



Courtesy

A Short Horror Story

By Amanda Lawrence Auverigne

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Chapter One

Dana and Katy walked slowly along the quiet residential street.

The two young women swung large plastic bags of candy in their grasp.

"We got a lot of good candy this year," Katy said shoving a piece of bright orange taffy inside of her mouth.

"Yeah," Dana said with a loud smack of her lips. She pushed a piece of chocolate into her mouth.

"This taffy is so good," Katy said. She reached inside of her large plastic bag and wriggled her hand within the recesses of the treat-filled sack. "I hope I have some more in here."

"I ate all of mine," Dana whined.

Katy shook her bag and she pulled out a handful of colorful foil-wrapped treats.

"Hey," Katy said turning to Dana. "I got three of those chocolate coconut candy things from Miss Grayson."

"Wow," Dana said.

"Did you get any?" Katy asked. "Cause they're really good."

"Lemme see," Dana stated.

Dana slowed her stride. She raised her plastic bag and peered inside of the parcel.

"Are they the ones shaped like little triangles with the crazy gold and red silver wrap on them?" Dana asked.

"Yup," Katy replied.

"I got like...seven of those."

"For real?"

"Yeah."

"That's not fair. Gimme one."

"You can have all of them. I don't like coconut."

Dana reached into her bag. She pulled out the foil-wrapped treats and thrust the seven shiny candies in Katy's direction. "Here you go. Bon Appétit."

Katy took the candy with a cheerful laugh. "Thanks, Dana. And for being my bestest friend and sharing your candy, you can have all of my Fruity Chews."

"Okay," Dana said cheerfully.

Katy and Dana continued their trek forward. They crossed a narrow street and leaped atop the sidewalk.

The two young women moved along the length of a residential street that was filled with rows of large stone houses.

A small stone fence lay in front of each house. And each rocky barricade was decorated with a large carved pumpkin.

A glowing stick of light had been placed in the interior of each pumpkin.

Katy and Dana stared at the row of glowing pumpkins during their lazy walk forward.

"Wow," Katy said. "Look at all of the pumpkins."

"Yeah," Dana stated. "The Saginaw Block Club does the Halloween decorations for the whole block every year. And it looks like they went all out this year."

Katy and Dana slowed their stride and they stared at the houses around them.

Chapter Two

The aged homes were decorated with an assortment of garish decorations.

A small cemetery with five headstones rested in the front yard of a small gray house. A stiff blood-covered hand jutted from the earth in front of one of the tombstones.

The fingers of the protruding hand moved in slow steady motions atop the earth.

Three half-buried coffins filled with mannequins of decomposing individuals lay in the front yard of a large stone house that was the color of cedar.

One of the dead thing's hands jutted from the interior of its sarcophagi. The limb was held suspended by a small thin wire that was connected to the top portion of the coffin. The mannequin's bloated face was twisted into a sneer while its hand moved in a frantic waving motion.

A large stack of hay was situated in the center of the front yard of a large white house. Dozens of blood stained body parts jutted from the sides of the neatly stacked cubes of yellow straw. A bloody axe and a large rusty bear trap lay perched on the ground near the dry clusters of hay.

A thick layer of spider's webs covered the front portion of a large green house. A huge large black spider the size of a truck lay perched atop the roof of the left side of the structure.

The large hair-covered arachnid wriggled in quick jerking movements. A cluster of glowing red eyes decorated the front portion of the black animal's head. The beast's long front legs moved in slow up and down motions from its position atop the house.

Hundreds of black fist-sized spiders lay scattered in the front yard of the large green house. A few of the fake arachnids shook and trembled as they lay on the ground.

A few feet away from the army of twitching spiders, the shuddering form of a web-covered man writhed atop the stone walkway near the entrance of the green house.

The shivering figure was encased in a thick layer of white dust-covered spider's webs. Hundreds of tiny motionless black spiders covered the figure's form.

The tightly web-encased figure trembled violently. Loud choking noises poured from its shaking dusty form.

"That spider thing is freaky," Katy whispered pointing at the green house.

"Yeah," Dana said staring at the web-covered man with a grimace.

Dana and Katy continued their walk forward.

After a few moments, they stopped in front of a large white house.

The building was devoid of any lights, webbing or garish decorations.

In the front yard of the plain structure, a tiny brown house made of fake gingerbread rested in the center of the space.

