on the floor in the same condition. Her horror grew more intense, also lying on the ground was Sampire, Ace Warrior and Fireangel02. "Oh my God!" She shrieked.

Then she saw movement above her. She looked up and there, floating just a foot above her head was an old woman wearing a black robe. Her face was wrinkled and contorted her eyes closed tightly. Before she could scream again the woman reached down and grabbed her head. Again there was a snapping sound followed by a thud in the room. Seconds later, the lights went out once again.

Ellie was completely lost. Somehow she had wandered into an area with no light, when she tried to go back the lights went out behind her. Now she walked along in the darkness clutching the wall and yelling for help with every step. Even this was better than what she had encountered on the previous floor, but not by much. Her mind was racing, hoping that the vicious beast had not followed her into the darkness. Every few

steps she would stop and listen for footsteps, but there was no sound in the darkness. She continued on going around corner after corner trying to find some light. Suddenly two small red lights appeared in the darkness ahead. At first she didn't pick up on them, but they were moving toward her now and doing so rapidly. She turned her and started running back the way she came until she ran face first into a wall. In the darkness she could hear her breathing, but nothing else. There were no footsteps, no other indicative sounds of any other presence.

She took her hand and wiped the tears off her cheeks, she had cried as she ran and didn't even realize it until now. She stood up and turned around. She froze with fear immediately. Just inches away from her were the two red lights she had seen, now that they were this close, she could tell they were eyes. The eyes glowed brighter suddenly and a flash came from them. Ellie fell backwards onto the floor, dead.

The southeastern route of the fifth floor held pretty much the same adventures for group ten as the northeastern route had held for group two. Corridor after dark corridor lined with bare rooms of darkness. Four of their flashlights had died now, leaving only two in the hands of Simply Sweet and Lolita.

Slowly they moved forward in the shadows, wandering aimlessly in all directions, completely lost.

"It's a good thing these halls didn't branch." Stardust spoke up. "At least we can find our way back easily enough.

"I'm hoping there's a stairway or something down here to lead us up a floor or two." Seco responded.

"There had better be something soon." Maresy began. "These flashlight batteries go dead and we're screwed."

As if on queue, both flashlights went out simultaneously. "Oh great" Simply Sweet yelled out. "You jinxed us Maresy."

"Ok, nobody panic." Bedrmiiz spoke up. "Let's just form a line and walk along the wall back the way we came until we're back in the lighted area."

Everyone lined up alongside the wall and placed one hand on the wall and the other hand on the shoulder of the person in front of them. They began walking slowly back in the direction they had come.

They turned along the corridors keeping one hand on the wall for what seemed like forever. As they turned a corner, they saw two red lights in the darkness ahead. They all stopped and looked quietly at the two small lights. They seemed to be moving toward them. Then, they were gone.

"What the hell was that?" Lolita asked.

"I have no idea." Simply Sweet and Stardust responded at the same time.

"That was Shalbriri." A crackling slow voice spoke in the darkness.

"Oh shit." Seco whispered. "I think I have to find a restroom quickly."

Suddenly the two red lights appeared right beside him. Seco jumped and slammed his back against the wall. "Never mind I don't need one now."

The dark corridor was filled with the sound of dripping water and the heavy breathing of frightened individuals.

"Shalbriri" the crackling voice said again and the two red lights began to glow brighter.

“Oh shit those are eyes!” Maresy yelled and started running down the hall. Lolita and Simply Sweet followed her. Bedrmiiz, Stardust and Seco weren't able to. Seco fell to the floor lifeless as the red eyes flashed brightly in the dark corridor.

Stardust and Bedrmiiz both had turned away. They started to move away but there was a loud crack followed by a thud as Stardust's neck snapped and her body hit the floor. Shalbriri let out a very loud, ear-piercing shrill scream that echoed down the halls and made Maresy, Simply Sweet and Lolita's blood run cold as they moved swiftly through the darkness.

Shalbriri moved swiftly and deftly through the darkness closing in on her three running victims. She could smell them and the smell of fear was sweet to her nose. She moved around a corner and saw the three figures running blindly and started cackling loudly as she closed in on them. She grabbed Simply Sweet by the neck and tossed her hard into a solid concrete wall. The sound of Simply Sweet's head crushing against the concrete made Shalbriri smile, she reached down for Lolita. Just as she made contact with Lolita's head the lights came on in the corridor. Lolita and Maresy moved swiftly around the next corner. Shalbriri, blinded by the light, slammed hard into the corridor wall. Shalbriri was very upset at the escape of two victims. But she sensed more occupants on the west side of her floor and moved off in that direction.

In the northwest corridor of the fifth floor, group four was exploring every room they came to. The doors on the left side of the corridors were blue and the ones on the right were black. So far the only things they had come across were bedrooms and bathrooms. As they turned the corner into another corridor, there was only one door remaining before a dead end. It was bright red.

“Damn it.” McGowan007 said. “Looks like we're going to have to backtrack all the way to where we started.”

“Don't jump the gun, maybe there is a stairway behind that door. It is a different color than the rest.” Fancfree said encouragingly.

Caresses was the first one through the door. It was dark in the room and all six went in to find a light switch. Just as the last of the group, Perkyone, entered the room the door slammed shut. Perkyone and Bluesky tried to push the door open, but with no luck, it was locked.

“Someone better find a light switch now.” Bluesky said into the darkness. “The door is locked.”

“Oh great” Clairvoyant whined. “I can't see anything in here. Literally can't see my hand in front of my face.”

“You're not afraid of the dark are you?” Perkyone asked.

“Dark, no. Blackness, yes.” Clairvoyant responded.

“Okay everyone, let's find a light switch. There has to be one in here somewhere.” Caresses voiced into the darkness.

They were scattered in the room, McGowan007 was walking along a wall that seemed to go on forever. Before she knew what hit her, Shalbriri snuck up on her and slammed her head through the wall then threw her dead body across the room.

Everyone else heard the loud crash and then the sound of something sliding across the floor.

“What was that?” Fancfree asked.

“I don’t know” Caresses said. “Is everyone okay?”

“I am.” Perkyone responded.

“I am.” Clairvoyant called out.

“I am.” Bluesky said.

“I am.” Shalbriri called out and then began laughing evilly. “But you won’t be soon.”

Fancfree saw the two red lights moving toward her just before she felt the hand on her neck. There was a loud crack and a thud as her dead body fell to the floor. Clairvoyant and Caresses met with the same fate, both seeing Shalbriri’s eyes just before it was too late.

Bluesky watched the red lights move nearer to her. “Who are you and what do you want?” She asked frightened.

“Shalbriri dear and I just want you to look into my eyes and smile.”

Bluesky watched terrified as the two red eyes glowed brighter then suddenly flashed out brightly. She fell to the floor dead.

Shalbriri cackled with glee and moved swiftly on to the southwest portion of the fifth floor.

Group seven had somehow gotten split up. Gentleman, Medical747 and Flea were trapped in a stairwell between the fifth and sixth floors, the lights had gone out just as they went up the first steps and after what seemed forever they had finally decided to sit down on the steps and get some rest. None of them had a flashlight but Flea had a lighter and occasionally he lit up the area so they could look around. It was a simple enclosed stairwell, but there were no light switches and both the doors were locked.

The silence of the darkness was broken by two soft clicks, about five seconds apart. Flea flicked his lighter and lit up the area to see what the noises were. They looked down at the fifth floor door, it was still shut and so was the sixth. Nothing appeared to have changed so he let the room go dark once again. None of them looked straight up to see danger hovering overhead.

Shalbriri grabbed flea by the top of the head and slung him down the stairs and through the wall below head first. “Hehehehehe” She cackled.

Medical747 and Gentlemen sat in horror as two red eyes moved closer to them. They began growing brighter and brighter. Suddenly the door from the sixth floor flew open and the light shined in from above.

“Holy shit.” Medical747 screamed when she saw the witch-like person in front of her. She and Gentleman ran up the stairs, they were unbelievably happy to see Ralph Cantrell who was holding the door for them.

“Charon will hear about this Ralph.” Shalbriri screamed.

“He already knows about it.” Ralph responded and closed the door.

Skully, Wabbitt and Amanda Panda had somehow managed to find their way back to the corridor where they began. They walked down the dark corridor towards the light from the main area of the fifth floor.

When Wabbitt and Amanda Panda reached the main area they were puzzled that Skully was nowhere to be found. “Skully” Wabbitt yelled back down the corridor. There was no response.

“What should we do?” Amanda Panda asked.

“Let’s try him on the radio.” Wabbitt suggested and turned her radio to Skully’s channel. “Skully, where are you?”

The static went silent and Skully responded. “I’m stuck in a room down here. Help me.”

The voice sounded similar to Skully’s but not exactly. “Is this really you?” Wabbitt asked.

“No, it’s the Easter Bunny.” Skully responded. “I’m just two doors down to the right. The door is locked or something I can’t get out.”

Amanda Panda and Wabbitt walked down the corridor and opened the second door down. It was pitch black in the room and there was no immediate sign of Skully. They yelled for him but there was no answer, only two small red lights in the back of the room moving suspiciously like they were some kind of large animal eyes. After yelling for him a second time to no avail Amanda Panda tried him again on the radio. This time there was only static.

“Let’s just go upstairs and find Charon, maybe he can find Skully. I don’t want to take a chance on getting lost in these halls.” Wabbitt suggested.

Amanda Panda didn’t argue, the two went back up the hallway and over to the elevator.

JDBing writhed in pain from the hooks in his body. Sonneillon had left the room several minutes before and JDBing thought maybe, just maybe he could wriggle his way free, at least get one or two of the hooks out of his flesh. He gritted his teeth through the pain and using his left hand grabbed a hold of the hook in his right shoulder. Tears streamed down his face as he slowly moved the hook back through his skin. Just as it was almost out another hook came flying out and snagged his left hand yanking it out in front of him. A second hook flew at him snagging his right hand and pulled it out in front of him. His screams were muffled still the tears flowed non stop even after he lost consciousness yet another time.

CHAPTER SIX

“Is there a light switch anywhere in this damn room?” Greeneyedblonde yelled out in the darkness.

“I don’t think so.” Auntie called out from across the large room they had gone into before the lights went out. “I think a breaker went out.”

“I guess that’s possible.” Greeneyedblonde replied. “Where are you? I’m starting to get a little freaked out about being blind in this darkness.”

There was no response, just an echoing crack and a thud like something falling hard to the floor. “Auntie? Are you ok?”

Silence filled the room and then there was a rustling sound. Greeneyedblonde tried hard to focus on where the sound was coming from. “If you are planning on sneaking up on me and scaring me, I’ll kick your ass.” She said to the darkness.

“That I want to see.” A strange voice responded.

Greeneyedblonde looked up above her because it almost sounded like the voice came from there. “Who’s there?”

“BOO!” The strange voice shrieked from just behind her. She whirled around and lashed out her right hand in the direction of the voice. There was a loud cracking noise as her wrist was snapped between the wrist and the elbow. She screamed in agony and held her arm with her left hand.