Brightly colored gum drops, peppermint discs, chocolate buttons, licorice whips, candy chews, and thick swirls of sugared icing decorated the small structure.

A large rectangular-shaped window lay in the front portion of the house. The partition was transparent and the window provided an unobstructed view of the tasty dwelling's interior.

The interior of the house was composed of a single room.

A large wooden table with an assortment of mixing bowls, spoons and knives rested in the center of the space. A large book lay propped atop a rolling pin on the side of the massive table. A large stove of black iron rested against a far wall of the room.

The small door in the middle of the stove was ajar. Small jets of fake yellow flames poured from the center of the metal device.

A pair of fat feminine legs adorned with a pair of half rolled red stockings jutted from the opened stove door. A pair of large black boots rested on the floor directly beneath the protruding legs.

The flesh of the fat-laden limbs was covered with large dark scorch marks. The burned limbs wriggled in slow up and down motions.

Small plumes of dark smoke rose up from the sides of the stove. The sound of a shrill tortured scream echoed from the interior of the tiny house.

Two mannequins of small children, a boy and a girl, stood on the lawn a few paces in front of the gingerbread house.

The little girl was clad in a lacey dress of pale blue. The small boy was dressed in a tiny suit of the same hue.

The two figure's tiny hands were clasped together.

Both children held large chunks of candy-covered gingerbread in their grasp.

Thick dollops of frosting clung to their lips and cheeks.

The two mannequins gazed into the interior of the house with glassy expressions of glee across their painted faces.

"Uh that's kinda weird," Katy stated. "And scary. Ack, I know I'm gonna have nightmares about that stove."

"It's weird and awe-some!" Dana exclaimed.

"Huh?"

"This is just killer! Look at all of the detail. I mean, you can see the flesh on those legs burning from here? How did they do that?"

"Um, I don't know."

"And that house looks really tasty. I think I see some Taffy Chews on the roof if you're hungry."

"Uh, no thanks."

"This is just awesome. Just look at the stove smoke!"

"Yeah the FX for this house is really detailed. And borderline crazy. Uh, who lives here again?"

"It's the Sibleys House. They're like Halloween *legends* on this block."

"They are?"

"Yeah, the Sibleys *a/ways* kill it on Halloween. They've won the Annual Saginaw Block club Halloween Haunting Decoration Contest for three years in a row!"

"Wow."

"Katy, you should have seen what they did last year. Their whole yard was set up just like a morgue."

"What?"

"Yeah, they had the little drawers, the long tables, saws, the big jars with little innards and bits, scalpels, buzz saws, chest crackers and everything."

"Chest crackers?"

"Yeah. They're those big bolt cutter looking things that they use on those forensic shows to crack open the ribcage during an autopsy."

"Oh."

"And last year the Sibleys had two animated mannequins performing mini autopsies with blood, organs on scales and everything. One of the bodies on the table didn't have any brains. The dead guy's head was like empty and one of the coroner mannequins was holding up the brain."

"Ew."

"I don't know how they did it, but you could like see the blood dripping off of the brain."

"Blech!"

"Three of the Saginaw Block Club judges got sick watching it! It was awesome. The morgue thing not the old guys throwing up in the bushes."

"Yuck."

"Yeah, it was pretty gross."

The sound of a loud crash echoed behind Katy and Dana.

Katy and Dana stopped walking and they looked at each other.

"What was that?" Katy asked.

"I don't know," Dana replied tentatively.

Chapter Three

Katy and Dana turned around. They stared at the space behind them.

A short red haired little boy stood in the center of the sidewalk a few yards behind the two young women.

The young boy was dressed as a pirate and his slightly corpulent form was pressed into a tight fitting costume. A dark patch lay across his left eye. A bright scarlet scarf was tied around his head.

The little boy snatched a large pumpkin from its perch on a stone ledge beside him. He threw it to the ground with a curious yodel.

The red haired boy moved forward quickly and he stomped atop the ruined object in a wild dance.

"Tommy Fenster," Dana said. "What a classic case of *spaz*."

Katy turned to Dana. "Didn't you used to babysit him?"

"Yes," Dana replied glumly.

Tom took a few steps forward. He snatched two glowing pumpkins from the stone fence before raising the orange objects over his head and throwing them to the sidewalk with a loud roar.

The pumpkins struck the ground with loud thwacking sounds.

The orange objects exploded upon impact spraying the ground with a torrent of slimy pumpkin pulp, broken shell fragments and bright white seeds.

Tom moved forward and he leaped into the center of the shattered pumpkins.

The little boy clapped his hands and slid around the heap of seed-filled pumpkin fragments with a banshee like screech.

"He's a destructive little one isn't he?" Katy asked.

"Yeah destructively mental," Dana replied.

Tom turned around in a rapid spin and he stopped. He clapped his hands and slid backwards across the shattered pumpkin with quick jerking movements.

"What is he doing?" Katy asked.

"Oh that's his little dance he does when he's destroying things," Dana replied.

"Oh. Did he uh, do that when he was a baby?"

"I don't even want to get into the stuff this kid did when he was an infant. If you'd seen him you wouldn't believe it."

"Whoah."

"Come on. I'm putting a stop to this right now."

Dana rushed forward. Katy followed.

The two young women stopped a few paces in front of Tom.

Tom slid across the pavement and he stopped in front of a stone gate. He snatched a pumpkin from the pedestal with a loud cheer.

"Hey cut that out!" Dana shouted.

Tom jumped with a start at the sound of Dana's voice. He clutched the pumpkin against his chest, turned around and looked up at Dana with wide eyes.

"Oh. It's you," Tom hissed.

"Yeah, remember me butt wipe?" Dana asked.

"I don't have to do anything you say!" Tom yelled.

"Put that pumpkin down Tom," Dana commanded.

"Okay!" Tom laughed with glee.

Tom raised the pumpkin over his head and he smashed it to the ground with a loud yell.

"Now that was just stupid," Katy stated.

Tom took a few steps forward and he stopped in front of another glowing pumpkin. He snatched the object from the stone fence before turning to Dana.

The chubby little boy regarded Dana with a vengeful sneer. He carelessly tossed the pumpkin into the air repeatedly and caught it in his hands.

"Tom you *really* need to cut that out," Dana said.

"And if I don't?" Tom asked throwing the pumpkin higher into the air.

The pumpkin struck Tom's hands with a loud slapping noise when he caught it.

"What are you gonna do if I don't stop huh?" Tom asked. "They're not *your* pumpkins."

"They're *everybody's* pumpkins," Katy said.

"Yeah," Dana agreed. "So put it down, turn around and go home now before I kick your butt!"

"Yeah Tom put those pumpkins down," Katy began. "Cause what you're doing right now isn't nice. Some really nice people worked really hard on those decorations. And just cause Halloween is over it still doesn't give you the right to bust them up."

"Shut up!" Tom hollered catching the pumpkin in his grasp.

"What did you just say to me?" Katy asked with slightly narrowed eyes.

"I said shut up!" Tom repeated taking a step forward.

Tom raised the pumpkin in his hands and he threw it at Katy.

The large orange object soared swiftly across the space and the rapidly spinning object flew in the direction of Katy's face.

Dana dropped her plastic bag and she moved swiftly to Katy.

Dana stopped in front of her gasping friend. She raised her hands and caught the flying pumpkin a few seconds before the large round item struck the front of Katy's skull.

Tom looked at Dana with wide eyes.

Dana tossed the pumpkin into the air and she caught the falling object in her left hand. She raised the large orange object in her grasp quickly before spinning the glowing thing atop her left index finger.

The pumpkin spun atop Dana's finger with dizzying speed.

"What?" Tom asked watching the rapidly spinning pumpkin with a choke.

Dana brought her left hand upwards sharply and the pumpkin was suddenly aloft.

The pumpkin descended rapidly and Dana caught the orange object with both hands. She looked at Tom with an expression of irritation across her features.

"You really need to watch where you throw this," Dana said.

Tom looked up from the pumpkin and he stared at Dana.

Dana took a small step forward and swung the pumpkin in Tom's direction.

Tom took a small step back with a low cry.

"Cause someone could get hurt," Dana continued.

"Leave me alone!" Tom cried ceasing his stride backwards.

Dana stopped. She spun the pumpkin atop her right index finger while looking at Tom with a sneer.

"You throw like a wiener," Dana said.

"Shut up Dizzy Dana!" Tom screamed.

"Don't call me that," Dana said.

"Why? It's your name," Tom said. "Dizzy Dana! Dizzy Dana! Dizzy Dana!"

"That's it!" Dana shouted.