Again there was a loud “BOO!” from behind her. She spun around quickly and saw what appeared to be two red eyes blink in the darkness. She screamed again and tried to run away, but there were two more cracking sounds in the room as both of her legs were broken between her ankle and her knee. She fell to the ground hard and in agony. “Please, whoever you are, please stop.”

The two red eyes were just above her now, gazing at her coldly. “You have such beautiful emerald eyes. I think I’ll take them.” The shrilled voice spoke out in the darkness. Before Greeneyedblonde could respond she felt pressure and then a burning sensation in her eye sockets.

Again she yelled out in pain. This had to be a nightmare she thought to herself, it can’t be real.

“Oh but it is real dear.” The old woman’s voice whispered in her ear. “Now, it’s time to die.”

The room echoed with one final cracking sound followed by a loud thud as Greeneyedblonde’s severed head slammed hard against the wall.

Shalbriri began cackling as she moved across the dark room. “I love my work.” She shrieked.

On the sixth floor there was an enormous crowd gathered in the large room now. The newest arrivals Lady Turtle, FastEddie, SlicenDice, AdorableJoe, SherryKat, Shar, Gordplayshere, First Class Pard, NobodyzChild, Rosie, SwtGaGirl, SpaderM, Jade1255, Sunflower78, Whatstrips, Boris, Hawkeyes, Cabbie and ImalilAngel. Joined Pammie, Deshadown, Paragod and Punkiegirl from group three, Perkyone from group four, Flirt19, Adoptapet, Fibber and Dancinwithwolves from group five, Tweedledum, Texanna1, Trachelle and Lady Bug from group six, Medical747, Gentleman, Amanda Panda and Wabbitt from group seven, AJW, Morsky and Gracie from group eight, Smokinnn,

Jannelly, Lacy, Liberty and Ladydazzle41 from group nine, Bedrmiiz, Lolita and Maresy from group ten, Cajun Princess and Pure Cajun from group eleven and Real Nut, Cardshark2, Little Sugar and Sudit from group twelve.

Group one and group thirteen had decided they were going to find the stairs to the seventh floor while everyone else waited for Charon as they were instructed by Ralph Cantrell.

The sixth floor was laid out rather oddly. The large room was off to the west side of the elevators, there were two smaller rooms farther down the hall on the west side that led to other rooms behind them and there were six doors on both the south and east side that were locked.

Group one had gone into the first room past the large room on the west side. From there they found a corridor after going through three rooms that was lined with four doors on either side. The first two doors on each side led to empty rooms. The third door down on the left side had another room beyond it, rather than everyone going off in that direction, Scott9343 volunteered to explore that area on his own. BJAM volunteered to explore the area across from it as the room there also had another door in the back. The last door on the right had an extra door leading off from it and Mlilreb went to explore it. The last door on the left had three separate doors leading off of it, so Melon, Mbabyreb and Rex2 each went through a door in exploration.

The group maintained radio contact as they moved farther through their respective areas. Scott9343 had gone through three more rooms and was about to open the door to a fourth when he found it to be locked. He turned to go back but the door he had come through slammed shut and locked him in. He tried to call out for help on the radio only to receive static from all five of his group members' channels. Suddenly he heard a loud buzzing. It seemed to be coming from above him. He looked up and saw four small vents leading down into the room. The buzzing grew louder and Scott9343 began to panic. He tried frantically to open the door he had come through, not seeing the enormous swarm of bees coming down into the room through the vents. When he turned around his eyes grew wide and he opened his mouth to scream. The bees flew down his throat and covered his body. Within seconds, he fell to the floor dead.

BJAM had come across the same problem that Scott9343 was facing. She was trapped in a small room and she could not raise anyone on the radio to help her. Her problems grew worse when the light in the room went out leaving her in total darkness. She tried and tried to open the door to no avail. She decided to just stay where she was instead of moving around the dark room. In the darkness she heard movement. It grew louder and louder. She couldn't place the sound. She felt something crawling up her legs and swatted at them, then the light came back on. The room was filled with millions of spiders of all sizes. She screamed in horror as they all moved toward her. Her screams grew louder and they began biting her and then faded as life crept out of her body.

Mlilreb was facing the same issues that BJAM and Scott9343 were facing. Trapped in darkness she heard a loud buzzing sound filling the room. She had heard the sound before but nothing nearly as loud as this. The room filled with locusts, they swarmed all over her in the dark room, she screamed and that was her fatal mistake as they swarmed down her throat. The light came back on in the room as she lay on the floor choking from the enormous amount of locusts moving around inside her.

In the final room, Melon, Mbabyreb and Rex2 were laughing. They had each gone through three separate doors all three leading into the large room where everyone was waiting for Charon. On their radios, BJAM, Scott9343 and Mlilreb told them they were all together now and would continue to search the sixth floor for the stairs.

Dave and Racecardriver had somehow gotten separated from their group. They still had radio contact, but it was nearly useless since no one knew where the hell they were to begin with.

“We’re in a green corridor with white doors now.” Dave said. “We’ll hang out here for a bit, maybe you’ll stumble across it.”

“We’re going through room after room.” Jonilee responded. “We’ll find you. Where did Pecoswilly and Mistynite go?” They heard Jonilee say.

“You mean their not with you?” Racecardriver asked.

“They were, but not anymore. I’m going to backtrack a few rooms and see where they are.”

“Okay, we’ll search the doors here, while we wait. Maybe one of them is a stairway.” Dave responded.

Jonilee started back the way she had just come and Dave and Racecardriver began looking into the rooms along the corridor. All three were continually trying to raise Pecoswilly or Mistynite on the radio.

“How the hell did we lose Jonilee?” Mistynite was incredulous. They had been walking around every room trying to find her but to no avail.

They opened up a black door and found the main hall area to the sixth floor. “What should we do now?” Pecoswilly asked. “Should we go back and look or join everyone else and then go and look.”

“Let’s just go over where everyone else is and maybe get some help finding them.” Mistynite answered.

Dave and Racecardriver came to a black door at the end of the corridor and pushed it open. The door hit Pecoswilly squarely in the face.

“HEY!” He screamed.

“Oh no, sorry about that” Racecardriver said.

Dave was about to fall down from laughing so hard. “Yeah, sorry” He managed to say.

Mistynite was also laughing heartily. “I keep telling you be careful where you put your nose.”

“Ha ha ha very funny eh?” Pecoswilly was trying as hard as he could not to laugh also. “That hurt you know.” Then he busted out laughing. The four of them went over and joined the large group of partygoers thinking that Jonilee was probably already there.

Jonilee was panicked. She had gone into a room and the next thing she knew the doors of the room slammed shut and locked and the lights went out. It was pitch black and eerily silent. She continually tried to call for help on her radio, but it didn’t seem to be working.

Things began getting worse, suddenly there was a small scratchy sound on the floor that seemed to be moving toward her. Then there was another and another until the room echoed with thousands of the same sound.

She put her hand over her ears to try and drown out the sound. But seconds later she realized it wasn't the sound she had to worry about. Something was crawling up her leg. She smacked at the unwanted visitor and then there was another and another.

She continued to swat them off until the light came on. Her eyes grew wide with fear and her heart began to race. She was frozen and unable to move or scream. There were thousands of scorpions crawling around the room. She felt the first one sting her, then another and another. They were stinging her rapidly now, the room started to get blurry, she felt the life fading from her body. Seconds later, she fell to the floor dead.

CHAPTER SEVEN

“Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I know that some of you have questions and concerns, but please let me speak. Perhaps your questions will be answered. For those newcomers that I haven’t met, my name is Charon. I am your host. Ralph has told you, I’m sure, that anyone who can make it to the fifteenth floor of the house will receive the sum of two-hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Now you may be thinking to yourself that this is an easy task. Think again. You see each floor of the house is protected by a demon.” Charon paused as jaws dropped and looks of disbelief appeared.

“Yes, I said a demon. I can tell by your faces that some of you don’t believe in demons and some of you are terrified as you should be. You will note that there are just over sixty people in this room. Out of one hundred, that means that over thirty have perished in the walls of the house.” Charon saw a smile on the face of Dave and Deshadow. “Why are you smiling?”

“Because it’s not like anyone here really believes that someone is dead in the house.” Deshadow responded.

“I see.” Charon paused. “How many here doubt that anyone is truly dead? Please raise your hands.”

Nearly everyone raised their hand. “Ok, then let’s get this out of the way shall we? I was hoping to not have to do this.”

Charon raised his right hand in the air slowly, as he did so the wall behind him drifted upward into the ceiling. People began screaming and the scene became highly chaotic when they saw what was behind the wall. It was Biggjon, he was hanging from the ceiling with hooks through his hands and feet and another one into his back. Charon waved his hands around in the air and Biggjon’s body danced along as if it were a marionette. Charon brought his hands together in front of him now and the body dangled motionlessly. Quickly he threw his hands in the air wildly over his head, the horror was unbelievable. Biggjon’s body ripped into pieces with varying parts still hanging from one of the five hooks.

“Now, anyone not believe me now? It’s a real shame that he died before that demonstration, you see the demon on the second floor, Sonneillon, is an excellent worker, but he sometimes gets overzealous.”

Dave and Gordplayshere decided to attack Charon. They ran towards him and with a wave of his hand he sent them both flying backwards across the room. “I love humans. You think your violence will cure your problems. The fact is the violence IS your problem. The more violent you are, the more likely you would be to spend eternity with me.”

“With you?” Lacy chimed up. “Just who are you?”

Music began playing from seemingly everywhere. It was a Rolling Stones tune. Charon began singing along with Mick Jagger.

*“Please allow me to introduce myself
I'm a man of wealth and taste
I've been around for a long, long year
Stole many a man's soul and faith*

*And I was 'round when Jesus Christ
Had his moment of doubt and pain
Made damn sure that Pilate
Washed his hands and sealed his fate*

*Pleased to meet you
Hope you guess my name
But what's puzzling you
Is the nature of my game”*

Then just as quickly as it started, the music stopped. “Any more questions as to my identity?” Charon smiled evilly his coal-black eyes twinkling.

“This freak thinks he’s the devil.” Hawkeyes said.

“Thinks?” Charon roared. He pointed his hand at Hawkeyes and everyone watched in horror as he spontaneously went up in flames. He ran through the room engulfed in the fire and seconds later dropped to the floor. The fire didn’t go out until all that remained of Hawkeyes was ashes. Charon walked over to Hawkeyes remains, took a deep breath and blew the ashes across the room. “Ashes to ashes, disbelief to dust.” He said.

“Ok, no more stupid questions, it’s time to listen.” Charon began and the room fell eerily silent. Everyone watched him with fear in their eyes. “From this floor on, your little groups no longer exist. Your survival will depend on your instincts because you will be making choices to determine your own fate. Rest assured once you have made your choice, it is irreversible. Different floors have different demons. On this floor Merihim, the prince of pestilence roams. However, you no longer have to worry about him. What lies ahead of you are different demons of different specialties, all of which have one thing in common. They enjoy bringing pain to humans. There are twelve doors outside that are currently locked. I am going to choose twelve people to be leaders.”