Dana stopped the motion of the pumpkin and she tossed the object into the air. She caught the pumpkin with her right hand before she rushed to Tom with a loud shriek.

Tom watched Dana's advance with an expression of alarm across his chubby features.

The red haired young boy ran backwards a few paces before he turned around and ran forward with a loud wheezing cough.

Dana followed closely behind the running boy.

"I'm right behind you Tom!" Dana shouted.

"Leave me alone!" Tom wailed. "I didn't do anything to you!"

"You tried to hurt my friend and you made me mad!"

"Stop! Leave me alone! I'm telling on you!"

"Stop crying you baby!"

"I'm not a baby!"

"You are!"

Tom increased his speed forward. He moved swiftly across the sidewalk.

The soles of his shoes slid precariously across a wide patch of shattered pumpkin fragments and the little boy tripped over his feet while continuing his clumsy run forward.

Tom managed to regain his shaky balance near the edge of a nearby curb.

The pumpkin-smearred soles of Tom's shoes slipped off of the edge of the curb and the little boy staggered clumsily into the empty street with a loud cry.

"I'm gonna clobber you with this thing!" Dana bellowed leaping off of the curb and sliding gracefully into the street behind Tom.

Tom ran faster.

Dana quickened her pace and she ran behind Tom.

Katy sprinted closely behind Dana.

"Dana no!" Katy shouted. "Don't do it!"

Tom ran into the center of the street. He stopped suddenly and turned around.

Tom stared at Dana with an expression of menace across his features. His breaths poured from his form in heavy rasps. His chubby face was flushed crimson.

Dana stopped a few paces in front of Tom. She glared at the little boy with a menacing sneer while holding the pumpkin in her hand.

Katy ran into the street and she stopped beside Dana.

Katy grabbed Dana's left arm and said, "Dana, please don't throw that pumpkin at him. You could get into trouble and he's not worth it."

Dana stared at Tom with narrowed eyes.

"No," Dana said. "He almost hit you with this thing. He's got this coming."

"Dana don't. He's just a kid," Katy said.

"An annoying kid," Dana stated.

"It's Halloween. Let's just go," Katy said.

"Yeah," Tom huffed. "Just go Dizzy."

"Tom," Dana said calmly. "Just shut up."

"I'm not shutting up!" Tom yelled. "I'm going to keep talking because I can and you can't stop me!"

"Tom...shut up," Dana repeated.

"And I'm going to smash every last pumpkin on this block and the next block and the next one cause its Halloween, I can do whatever I want and you can't do anything about it Dizzy Dana!" Tom shouted.

"I'm warning you kid," Dana said.

Tom raised his arms over his head and he laughed gaily while shaking his hips in a wild dance. "Dizzy Dana Dizzy Dana Dizzy Dana!"

"Watch me do something," Dana said calmly.

Tom stopped dancing. He raised his hand and pointed at Dana with a braying laugh.

"You're not gonna do it! I dare you!" Tom laughed.

"You dare me?" Dana asked with a slight edge to her voice.

"Yeah Dizzy Dana," Tom said. "I dare you to do it and I know you won't cause you're dizzy dizzy..."

"Watch this!" Dana shouted.

Dana raised the pumpkin in her grasp and she threw the object at Tom.

The spinning gourd flew into the air with near blinding speed before it struck the center of Tom's shocked face with a loud crunching noise.

The pumpkin shattered into several large fragments and thick globs of orange seed-filled gunk flew from Tom's cheeks and fell onto his shoulders with loud slapping noises.

The center of Tom's face exploded in a shower of blood.

Tom grabbed at his nose and he took a staggering step backwards. He tripped over his feet and fell to the ground in the center of the street in a motionless heap.

"Oh no!" Katy cried.

Dana walked into the street calmly. She stopped in front of Tom.

Katy followed Dana. She stopped beside her friend.

Dana and Katy stared at Tom.

Blood and mucous gushed from the young boy's nose. The scarlet tendrils oozed across his face and neck. His chest, neck and skull were covered with thick pieces of pumpkin and large clumps of orange gunk.

Dana folded her arms across her bosom. She nodded with a satisfied grunt.

"So much for trash talk," Dana commented.

"I think he's dead," Katy whispered.

"He's not dead. Just unconscious," Dana said firmly.

"I don't know. That pumpkin hit him in the face pretty hard. He could have a fractured skull or something," Katy stated.

"Well maybe that pumpkin knocked some sense into him," Dana stated with a light shrug.