Charon paused smiling. “When I call your name you will go outside and stand by one of the twelve doors. Should you refuse to do so, I can assure you a painful death unlike anything you could possibly imagine. AJW, Paragod, Perkyone, Racecardriver, Bedrmiiz, Stardust, Softspoken, Wildchild, Irish Eyes, Candysosweet, Sudit and Lacy each of you go and choose a door.”

Everyone filed out of the room dutifully once in the hall they chose a door without a word and stood by it. Ralph Cantrell stood in the hallway observing to ensure compliance with Charon’s orders.

Back inside the room, Charon looked at the remaining people with a gleam in his eyes. “That leaves fifty-four of you in this room. Here are the rules. You will walk out of here and pick a door. You will follow the person who has been chosen to lead the way. Straying off course or trying to assume command will result in a death like your friend Hawkeyes. I will be waiting on the eighth floor, six groups of people will see me there, six will not. I and my minions will be watching at all times, you’ll do well to remember that. Now get out of here and good luck.”

Everyone left the room in fear, not a sole doubted Charon now and no one wanted to get on his bad side. Questions remained among the people, but they were all afraid to

ask. The goal was still what it was to begin with, to survive and make it to the fifteenth floor.

The people separated as follows:

Door #1 – AJW, Dancinwithwolves, Realnut, Pammie, SwtGaGirl, Pecoswilly

Door #2 – Paragod, Deshadow, Gracie, Texanna1, Trachelle

Door #3 – Sudit, Little Sugar, Cardshark2, Ladybug, Adoptapet

Door #4 – Stardust, Lolita, SlicenDice, Morsky, Sherry Kat, AdorableJoe

Door #5 – Bedrmiiz, Jannelly, Liberty, Smokinnn, Boris

Door #6 – Irish Eyes, Lady Turtle, Mistynite, Punkiegirl, Pure Cajun, Cajun

Princess

Door #7 – Perkyone, Wabbitt, Amanda Panda, Gordplayshe, Ladydazzle41

Door #8 – Wildchild, Medical747, Rex2, Shar, SpaderM

Door #9 – Candysosweet, Sunflower78, Cabbie, Flirt19, FirstClassPard

Door #10 – Softspoken, Gentleman, Tweedledum, Whatstrips, Dave

Door #11 – Racecardriver, Fibber, ImalilAngel, Jade1255, Mbabyreb, Maresy

Door #12 – Lacy, NobodysChild, Rosie, Melon, FastEddie

When everyone had separated into their respective groups, the doors in front of them opened. When every person was through the doors, they all went shut again.

“I guess there’s no turning back now.” Dancinwithwolves muttered quietly.

“AJW? I sure hope you are lucky.” Realnut added.

“I hope so too.” AJW said.

He had been given a flashlight and a map. The map showed a “Y” intersection just ahead and sure enough they arrived at it. “Any idea which way we should go?” AJW asked.

“You pick.” Pammie responded. “He told us if we tried to make any decision or take charge we would die painfully.”

“I think I’ll pick then.” AJW said. He chose to go up the stairway to the right instead of the one to the left. They climbed up a dark blue stairwell and came to a closed door at the top. “This is where the map ends.”

AJW reached out and opened the door, the room was dark and he shined the flashlight through the room until he saw another door off to the right. There was writing on the door, but he couldn’t make it out. He took his group over to the door cautiously and read the sign. “Congratulations, you chose wisely, follow these stairs to level eight.”

Everyone in the group breathed a deep sigh of relief and then AJW opened the door. Again there was a dark blue stairway with a door at the top. They climbed the stairs slowly and cautiously opened the door at the top. Inside was a large room with a snack table set up and chairs around tables. Also in the room was Ralph Cantrell.

“Welcome to the safe room.” Ralph said. “Have a snack or a drink and relax.”

Pecoswilly looked around the room. There were five other doors leading into the room. “I guess those are for the other lucky ones.” He said.

“None of us are lucky.” SwtGaGirl responded. “If we were, we wouldn’t be here.”

Paragod was given the same equipment, a flashlight and a map. He and his group followed a long hallway and came to a “Y” intersection, both of which led up stairwells. The one to the left was red. The one to the right was dark blue.

“Does the map show what’s up those stairs?” Deshadown asked.

“No, as a matter of fact it ends here at the “Y”. Paragod responded. “Do you guys have any preference?”

“That monster back there said that you had to choose or we would die.” Texanna1 told him.

“Red reminds me of blood. We’ll try dark blue.”

“Sounds good to me” Trachelle said.

They climbed up the stairs and Paragod slowly opened the door at the top. It opened into another stairwell. They climbed up another set of stairs and came to yet another door. “Eighth floor, menswear, shoes and let’s hope safety.” Paragod quipped. He opened the door and it opened into a large room where one of the other groups and Ralph Cantrell were.

“Congratulations.” Ralph said. “You chose wisely, enjoy some snacks and drink until the other four groups join us.”

“Nice job Paragod.” Gracie said. “Thank you.”

Paragod nodded and smiled. “You are welcome.”

Sudit was given a flashlight at her door and a map that made no sense at all. They climbed a set of stairs immediately after going into their room. At the top was a black door. According to her map, the door opened into two rooms. She opened the door and they stepped into a small room with a small desk in the middle. There were two doors, one on either side of the desk. Sitting at the desk was a reasonably attractive woman, in her mid-30s. She looked perfectly normal except for her deep black eyes.

“Good evening.” She said smiling brightly. “My name is Jezebeth. I am here to aide you in your next decision. Behind me is two doors, you must choose one of these doors. I’m here to tell you that you definitely do not want to go right.”

“Why don’t we want to go right?” Cardshark2 asked.

“Because, if you go right, your life will end” Jezebeth responded smiling sweetly.

“I think we should go left.” Sudit said. “I believe her.”

“Are you insane?” Adoptapet asked. “That guy down there told us this house is full of demons, we need to go right.”

Before anyone could respond, Adoptapet burst into flames and went running through the room. “Obey the rules!” Charon’s voice echoed through the room.

The group stood wide-eyed looking at Adoptapet’s dead, smoldering body. “Okay Sudit, let’s go left.” Little Sugar said.

Jezebeth kept smiling and winked as the group walked to the left door. Sudit walked in followed closely by the remaining group members. The room was very dark and the door slammed shut behind them leaving no light within.

“Sudit, turn the flashlight on.” Ladybug whispered.

There was no response.

“Sudit?” Cardshark2 said. “Where are you babe?”

Again, there was no response.

Before anyone else could speak, the light came on in the room. Jezebeth was standing in front of them now, still smiling that innocent smile. "Who is it you are looking for?"

"Sudit" Little Sugar answered.

"Sudit was dead long ago." Jezebeth responded. "She was killed on the third floor by Pyro. It was real painful too. She fell through a trap door into a fire pit."

"Damn you!" Cardshark2 exclaimed. "You lie!"

"Yes, I do actually. But as for her demise, I'm not. You are the ones who left her alone, not I. Don't blame me."

Cardshark2 charged the woman, he was filled with rage. Suddenly the sweet innocent-looking woman metamorphosed into a beast with flaming hair, large black eyes and a huge mouth filled with razor-sharp teeth. Cardshark2 didn't have time to stop. Jezebeth grabbed him and pulled him towards her then bit his head off. She dropped his lifeless body and chewed his head then swallowed loudly. "That was delicious." She bellowed in a deep voice.

Little Sugar and Lady Bug screamed. They had nowhere to run to now. The door they had come through was no longer there. Jezebeth caught Little Sugar first and bit off her head and ate it and then did the same to Lady Bug.

Stardust wasn't given a map, but she was given a flashlight and a pocket watch. She didn't ask any questions, just accepted the two items and waited for her chance to get out of this nightmare. She had no idea that she was already dead.

They walked down a long corridor and into a room painted in psychedelic colors. Behind them, the corridor closed up, there was no other exit.

"I think we're in trouble." Lolita said.

"In trouble is putting it mildly." AdorableJoe said. "We're dead."

"What was that?" SlicenDice yelled pointing at the wall off to their left.

Everyone looked over at the wall but saw nothing.

"What did you see?" Morsky asked.

"It looked like something transparent was moving along the wall." SlicenDice said.

"I don't see anything." Sherry Kat said staring at the wall intensely.

While the five of them stared at the wall Jezebeth crept up behind and bit SlicenDice's head off. By the time his body hit the floor she went back to playing chameleon and blending in to the psychedelic walls.

Lolita was the first to see his headless body on the floor and she screamed. In her fear she backed up against the wall. A mistake that Jezebeth was counting on, she had her second feast. AdorableJoe and Sherry Kat also never saw it coming. Their lifeless bodies hit the floor after Jezebeth had gone back to blending in.

"What the hell is going on?" Morsky yelled out.

The answer to the question was just a foot away from her. She turned just in time to see Jezebeth's large razor-sharp teeth closing in on her. The room echoed with a loud crunch followed by muffled chewing sounds.

Bedmiiz led her group up a short corridor and to a "Y" intersection with stairways going both ways. She shined her flashlight up the dark stairwells and saw a

door at the top of both. One door was dark blue, the other was green. “Eenie meenie miny moe.” Bedrmiiz said.

“Oh shit.” Jannelly said. “We’re relying on eenie meenie miny moe to save us.”

“I’m sorry. It’s all I’ve got.” Bedrmiiz apologized.

“I’m just kidding.” Jannelly smiled. “I know you’ll lead us the right way.”

“Me too Bedrmiiz.” Liberty said. “I have faith in you.”

“I’m glad someone does.” Boris said smiling.

“Oh shut up. You want to decide?” Bedrmiiz asked.

“No thanks. I’m not going to be responsible for everyone’s life.” Boris said.

“Gee, that makes me feel much better.” Bedrmiiz retorted.

After several minutes of thinking Bedrmiiz started up the stairway to the right and bravely pushed open the dark blue door. It led to yet another stairway with a dark blue door at the top and they continued upward. She took a deep breath and pushed the door open. It was a large room with several other party guests and the tall Lurch-like butler.

“Welcome to the eighth floor lounge.” Ralph said. “Enjoy a drink and a snack. We’re waiting the arrival of three other groups before we continue with the evening’s festivities.”

“Festivities?” Smokininn said. “You call this festivities you sick bastard? Where’s the alcohol? I need a drink.”

Ralph didn’t respond. He just turned and walked away.

Irish Eyes was looking at two doors on the seventh floor. The stairway they had come up branched out at the top and now she was faced with a decision. The door to the left was black and the one to the right was a midnight blue color.

“I can’t decide.” She told her group.

“You have to choose one.” Mistynite told her.

“Yeah, we’re not allowed to choose, only you.” Punkiegirl said.

“What if we don’t choose? What if we just sit here for awhile, maybe someone will help us.” Irish Eyes asked.

“It’s your decision.” Pure Cajun responded. “But do you really think Charon is going to just let us sit here safely?”

“Well, I’m sorry, but I can’t be responsible for everyone’s life. I won’t do it.” Irish Eyes began crying.

“Fine” Lady Turtle said. “I’ll choose.” She reached out and opened the black door. It was instantaneous, the second the door opened, Jezebeth came charging out furiously. She ripped Lady Turtle, Pure Cajun and Mistynite’s heads off and put them in her incredibly large mouth. Punkiegirl and Cajun Princess ran down the stairs as fast as they could go only to find the entryway below was blocked. Just as they turned back around, Jezebeth let out a shrill scream and ripped both of their heads off as well. After the last one was digested, she smiled and let out an earth shattering belch.

Perkyone led her group confidently through three dark corridors and up two flights of stairs. Now she stood looking at three doors. The one to the left was dark blue, the one in the middle was red and the one to the right was yellow.

“The red one is definitely out.” She said.

“I’m glad you said that. It reminds me too much of the devil” Wabbitt said.

“Whichever one you pick, I support you Perkyone.” Gordplays here said.

“I do too. As long as you pick the right one” Ladydazzle41 smiled.

Perkyone reached out and grabbed the doorknob on the yellow door. It felt cold to the touch. She reached out and grabbed the dark blue one, it felt much warmer. She stepped back, took a look at both doors one more time and then opened the dark blue door.

Inside was a large room with other house guests, snacking and drinking. Mainly drinking. “Congratulations” Ralph Cantrell greeted them. “Good luck on continued success. For now have something to eat and drink and relax.”

“Way to go” Amanda Panda was so excited tears were in her eyes. She ran to Perkyone and gave her a big hug. Everyone else in the group followed suit.

Wildchild stood in the hallway looking at four flights of steps leading to the seventh floor. Within him he knew that if he chose the wrong one now, it would certainly doom everyone in his group.

“What are we waiting for?” Shar asked.

“I want to be absolutely sure I make the right decision.” Wildchild responded.

“In that case, take your time.” Medical747 said. “I’m in no hurry to deal with that Charon again.

“That guy’s out there. I don’t know how he did what he did to Hawkeyes, but that convinced me he’s not to be messed with.” Rex2 added.

Wildchild started up a dark blue stairway. It spiraled around and around, going up two stories. He opened the door at the top with confidence and walked into the large room on the eighth floor where the rest of the lucky ones were gathered.

“Very nicely done” SpaderM said.

Ralph Cantrell was nowhere to be found. Instead, they were greeted by the other partiers. They joined the rest, happy to be alive but still leery about what lied ahead.

Candysosweet led her small group up two flights of stairs and to an area with three doors. They were dark blue, light blue and red. It was in complete agreement that the red door was out. Candysosweet opted for the dark blue door, when she was reaching for the door knob. Flirt19 stopped her.

“Let’s go through the light blue door, it seems more peaceful.” She said.

“What are you doing, don’t you remem...” Sunflower78’s words were cut off when Flirt19 burst into flame and fell down the stairs.

“Okay, let’s do whatever you want to do Candysosweet.” FirstClassPard said.

Candysosweet opened the dark blue door and they stepped into a large room. The room was very fancy, two huge chandeliers hung from the ceiling. Beautiful crown moldings went around the entire room and in the center of the far wall was an enormous fireplace.

“Hello there, welcome to my nightclub!” A thin man with a beard and handlebar mustache yelled out.

“Was he there before?” Cabbie whispered.

“I don’t think so.” Sunflower78 responded.

“Was I here?” The strange man said laughing. “Was I here? I assure you madam I was here long before you. Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Kobal, I am the Patron of comedy. What are your names?”

“I’m Candysosweet. This is Sunflower78, FirstClassPard and Cabbie.”

“Parents didn’t like you very much eh?” Kobal quipped. “That’s okay mine didn’t like me much either, they used to set fire to my hair when I was two. Can you believe it? Two! Like a two-year-old is ready for that?”

“They set fire to your hair?” FirstClassPard wanted to make sure he heard that right.

“Yeah, I do it all the time now, but at age two I was hardly ready. Would you like to see?”

“Yes I would.” Sunflower78 said without thinking.

“Great, watch.” Kobal closed his eyes and tilted his head forward. “Inferno!” Right in front of their eyes the man’s hair began to smoke then burst into flames.

“Doesn’t that hurt?” Cabbie asked.

“Not to quick on the uptake are ya?” Kobal replied. “Here you tell me.”

Cabbie hair became enflamed and she ran across the room screaming.

“Guess it hurts.” Kobal said and began laughing hysterically and pointing at Cabbie.

When he realized no one else was laughing he stopped laughing himself. He held out his hand toward Cabbie. “Rahtuzebul.” He said.

Cabbie began to shrink until she was merely a few inches tall. Kobal walked over to her and stomped on her. Again he broke out in hysterical laughter only to find he was laughing alone.

“That’s not funny.” Candysosweet said.

“What do you know? You are dead already, snake food. Be gone!” Kobal screamed and Candysosweet disappeared. “I just hate ghosts don’t you? They are such sticks-in-the-mud.”

Kobal was getting madder by the minute when neither of his victims would laugh. “Fine, you won’t laugh on your own, you’ll laugh until you die.” He shrieked.

FirstClassPard and Sunflower78 began laughing. Their laughter grew increasingly intense until they both fell to the floor doubled over with laughter.

“Fortunate individuals you be, you get to laugh yourself to death.” Kobal said and left the room.

Minutes later, the two partygoers were dead on the floor.

Softspoken had led her group up a flight of stairs, down four corridors branching in different directions and now up another flight of steps.

“Awesome, we’re going up to the eighth floor.” Whatstrips exclaimed smiling.

“You did a great job.” Dave added.

“Thank you guys” Softspoken said. “But it’s only the eighth floor, not the fifteenth.”

“That’s what I was going to say.” Tweedledum replied.

“Instead of standing here talking, let’s keep moving.” Gentleman said worriedly. “God only knows what is following us.”

The group agreed and moved quickly up the stairs and through a dark blue door. What they walked into was something out of a carnival funhouse. It was a maze with the walls lined with mirrors. As they made their way through, Gentleman began laughing hysterically. Everyone stopped and looked at him, completely confused.

“Are you ok?” Softspoken asked.

Gentleman tried to respond but couldn't. His laughter grew more intense and he fell up against the maze wall, then down to the floor. His face was turning blood red and his breathing was becoming raspy. But still, he continued to laugh. Dave tried to help him up, but it was no use, he was jerking violently now trying to catch some air in his lungs. The group watched helplessly and Gentleman literally laughed himself to death. He had a big smile on his face as all of the air left his body.

“What was that all about?” Whatstrips asked.

“I don't know, but we have to get the hell out of here now.” Dave responded and made the cardinal mistake of moving ahead of Softspoken trying to lead the group out. The mirrors moved quickly, one wall panel moved in front of him and one panel behind him. He was trapped tightly. All the remaining members saw were flames and smoke coming from the opposite side of the panel. They heard Dave's screams, but could do nothing to help. Minutes later, the panels resumed their position and all that remained of Dave was a pile of ashes on the floor.

Whatstrips and Tweedledum were terrified looking at what remained of the man they were just talking to minutes before. “Where's Softspoken?” Whatstrips asked.

They both looked everywhere but she was nowhere to be found.

“She's gone back to where she belongs.” A man's voice rang out. Whatstrips and Tweedledum spun around to see a man wearing a jester's costume.

“What do you mean, where she belongs?” Tweedledum asked.

“She was dead. You were following a ghost.” Kobal replied. “Do you think she was going to lead you the right way?”

“But we were told not to try to lead, we had to follow her.” Whatstrips said.

“You don't have to worry about that now.” Kobal began chuckling. “You are about to be fortunate.”

Tweedledum and Whatstrips were leery, but finally Whatstrips asked. “How are we going to be fortunate?”

“Have you ever busted a gut laughing?” Kobal asked.

Without thinking Tweedledum spoke up and said yes.

“Good, then you've had experience.” Kobal started laughing loudly, it was an ear-piercing pitch and the mirror panel began to crack.

Tweedledum and Whatstrips also started laughing even though they did not want to. Their laughter grew intense and they both reached down to hold their stomachs at the same time. Kobal's eyes gleamed as he awaited the climax, he didn't have to wait long. The two party-goers stomachs exploded sending blood and internal organs everywhere. Kobal licked the blood off his lips and picked up a kidney and ate it. “Ah, dinner is served.” He cackled.

Racecardriver was at a fork in the road and was seriously contemplating going the wrong way intentionally. They had progressed to the seventh floor, now after several corridors, they were at a stairway leading up to the eighth and a long stairway going

down. It didn't just go down one or two floors. It appeared to go all the way down to the first floor.

"We might be able to get out of here if we go down these stairs." Racecardriver told her group.

"Yeah and they might be a one way ticket straight to hell also." Maresy responded.

"I sure can't see any end to those stairs." Fibber added. "But whatever you want to do, we do. Just please remember you hold our lives in your hands as well as your own."

"Gee, I'm sure she feels no pressure now." Mbabyreb said. "You just choose, you've gotten us this far."

"Let's go up to the eighth floor." Racecardriver said and started walking up the stairs.

"I think you chose wisely" Jade1255 said.

"Yeah well, either she did or we'll all be dead soon." ImalilAngel responded. "Either way, the butterflies in the pit of my stomach will be gone."

Racecardriver opened the red door at the top of the steps and walked into a large room. The room was filled with other house guests snacking lightly and drinking heavily.

Maresy dropped to her knees and said, "Thank you God."

"Amen", replied everyone else.

Lacy had guided everyone masterfully according to the map she was given. They had gone up a flight of stairs down numerous corridors then up another flight of stairs, through a dark blue door and down yet another long winding corridor. According to the map, home safe home was just ahead. It was marked with an "X" on her map. Sure enough, they came to a door with a red "x" painted on it.

"X" marks the spot." NobodyzChild smiled.

They walked through the door and found themselves in a dimly lit room. Up ahead about 100 feet was what appeared to be a spotlight with a door just beyond it. They started walking toward the spotlight and stopped halfway when a man appeared in the light.

"Step on up don't be shy." The man said. "Kobal's the name, comedy's the game. I am here for your bemusement and my amusement."

They group nervously approached the man. "We just want to get out of here." Melon said.

"No time for laughter?" The man asked.

"No" Melon replied.

"I'm sorry to hear that. I guess you can just go down to the seventh floor and visit Jezebeth then." Kobal winked and the floor opened up underneath Melon. She fell straight through to a waiting Jezebeth who promptly bit her head and off and yelled up to Kobal, "Thanks."

"Anyone else not have time for comedy?"

Rosie took off running back towards the door they had come in through.

“Oh Jezebeth, second helping coming right up” Kobal said loudly. Again the floor opened up and Rosie fell to her death below. The remaining group members only heard a loud crunching sound.

“Anyone else?” Kobal queried smiling.

Lacy, NobodyzChild and FastEddie stood perfectly still and waited to see some comedy.

“Good.” Kobal began. For the next thirty minutes he did comedy sketches from the Three Stooges, Robin Williams, Abbott and Costello and Richard Prior.

After he finished with Richard Prior sketch he looked at the three of them and the smile left his face. Not one of them had even cracked a smile through his comedy routine and that was unacceptable. “I damn all of you to hell!” He screamed. His pleasant demeanor was now gone and his human form was fading away as well. His body rose to ten feet in the air, his face became elongated and a long snout jutted out with two enormous fangs. His eyes were orange with fire flickering within. He now had four arms with enormous claws.

The three remaining final group members scattered throughout the room looking for an exit. Kobal drew in a deep breath and fire flew from his enormous mouth. He roasted FastEddie and NobodyzChild then ate them both.

Lacy was at the door behind him, before Kobal could grab her she ran through it and found herself in a room with the rest of the houseguests. She slammed the door behind her and fell to the floor sobbing.

“Welcome to the party.” Ralph Cantrell said standing over her. “You are the final guest. Charon will be with you soon. Have a drink while you wait. You’re gonna need it.”

Back on the second floor Sonneillon decided to turn up the heat a little bit, literally. Beneath JDBing’s pierced, hanging body there was now a small flame. Not enough to burn his flesh, just enough to elevate his temperature so he sweated into his open wounds.

JDBing bucked and writhed in agony. “It’s amazing how much perspiration stings in an open wound.” Sonneillon spoke. “It appears that you are sagging a bit in the midsection though. We need to fix that, can’t have your flesh burning off, yet.

Another large hook dropped from the ceiling and pierced the skin in the middle of his back lifting his stomach up from the flame.

JDBing’s mind was focused on one single thought. “Please, just let me die.”

“You think death will ease your suffering?” Sonneillon broke out in hearty laughter. “This is just a glimpse at the afterlife for you. An eternity filled with just what you are feeling now. So get used to it.”

Again JDBing lost consciousness from the pain.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The survivors of the seventh and eighth floors had mixed emotions. They were elated to have survived thus far, yet saddened over the loss of so many friends. The mood was an overall somber one and one filled with fear and anticipation.

That anticipation grew worse as time passed. Charon and Ralph Cantrell were nowhere to be found and it had been five hours now. Finally at 1:00 pm, Charon entered the room with Ralph in tow.

“Congratulations to you all, you chose wisely or in some cases” Charon paused and looked at Lacy. “You lucked out.”

“Either way, you are about to embark on yet another journey, your goal this time is to reach another banquet room set up on the tenth floor. Now this room has six doors as you can plainly see, from this side all of them are dark blue. On the tenth floor there will only be four safe passages and not only will you have to choose wisely, you will have to be strong mentally to survive. Outside the door right behind me is a hallway, this hallway has eight doors. Again I will choose leaders for each path. There are to be no more than four people in any grouping. If you make a group of five, you won’t be leaving the corridor alive.”

“But there are thirty-four of us. There has to be two groups of five.” Maresy spoke up reluctantly.

“If you interrupt me again, there will only be thirty-two.” Charon glared at her. “As I was saying, only eight groups of four. Someone will not be going on to the ninth floor. Whoever are the odd men or women out, will die.”

Everyone in the crowd grew cold knowing that now it was a foot race out the door and the last person out was going to pay dearly. The reality of their situation had faded a small amount over the past hours, but now it was back in full force.

“Perkyone, AJW, Racecardriver, Wildchild, Paragod, Jannelly, Shar and Amanda Panda please go into the hall and choose a door. Take a packet from Ralph on your way out.” Charon instructed. When all eight of the group leaders had left the room, Charon told everyone else they too could go and pick a door.

It was a mad scramble for the door. People were knocking others down and clawing their way out of the room. Perkyone was at the first door, Pammie, Texanna1 and Gracie joined her quickly.

At the second door was Racecardriver, Real Nut, AdorableJoe and Medical747 joined her.

AJW was at the third door and he was quickly joined by Bedrmiiz, Deshadow and Pecoswilly.

At the fourth door were Wildchild, Boris, Trachelle and ImalilAngel.

Amanda Panda, Fibber, Liberty and SpaderM were at the fifth door.

There was a mad scramble for the final three doors, they ended up as follows:

Door six: Jannelly, Smokinnn, Mbabyreb and Lacy

Door seven: Paragod, Wabbitt, Maresy and Rex2

Door eight: Shar, SwtGaGirl, Jade1255 and Ladydazzle41

After the scramble was over, Gordplays here and Dancinwithwolves were left helplessly standing alone.

Charon walked down the corridor and stood in front of the two stragglers. "I will give anyone here a chance to take the place of one of these two people. If they are a close friend and you would rather die than watch them die, step forward now."

No one left, most turned their eyes away from Charon's next two victims. "So be it." Charon touched them both and they burst into flames. The screams echoed down the corridor and Charon made sure no door opened until their bodies were nothing more than ashes on the hallway floor.

"I wish you all the best of luck. I will see sixteen of you on the tenth floor." Charon smiled and walked out of the hallway. Immediately after he walked back through the doorway they had all come through, all eight doors opened.

Perkyone moved at an incredibly fast pace down the hallways and through three different rooms. She was choosing wisely at every turn without fail. It was as if she knew exactly where she was going without as much as a glance at her map. It only took her group five minutes to arrive in a large banquet room on the ninth floor. Unfortunately, when they entered the door behind them vanished leaving them with no exit.

"Oh great, we're dead." Pammie said. "I just hope I don't burn up, anything but that."

"Gee, way to think positively." Texanna1 responded. "We don't know we're dead yet. There's no one in this room but us. Maybe it's a test, maybe there's a hidden exit."

"And maybe, we just got here before our friendly ninth floor demon arrived." Gracie added. "Why in the world did you move so quickly Perkyone?"

"Because it was like there was something guiding me around every turn, through every room and corridor." Perkyone responded. "I don't think that we're necessarily dead though, I agree with Texanna1."

Before anyone could say another word, three doors opened up Jannelly, Paragod and AJW's groups came flooding in. "Don't shut the door!" Texanna1 screamed out. But it was too late, the doors vanished behind them

"Where are we?" Jannelly asked.

"Another banquet room with entrances but no exits" Pammie responded.

"He said sixteen would survive to the tenth floor. I guess we're not them."

Paragod spoke up.

Within minutes, all of the groups were in the room, no one could catch a door to get out and no one could find an exit. All of the walls were solid.

"May I have your attention please?" Racecardriver stood in the center of the room.

Everyone stopped looking for a door and looked at her.

"Thank you." She said. Then, right before everyone's eyes she began to change. She grew two feet taller, her fingernails turned into six inch claws and her eyes grew large and bright red. Her face grew dark and shadowy and her body changed into what could only be described as a gorilla without fur, just solid muscle rippling throughout.

"My name is Cresil." She spoke now in a deep menacing tone. "Welcome to my parlor. In just a few moments you will be making a decision, this decision will determine whether you live or die. But first, here are my assistants. I think you'll recognize them."

Ellie came into the room via an unseen door and made her way through the crowd. It wasn't too difficult for her as everyone cleared a large path when they saw her eyes. The glowed red, like fire, and she looked evilly at everyone as she passed.

Ace Warrior came in from the other side. He too had glowing red eyes and he snarled at everyone as he passed. They both joined Cresil in the center of the room.

Everyone focused their attention back on the center of the room now. Anxious and frightened over what was going to happen next.

"I'd like everyone on the side to form a double line on either side of my assistants." Cresil continued. She waited until they had done so and then pointed straight ahead. "From those doors will enter two humans, one a male and one a female. Can you resist temptation? We shall see, for it is not how you act that will determine whether you live or die. It's how you think."

Both of the doors opened simultaneously and a young man with blonde hair and a bodybuilder's physique came in through one. The other one revealed a woman in her mid twenties, she had long flowing blonde hair a deep brown tan and absolutely perfect body. Both were completely naked.

They walked about ten feet into the room, then turned and exited as quickly as they had come in.

Ellie and Ace Warrior started moving down the rows of people. AdorableJoe was the first to be called out by Ellie, followed by Gracie, Pammie and Rex2. Ace Warrior gathered up Amanda Panda, SpaderM and Texanna1.

"Choose" Cresil instructed her assistants.

Ellie walked down and stood in front of Pammie. Pammie turned her head away from the glowing red eyes. Ellie grabbed her head and stared straight at her, before Pammie could close her eyes, she was frozen. Within those eyes she saw a blazing fire, she felt her body getting warmer and warmer. Smoke began to come out of her mouth, nose and ears. Her skin turned red, and then began to blister and blacken. Suddenly flame shot out of her mouth and ears, she was on fire from the inside out. Ellie still held her head now supporting the weight of her dead body. She continued to do so until Pammie's ashes were all that remained. Then, Ellie disappeared.

Ace Warrior walked slowly back and forth in front of his potential victims. Finally he stopped in front of Texanna1. She closed her eyes tightly and tilted her head toward the floor. He grabbed her cheeks and pried her mouth open, then blew into her mouth. The blue flame was evident as it shot from his mouth into hers. She opened her eyes and tried to close her mouth to no avail. Tears streamed down her face as her body began melting from the inside out. Slowly her skin melted off her bones, Ace Warrior continued until there was nothing left but a skeleton. Then, he too disappeared.

"Wow that was impressive." Cresil said and applauded her assistants' efforts. She walked over and stood in front of the remaining victims. "I'll bet you five are wondering what you did to deserve to be here."

Amanda Panda tried to run, she got as far as two steps away when Cresil stretched out her arm and ripped her head off. She then cracked her skull open like an egg and emptied the brains into her large mouth. "Yummy." She smiled. "Is anyone else going to run for it?"

Gracie tried. She got two steps away also, before her head was removed and her brains eaten. “There’s something about warm human brains. They’re nice and salty with just a little twang to them.”

Quickly she ripped the heads off AdorableJoe, Rex2 and SpaderM in succession. One by one she cracked open their skulls and ate their brains as well.

“As I was saying. What separates you remaining from those who were just killed? Simply put, their minds immediately held impure thoughts. You see that’s what I specialize in, slovenliness and impurity. The rest of you are to continue in the groups you originally had minus the people who were just killed and of course, minus myself. If your group leader just died, pick a new one. Ralph will hand you a map and point you to a respective door.” Cresil threw her hands up in the air and disappeared in a large ball of fire.

Perkyone was the first to get a map from Ralph and exit the room. She was the only remaining member of her group. Fibber and Liberty went next having lost two members of theirs including the leader. Fibber assumed the role and led them out of a door that Ralph pointed to. The rest of the groups followed one at a time until the room was empty.

Each map led the groups through a complicated maze of hallways and rooms, then up a flight of steps and into a room filled with snacks and refreshments. All of the groups arrived safely and at first, they all breathed a sigh of relief having arrived safely on the tenth floor.

That relief was short-lived however as the lights went out and red flashing strobe lights started going off in the room. Suddenly a guitar riff began blaring loudly and a song filled the room.

*“Living easy, living free
Season ticket on a one-way ride
Asking nothing, leave me be
Taking everything in my stride
Don't need reason, don't need rhyme
Ain't nothing I would rather do
Going down, party time
My friends are gonna be there too...”*

The song continued to blare until the final chorus wrapped up with: “*I’m on the highway to hell...*”

“That was appropriate.” Shar said loudly.

“Welcome to the hall of music.” A voice rang out. “You pick your fate by choosing your music. I suggest that you choose wisely. Within your heads your favorite genre lies, when the music starts you’ll be in for a large surprise. Not all will hear music, one and the same. Some will hear country and other will rock. Which will survive? I’ll never tell.”

Everyone had focused in on the voice now. It was Perkyone. She had her back to everyone in the room up until this point. When she turned, everyone wished she still had. She had the head of a wolf now and immediately upon turning she let out a loud howl. “If this were a Halloween costume, I’d be Wolfman Jack!” She exclaimed loudly then

began howling more. "I am Murmur, the demon prince of music. I am here to eradicate those with poor taste in music. So choose wisely."

"In just a few seconds the music will begin. Four different songs will play, each leading you to a different doorway. Three will be right, one will be wrong, those selecting door number four will progress no more."

The music began and as promised, four different songs began playing. One was Running with the Devil by Van Halen, one was Redneck Woman by Gretchen Wilson, one was Chantilly Lace by the Big Bopper and the final song was The Entertainer by Scott Joplin. Murmur watched as everyone went through a different door. Six of them walked in to the wrong door and Murmur followed behind them.

"HELL YEAH!" Murmur yelled out once they were inside a small enclosed room. "Ya'lls gonna die now. Yeeeeehawwww!" This was followed by a howl and a flurry of claws flashing out and body parts and blood flying everywhere. It only took a minute for Fibber, Ladydazzle41, Real Nut, Medical747, Smokinnn and Jade1255 to die brutally. "I'm hungry, ya'll won' mind if'n I eat some vittles will ya?" Murmur howled again and began eating the dismembered bodies.

The rest of the people all entered into one large room with snacks and refreshments. Ralph Cantrell was there to greet them as they entered. "Congratulations, you have advanced to the next floor. Charon will be with you shortly." After that, he left the room.

"Thank God I love rock and roll!" Pecoswilly shouted out.

"Amen to that." Jannelly agreed.

"I personally like piano music." Deshadown said.

"Me also" Wabbitt agreed.

After a little more discussion the three songs were discovered and SwtGaGirl summed it up best, "Figures that with Perkyone being a demon anyone who liked country was going to die."

Seventeen people partook of drinks and snacks and waited for their next test.

Back on the second floor JDBing had once again regained consciousness. "You have a low threshold for pain." Sonneillon said. "I'm going to do this slowly so you can fully enjoy it."

In his hand he held a small roll of barbed wire. He started at JDBing's feet and slowly stuck it into his skin as he wrapped his body up in it. When he had the last bit on his head, he pulled it tight. The wire dug deeply into his pain-riddled body. He bucked and writhed over the open flame and then once again, he passed out.

"Almost there" Sonneillon said. "Almost there."

CHAPTER NINE

Seventeen people sat nervously on the tenth floor of the McNaulty House. Again, hours had past while they waited for Charon to return. The emotions were mixed. They ranged from absolute fear to elation over being so close to the fifteenth floor and \$250,000.

“I have never been more afraid in my life.” ImalilAngel said. “But I could sure use that money.

“I’m not sure the money is of any importance to me now. I just want to get out of here alive.” Jannelly responded.

“You mean that you are doing all of this and aren’t looking at the pot of gold at the end of this hellacious rainbow?” Liberty asked.

“My life is worth more than that.” Wabbitt interjected. “I’m sure that’s what Jannelly meant also.

Jannelly nodded in agreement.

“Besides, do you really think he’s going to let any of us live?” Trachelle asked.

“Now that’s the perfect question.” Mbabyreb said. “Is this all just a hoax to run us through a gauntlet for his enjoyment or is it legitimate?

“My money is on it being a hoax.” Deshadown responded.

“If you were given the choice right now of leaving the house or continuing on for the money, what would you do?” Bedrmiiz asked the group. The response was split down the middle, nine votes for leaving and eight votes for continuing. But of the nine who said they’d leave, half said if they were closer they too would stay and try.

“I can assure you people, this is not a hoax.” Charon spoke as he entered the room. He read everyone’s faces. “Don’t be so surprised, I can hear everything.”

In his hand he carried a small case. He walked over and placed it on the table in front of them. “In this case are seventeen envelopes containing fifty thousand dollars. Help yourself to one before we continue.”

Shar opened the case and grabbed the first envelope. Charon watched intently to see who was greedier and who was more timid. He noted the order in which they retrieved an envelope then walked away and continued to speak.

“You are now on the tenth floor of the McNaulty House. You are the first humans to have made it this far and for that I congratulate you. What lies ahead of you are more choices, more mazes and more death. From this point on, it is every man or woman for themselves. There will be four doors opening up in the back of the room. Two lead safely to the twelfth floor, two lead to the eleventh floor where a being known as Geryon awaits you. I assure you, taking the wrong two doors will indeed result in your death. Good luck and I will see the survivors on the twelfth floor.”

Charon left through a doorway that closed behind him. There were four doorways now on the opposite wall. All of the doors were the same blood red color.

“Anyone have any solid hunches?” AJW asked.

“Yeah, stay here, but unfortunately that would end up getting us killed by Perkyone or Murmur or whatever the hell that thing was.” Boris said.

“Anyone know who or what Geryon is?” Pecoswilly asked. “Or do I not want to know?”

No one responded. The group moved slowly toward the doors, when they were just a few feet away, all of them opened. Each one had the same thing, a long white corridor that had another red door at the end.

“So much for peeking first” Paragod laughed.

There were good luck hugs and well wishes to everyone and then it was time to choose a door. Wildchild was the first to go through a door. “I feel this way is safe.” He said. “Is anyone going to join me?”

“I am.” Paragod said.

Paragod was followed by Trachelle and Pecoswilly. The foursome walked down the long corridor and jumped as the door behind them slammed shut. The hallway seemed to be endless, but they were finally at the door. Wildchild pulled it open and walked through. There was a long flight of stairs.

They climbed the stairway slowly, looking around as they did so. It seemed like an endless climb, but when they reached the top, they realized it was well worth it. Off to the right was a large banquet room with Ralph Cantrell inside.

“Greetings and welcome to the twelfth floor. You are the first to arrive. Enjoy a snack and relax.” He said smiling.

High fives and hugs were abounding from the foursome as they celebrated their survival yet again.

AJW, SwtGaGirl, ImalilAngel and Boris chose the next door. They walked down the long corridor and through the next red door. No sooner than the door slammed behind them they knew something was wrong. There was a stairway leading up that with no light, at the top there was a dark blue door with a red light coming from the crack at the bottom.

“I think we’re screwed.” Boris said.

“I think so too, but let’s try and keep positive.” SwtGaGirl added.

Slowly they walked up the stairs, every step they took was one step closer to their doom. It weighed heavy on them now, when they reached the door at the top of the steps, the shroud of death was thick

“I say we just stay here.” ImalilAngel said. “Make them come to us. Why should we open that door?”

“Because it may not be what we think it is.” AJW responded. “Maybe, we’ll be just fine.”

“And maybe we’ll have our heads bitten off. Maybe we’ll be set on fire. There are a whole lot of maybes, most of them aren’t good.” Boris added.

AJW didn’t wait any longer. He reached out and opened the door. The air inside the room was like a giant vacuum and sucked them all in. The vacuum stopped when the last of them were in the room. A quick glance around the room let them know, this was a mistake. There were no doors. There was no escape from the fate that now was inevitable.

SwtGaGirl got on her knees and began praying. ImalilAngel and Boris did also. AJW did not, he stood watching them and waiting for them to finish.

As soon as he heard the word, “Amen” He spoke to them in a very harsh voice. “Welcome to my lair. I’d like to thank you for following me to your death.”

Boris looked up first and did a double-take. AJW was now an enormous centaur. "I am Geryon, the gate keeper of hell. Compared to others, your death will be virtually painless. It's what comes next that will be painless. You have prayed to your God to rescue your soul. He'll have to come and get you in hell."

AJW kicked out with his rear legs and made contact with Boris first, snapping his neck like a twig and sending his body flying across the room. ImalilAngel and SwtGaGirl watched in horror as Boris' body went through some kind of fiery vortex and vanished. They had no time to react, no time to run. SwtGaGirl was flying through the air next immediately followed by ImalilAngel.

"See you on the other side." Geryon yelled and then he ran and jumped into a vortex as well.

Bedrmiiz, Dshadow, Jannelly, Lacy, Liberty, Mbabyreb, Maresy, Shar and Wabbitt all went through the next door leaving one passage untraveled. They climbed up a flight of stairs and went down another long corridor. After going through a maze of rooms, they found another stairwell. The walls were black in the stairway as were the steps. At the top was a bright white door.

"Cross your fingers." Maresy said and then opened the door. Inside was a narrow room with three doors on one wall. The doors were numbered "1", "2" and "3".

Lacy walked to the doors and tried to open number two. It was locked. So were the other two.

"Not so fast." Bedrmiiz's voice rang out from behind them. "My name is Belphegor and you are now on my floor. To get out you must choose wisely, to get rich you also must choose wisely, to get dead you must choose idiotically."

Bedrmiiz was no longer a sweet lady, she was now a demon. Horns grew from her head and curled back like ram's horns. Her nose was no longer a nose, but rather two air holes in her flat face. Her eyes were deep emerald green and had a bright glow to them. Her teeth jutted were razor sharp with two fangs jutting out from the top and the bottom. She walked to the front of the room and stood in front of door number two.

"The game is simple enough and straight forward as can be. Each of you will have two choices to make. The level of your greed will decide your fate. You see I am the demon of wealth and I can make you rich beyond your wildest dreams. Much richer than Charon has promised. The stakes for you have been raised to one million dollars." Belphegor paused. "That's right, I said one million dollars."

She handed each of them a cashier's check in their name for the amount promised. "I pay you now so you know it's no joke. All you have to do is make it to the fifteenth floor and it's yours to keep."

"What's the catch?" Liberty asked.

Belphegor began laughing evilly. "You must survive. That is the catch. You have successfully ascended twelve floors of the McNaulty House only three to go."

Belphegor opened door number one. "If you wish to leave the house, forego all cash prizes. Simply give me the money order and the cash that Charon gave you and walk into this elevator."

"And I'm just supposed to trust you?" Mbabyreb asked.

"Yeah, you can always take the word of a demon." Shar added.

Jannelly, on the other hand, did not hesitate. She walked up, gave the money order and the cash to Belphegor and stepped into the elevator.

“What are you doing?” Wabbitt asked incredulously. “You are really going to trust her?”

“I’m probably going to die anyway.” Jannelly said. “I may as well be the one to choose when and where.”

“Anyone else want to leave the house?” Belphegor asked.

No one stepped forward and Belphegor closed door number one.

The elevator began descending slowly. It didn’t hesitate at any floor, just kept going. Jannelly knew she had just climbed on the elevator straight to hell but she stood bravely awaiting her fate. When the car stopped and the door opened, she couldn’t believe her eyes. It was the outside of McNaulty House as promised. The moon was full and she could see it’s reflection off of Clear Lake. She ran as fast as she could to get away from the McNaulty House. Free from the mind games, the torment and the pain.

“Now, the rest of you have but to choose. Door number two and three will constantly change. What lies beyond is either my private chamber or a room with your friend waiting to continue on to the thirteenth floor. One at a time, please. Dshadow, you first.”

Dshadow stepped forward and walked through door number three. He found himself, thankfully, in a room with Paragod, Trachelle, Pecoswilly and Wildchild.

Lacy went next and also chose door number three. She too found the room with the others.

Liberty followed and chose door number two. It led into the large room where her fellow house guests were waiting to advance.

Mbabyreb wasn’t so fortunate. She chose door number three and found herself inside a small dark room with only the light of a large candle.

Maresy chose door number three and breathed a huge sigh of relief when she found herself in a room with the others waiting to advance.

Shar chose door number two and found herself in a dark room with Mbabyreb who was in a corner weeping and praying. Shar joined her in prayer.

Wabbitt stepped forward. “Last but not least” She muttered to herself and then opened door number two and walked in. She was elated to find herself in a room with eight other survivors.

Belphegor then opened door number two and went in with Shar and Mbabyreb. She breathed in deeply. “Ah, I just love the scent of greed. You had an opportunity to leave the house, but you chose to stay and die. Now I ask you what good are those million dollar checks? Do you think they will pay your passage into Heaven? Good luck with that. They most certainly won’t get you special treatment in hell. No, the only thing they are going to do is get you killed.”

Before either could respond, the fires of hell filled the room turning it into a giant oven. Belphegor smiled as she followed the flames back to hell.

Back on the second floor JDBing was sweating profusely into his open wounds. Sonneillon had removed the hooks from his mouth so that he could delight in the screams of his victim. JDBing didn’t disappoint, he screamed loudly in absolute agony.

Sonneillon walked to JDBing’s feet and pulled down on the barbed wire severing his feet at the ankles. They dropped into the fire and sizzled. Again JDBing screamed.

Sonneillon moved upward and yanked at the barbed wire at JDBing's right arm causing it to fall into the fire. He smiled widely as his victim screamed. He followed this with the left arm and again he smiled, pleased with his work. Sonneillon then reached down to the hook attached to JDBing's groin.

"No, no, oh God please no." JDBing begged.

A sharp agonizing pain shot through his body as Sonneillon pull on the hook and ripped his genitalia off. JDBing screamed like he hadn't screamed before. Sonneillon tired of hearing it and shoved his severed penis into his mouth.

Sonneillon stood in front of him for several minutes as his blood fell into the fire. He could see by his eyes that he was nearing death, only seconds away. Sonneillon then grabbed the main chain and yanked it hard pulling JDBing's body apart. Sonneillon was able to hear one last shriek before his victim died.

CHAPTER TEN

“Three floors to go!” Pecoswilly was excited now. “Almost very rich people.” He looked down at his million dollar check and smiled.

“The key word in that statement would be almost.” Deshadown cautioned. “Remember to never count your chickens before they hatch.”

“Especially since we have two more demons to get through” Lacy added. “I have a feeling they will be even worse than what we have dealt with so far.”

While the rest of the survivors stood talking amongst themselves, Paragod was talking to Ralph Cantrell.

“Are there any secret passageways?” Paragod asked.

“One” Ralph replied.

“Is it easy to find?”

“No.”

“Does it take you straight to the fifteenth floor?”

“Yes.”

“Can you give more than a one word answer?”

“No.”

“Nice chatting with you.” Paragod said coyly. “Try not to talk so much though. It gets kinda boring after awhile.”

He walked back over and joined the others.

“What did Lurch have to say?” Maresy asked him.

“Not much.” Paragod said. “Not much at all.”

“He doesn’t have much of a personality.” Wabbitt added. “Makes me wonder just what he is.”

“He’s a demon.” Wildchild spoke up. “He wouldn’t be so close to Charon if he weren’t. In fact, I wouldn’t be surprised if he were one of Satan’s personal guards.”

“Satan has guards?” Trachelle asked. “Why would Satan need a guard?”

“Everyone needs guards.” Wildchild responded. “No matter how powerful, there is always a gauntlet to get to the leader. I have a feeling you are about to climb the ladder now. Satan’s number one now would be Belial, his head guardian is Abigor. Both are vicious, Belial is deceptive, Abigor is brutal.”

“How do you know so much?” Lacy asked.

“I did my homework.” Wildchild responded.

“So you think those are the two demons we have to face next?” Pecoswilly asked.

“I don’t have any idea.” Wildchild responded.

“Well if they are, is there any way to beat them?” Maresy asked.

Before Wildchild could answer Charon came into the room loudly. “Everyone get over here NOW!”

No one wanted to argue, they all dutifully went to Charon.

“YOU! YOU WILL NOT BE CONTINUING!” Charon screamed at Wildchild. Seconds later, Wildchild vanished. Charon looked at Ralph. Both of them looked very puzzled.

“I’ll be back.” Charon yelled. There was hatred in his voice. He slammed the door behind him after he left the room.

The people stood frightened. “Oh great, he managed to piss off the devil.” Lacy said. “We’re screwed.”

“But it’s only three more floors.” Pecoswilly added.

“That’s like saying we only have to walk across a hundred yards of hot coals.” Deshadow added.

“I’d rather have the hot coals.” Trachelle said.

The door opened once again. Charon came in and immediately motioned for Ralph. Ralph came over and Charon whispered to him. They both left the room once again without a single word.

Outside the house Jannelly was making her way down the hill from the McNaulty House and a car was coming up the hill. The car stopped beside her.

“Are you coming from the Halloween Party?” The woman asked.

“Yes I am, if you are thinking of going there turn around and drive away quickly.” Jannelly responded.

“Why?”

“Because it’s hell. Every floor has absolute danger. People are dying in there.”

“Oh, ok.” The woman replied. She rolled her window up and continued up the hill.

“Idiot” Jannelly muttered and continued down the hill.

Naynay pulled up and parked in front of the house. She approached it in awe, it was absolutely stunning. There was only one problem, there was no door. She walked around the side of the house and saw an open elevator. She stepped in and pushed the button for the highest floor available, the twelfth.

The survivors were stunned when an elevator appeared and Naynay stepped out of it.

“Hi everybody” Naynay was smiling big. “I’m sorry I’m late, I got lost and had to get directions from a local who had two teeth in their mouth and spoke in a version of English that barely understandable.”

“How did you get up here?” Deshadow asked.

“I took the elevator.” She turned to point to it, but it was gone. “Ok, that’s odd. There was an elevator.

“You think that’s odd, you ain’t seen nothing yet.” Trachelle responded.

“Why? I saw some strange woman going down the hill claiming there were demons in here and it was hell.”

The survivors looked at one another. They were shocked to hear that Jannelly had actually gotten out. “That was Jannelly.” Lacy said. “She wasn’t kidding.”

Before Naynay could ask anything else, Charon returned to the room. “It’s time to continue on your...” He stopped and looked at Naynay. “Who are you?”

“I’m Naynay. I’m a little late.” She replied.

“You’re toast.” He said and waved his hand. Everyone watched in horror as once again a friend burst into flames and went screaming around the room until they fell to the floor and became ashes.

“Now then. Congratulations on making it thus far. What lies ahead will test your quickness and your ability to see things for what they truly are. Make it past the next two

floors and you will have reached the fifteenth floor. I will see the survivors there. Good luck.” He left quickly.

Trachelle stood looking at Naynay’s ashes with tears in her eyes. The reality of what could possibly be her fate was ever so strong now.

“Pull it together.” Wabbitt told her. “You’re going to need all of your faculties.”

One door opened up in front of them. They could see a large room with no signs of an exit. Suddenly a smaller room appeared off to their right. It had a single red door leading into it. Seconds later, it vanished again.

Paragod was the first to walk in followed by the rest of the survivors. Before their eyes, Paragod disappeared.

“What the hell?” Liberty asked. “Where did he go?”

“I’m right here.” A booming voice responded. Before he spoke again the room that had vanished reappeared in a different location. They all looked at it strangely then looked for the voice that echoed through the room.

“I am Abigor.” The voice said and then out of the shadows a fiery horse stepped slowly towards them. The horse was jet black and enormous. His mane was a beautiful shiny coal black. His eyes were fiery red. He breathed out smoke and glared at them. On his back was Paragod. Only now it was a skeletal figure with coal black eyes and flames coming from the top of his skull. In one hand he carried a large sword in the other was a large metal flail with a giant ball with three inch spikes coming from it.

Again the room appeared in a different location. Not long after it disappeared once again. “To advance past me, you must safely get inside the room when it appears. You will have fifteen seconds then it will vanish once again.”

He kicked the horse and charged toward them, they split up running in all directions. The room appeared and Maresy was just a few feet from the door, she sprinted as fast as she could, but Abigor’s sword cut her in half just inches away from freedom. Deshadow, came along behind Abigor and his steed, when Abigor moved, Deshadow ran through the room’s only door just before it vanished.

Abigor began chasing Liberty across the room. She decided to lay flat on the floor, hoping he would just ride right by. He didn’t, he slammed the huge metal ball down into her skull.

Again the room appeared and Trachelle ran for it, Abigor was coming at her head on. She grabbed the doorknob and swung the door open. She was one step in to freedom when Abigor’s sword cut her in half.

Before Abigor could bring down the heavy flail, Lacy ran through the open door. Again the room vanished. Pecoswilly stood in the center of the room looking in all directions. When he saw the room appear once again he ran toward it. Wabbitt was behind the room when it opened and she ran around the walls to find the door. Abigor and his steed charged hard to the door. Wabbitt was the first one through, Pecoswilly was two steps ahead of Abigor, but then tripped and fell just inches from the door. Abigor slammed the huge flail down into Pecoswilly’s spine. Then when Pecoswilly was screaming in agony, he brought down his sword and severed his head.

Deshadow, Lacy and Wabbitt found themselves in a small room with Ralph Cantrell. “Three remain, now you must face Belial.”

“Who is Belial?” Lacy asked.

“I am.” Ralph replied.

“I knew it.” Deshadow said. “You are just too damn ugly not to be a demon.” Deshadow’s fear had faded, he was just plain angry now.

“You ridicule me?” Belial said. “Fantastic, give me more pleasure when I kill you.”

“You mean, “if” you kill me.” Deshadow replied.

Belial ignored Deshadow’s comment and continued. “You were tested physically by Abigor and survived. My challenge is mental. Behind me are three doors, don’t try to run for them, they are locked. All you have to do is answer simple trivia questions and you will be permitted to choose a door. Two of the doors lead to stairways up to the fifteenth floor, one leads into my torture chamber where you will see my wrath.”

Belial paused and waited for anymore comments, there were none. He stepped over and stood in front of Lacy first. “Your category is music. A song will begin playing in just a few seconds, simply tell me the title and you will advance to one of the doors.”

A strange beat began playing and the lyrics, “Who is this irresistible creature with an insatiable thirst for the dead?” The song stopped there.

Lacy had heard the song before, she knew the voice who said these were was Peter Graves. But he was not the artist. She thought hard for the next line and just when Ralph was saying time is up, she blurted out: “Living Dead Girl by Rob Zombie”.

“That’s correct.” Belial said. “Pick a door and leave.”

Lacy picked the door in the center, it unlocked and she walked through it. After she was gone, so was the door.

“Two doors remain.” Belial said and moved in front of Deshadow. “Very sorry to hear about the passing of your wife, we’ll take real good care of her though.”

Deshadow lunged at Belial and Belial grabbed him by the throat and threw him across the room. Deshadow slammed hard against the far wall.

“I really hope that you choose wisely. It will bring me great joy to kill you slowly.” Belial bellowed. “You’re question is this, on the seventh floor you had to defeat Jezebeth. What does she specialize in?”

Deshadow didn’t hesitate. “Lies. You just can’t trust a demon.”

“Pick a door.” Belial was clearly agitated. As Deshadow was walking past, he struck him in the ear knocking him across the room once again. “Don’t make the mistake of getting that close to me again.

Deshadow stepped in front of the door to the left, it unlocked and he walked through it.

Belial moved over to Wabbitt. “You have twelve spades and a king of hearts. It is your lead in a spades game. What do you bid?”

Wabbitt was about to say thirteen but paused. She realized she couldn’t lead the spades, she would have to lead the heart. “Twelve.” She said confidently.

“Go.” He said.

She walked through the remaining door and found herself in another room with Deshadow and Lacy both.

“What’s going on?” She asked.

“Well, until you came in, we assumed that we had made it to the final floor.” Deshadow replied.

Ralph came through a doorway and then it vanished. “Congratulations on advancing to my second challenge.” He said.

“You said two of us were going to be at the final floor.” Lacy yelled out.

“You have Deshadow’s insolence to thank for not having advanced.” Belial responded. “Now, none of you may make it.

“You can’t do that.” Deshadow was irate. “A deal is a deal.”

“Oh? You’d like to make a deal with me?” Belial smiled. “Interesting. Now that we can arrange.”

“Go to hell.” Deshadow responded.

“I live there, have a lovely few of the soles I have brought down with me also.” Belial retorted. “Now then, things will be pretty simple. Behind me are two doors a red one and a dark blue one. In your mind choose one, if you choose correctly, you advance, if not, you don’t. Very simple.”

Ralph walked to just inches away from them. He stood in front of Lacy first, then moved down to Deshadow and then Wabbitt. In a flurry of motion, he savagely ripped Wabbitt apart. When he was done, nothing was left but her head which he held in his hand. He took three steps back toward the doors, turned and threw Wabbitt’s head and hit Deshadow in the chest. Deshadow fell backward, then jumped up to show he wasn’t going to be bullied. “Good for you, weakness would have been your demise.” Belial said. “You both chose the red door. Congratulations, Charon is waiting for you on the fifteenth floor.”

The two of them walked through the red door, climbed a flight of stairs and found themselves on a floor with no roof. The night air felt good and seeing the stars brought a sense of life back into them. They walked around the completely open floor, looking out every window. Their elation began fading when they realized there was no way out.

This concludes chapter ten. The finale of the Halloween story will be read live on Iplay radio Monday night some time between 8 and midnight cst. After the live reading, it will be posted on Tuesday November the first.

I’d like to thank you all for reading and hope that you have enjoyed it as much as I have enjoyed writing it. This story will indeed be converted into a novel and published, the published edition should be available in January. With a slightly different storyline and a completely different ending.

Thanks to all of you who gave your name and participated, it’s you, not me that makes Halloween an enjoyable time!

Just some trivial details for you, this year’s story ran 61 pages long and consisted of 30,345 words. (Yup, I’m long winded) There will be some trivia on Saturday night on Iplay radio during the special spades trny starting at 8:00 pm. Halloween night be sure to come to main lobby and enjoy Halloween and story trivia with Pammie and Ellie. I’ll be broadcasting live on the radio with some additional tidbits and of course, the finale!

I hope you have a safe and Happy Halloween!

FINALE

Out of every window Deshadow and Lacy could see a ledge on the fourteenth floor. They both tried everything to break out a window. Neither felt reassured that they were now millionaires and were going to walk out of the house perfectly healthy. After an hour of trying they gave up and sat in the two chairs that were in the center of the enormous room.

“I don’t have a good feeling about this.” Lacy was more afraid now than at any other time.

“Looks like we are at Charon’s mercy” Deshadow added. “I can’t believe I have to have faith in the devil to keep his word.”

“Does someone doubt me here?” Charon’s voice spoke up from behind them.

Both Deshadow and Lacy jumped up out of their chairs and spun around.

Charon’s face had changed slightly and he now had two horns jutting out of his head.

“You have successfully gotten past fourteen of my best demons. For that you are to be congratulated. I was just going to open the door and let you leave, but your own doubts have caused me to rethink my position.”

“Son of a bitch.” Deshadow muttered.

“We have jumped through every hoop that you have asked. You’ve had your fun and we won.” Lacy was mad now. “Is that what the problem is? You have been defeated and your ego can’t handle it?”

Charon thrust his arm out and Lacy was lifted ten feet into the air. He held her there and glared at her. “Do not make the mistake of speaking to me like that again.” He boomed.

Her anger was quickly replaced with fear and she nodded and apologized. He lowered her back to the floor and started walking back and forth in front of them. The more he paced, the larger he became and the more he changed. Finally he stopped in front of them appearing no longer as a human, but as a beast. He was fifteen feet high, his skin was burnt red in color and he had a massive chest with enormous arms and legs ending in claws that stretched out six inches. His face was flat with two small holes in the center where his nose was. His eyes were enormous and snake-like. The pupil was shaped like an oval and when he blinked the closed. The center of his eyes was the color of fire. His mouth held razor sharp teeth with two large fangs jutting out.

Deshadow and Lacy both backed up.

“One of you is going to die.” He snarled at them. “Any volunteers?”

Both of them shook their head nervously.

The beast approached them and sniffed the air. “Your fear is like roses on a spring day to me. How should I decide which of you to kill?”

He raised his arms and both of them floated high into the night air. He moved his arms swiftly and they flew up and down. “Human juggling, too bad there aren’t three of you, it would be much more impressive.”

Suddenly, he lowered Lacy to the ground and lifted Deshadow higher into the sky. “You want out. I’m going to let you out. Have a nice flight.” Just when he was about to thrust Deshadow off the fifteen story building a voice called out from behind him.

“Put him down.” The voice said.

Charon whirled around and Deshadow fell to the floor hard breaking his left leg.

Lacy looked at the new arrival, she recognized him immediately.

“YOU!” The beast screamed in anger. “Who are you?”

“You don’t recognize me?” He smiled at the beast and walked toward him.

“Only from you disappearing earlier. You are Wildchild.” The beast looked at him puzzled at how he could have come back.

“Ah, but you and I met long before tonight. Back then, you won, tonight you won’t.” Wildchild said.

The beast began thinking back through the years at the previous owners of the house. He could not place the man’s face.

“You will die!” He yelled and stretched out his arms to grab the man and rip him apart. He grabbed nothing but air. Wildchild was now four feet to his right.

“Nice try. But as I said, tonight, you lose.” Wildchild motioned to Deshadow and Lacy with his eyes. They turned and looked behind them and there was a doorway at the far end. Lacy helped Deshadow up and they walked quietly toward the door.

“Who are you?” The beast was furious now and he sent balls of flame in the direction of the man. He missed again as Wildchild moved faster than the eye could detect.

“In 1866 I was here when you massacred the Cantrell family. You nearly massacred me also, but I jumped out of the fourth story window and fell to my death before you could. You lost my soul.”

The beast’s eyes grew large now. “Crockett.” He muttered.

“That’s right.” Wildchild said. “Sheriff Ron Crockett. You made one mistake back then when you and your minions buried my body beneath the house. I have been waiting for just the right time to take you down.”

“You can’t defeat me.”

“That is where you are wrong.” Wildchild watched as the two surviving party guests walked through the fire escape that led to the ground below. He knew he had to stall for another five minutes.

Next to the beast, Belial appeared followed by Abigor, Belphegor, Geryon, Murmur and Cresil. Wildchild smiled as the demons of the house emerged one by one. They were providing him with the time Deshadow and Lacy needed to escape.

By the time Leviathan appeared from the first floor, he knew the two people were safely on the ground and away from the house.

“Get him.” Charon commanded.

All of the demons moved in Wildchild’s direction.

“12:01 am November 1st.” Wildchild said. “The earthly extension of hell that you call the McNaulty House will not trap anymore unsuspecting victims.”

The house began to shake violently and the foundation began to crack. The demons stumbled and some fell as the first floor of the house fell into the earth. Wildchild stood there smiling as Leviathan vanished into thin air. The second floor crashed downward and Sonneillon vanished. With every floor crashing downward a demon disappeared.

“When this floor fades into the earth, you fade with it.” Wildchild smiled at the beast. The thirteenth floor now fell into the earth and Abigor vanished. The beast

charged at Wildchild for one last attempt to bring him down to hell with him. His attempt was unsuccessful and the last floor of the enormous McNaulty house faded into the earth.

Wildchild stood on the now solid ground above where the house once stood and looked at Lacy and Deshadow. "Take my advice. Tell no one what you witnessed here. Enjoy your money and live well."

He waved at them and then walked in the opposite direction from them.

"As I told you at the beginning, this tale was graphic at times. The two survivors, well, they are using a lot of their money on psychiatrists. Neither of them has spoken of the events of that night and I doubt neither of them ever will. As for me, my name is Ron Crockett and I was there that night. You may ask yourself, why didn't I help those innocent people. I would've if I could've. But unfortunately, the devil's power on Halloween is just too strong. I had to wait until November the first, by then only two survived. You can choose to disbelieve the tale if you'd like but know this. McNaulty House isn't the only home of Satan on earth. Perhaps next Halloween, you'll attend one of his parties. I just hope that he makes a mistake like he did here and bury an untainted soul beneath his home causing just a minute crack in the foundation."