"What's that black stuff all over him?"

"I dunno. Pumpkin guts and a light stick?"

"No, that other stuff."

"What other stuff?"

"Look at his chest. There's some shiny stuff on it. It looks weird."

Dana lowered her sight from Tom's blood- smeared face. She gazed at the young boy's chest.

A thick clump of seed-filled pumpkin mash lay in the center of the young man's chest.

A large dark stiff object lay nestled in the middle of the orange mass.

"I don't know what that is," Dana stated.

Dana moved forward. She fell into a crouch and thrust out her hand in the young man's direction.

Tom opened his eyes. He blinked for a few moments and looked up. He saw Dana leaning over him and released a high pitched scream before sitting up with a loud whimper.

Dana rose to her feet quickly and she moved away from Tom.

"I'm going to the cops! And I'm going to tell them you hit me with a pumpkin!" Tom wailed.

"Tom you need to calm down and go home," Dana said calmly.

Tom sniffed and he released a painful whine. He raised a hand to his nose and rubbed at his organ with a loud cry. The young boy pulled his hand from his face and with a gasp after seeing blood and bits of pumpkin mash clinging to his fingertips.

Tom looked up at Dana with a quivering lower lip. "You droke it! You droke my nose!"

"Its not broken," Dana said wearily.

"I'm calling the cops," Tom whined. "You'll get arrested and then I'll sue you!"

"Just calm down kid," Dana said. "You're not bleeding to death."

"He just might get an aneurysm from screaming so loud," Katy said pressing her left hand against her ear with a wince. "That was like two hundred and fifty decibels."

Dana laughed.

"We'll see how funny it is when the cops get here!" Tom cried.

Tom leaned his body forward and he reached into his rear pocket. He pulled a small cellular phone from the garment.

The large mass of pumpkin innards fell from his chest and the thick orange gunk landed in his lap with a loud splat.

Tom looked down at the orange mass. He screamed when he saw a severed hand resting in the center of the seed-filled pile.

The flesh atop the stiff hand was a dull green color. The tips of three of the limb's fingers were missing. Ragged bits of flesh lay at the lower portion of the limb where the wrist hand been. A large gold ring lay across the upper portion of the hand's fourth finger.

Dozens of wriggling white maggots slithered across the limb. Several of the fat writhing insects landed in Tom's lap.

A large black beetle skittered across the top portion of the hand and fell to the ground with a loud clicking sound.

Tom dropped his cellular phone. He shoved the insect-covered hand from his lap and crawled away from the object with a whinnying cry.

"What is that thing?" Katy asked.

Dana moved forward and she stopped in front of the hand. She stared at the discolored limb with a curious tilt of her head. She fell into a crouch and snatched the discolored object from the ground. She shook the crawling insects from the hand and stared at the slimy thing.

"Looks like somebody lost a hand," Dana said with a chuckle.

"Ew," Katy said staring at the hand. "It looks so real."

"Yeah it does," Dana said.

Dana leaped to her feet and she turned to Tom. She shook the hand in front of her while she rushed to Tom.

"What do you think Tom?" Dana shouted.

Tom released a harried screech. He stopped crawling backwards and flipped his massive body over with a grunt. He landed on the ground atop his belly with a resonant squeal.

The chubby boy leaped to his feet with a quick sliding motion before he ran down the empty street with a siren-like scream.

He waved his arms during his frenzied sprint and his shrill screams became a faint murmur when he disappeared around a dark corner.

Dana stopped running. She lowered the severed hand in her grasp with a laugh. "What a wuss."

Chapter Four

Katy moved to Dana. She stopped beside her friend and thrust a large candy-filled bag in her direction.

"Here's your candy," Katy said.

Dana turned to Katy. She raised her free hand and took the bag from her friend's grasp.

"Thanks," Dana said. She looked inside the bag. "You're welcome," Katy stated.

Katy stared at the severed hand.

"Uck," Katy said with disgust.

"What?" Dana asked looking up at Katy.

Katy pointed at the hand. "That hand thing looks freaky real. You can even see the little bone thing sticking out at the bottom."

"Really?" Dana asked. "I didn't notice that."

"Look at it," Katy said.

Dana flipped the severed hand in her grasp. She stared at the lower portion of the object.

"Yeah you can see the bone. And it's got like those marks from a blade. Like a machete or something," Dana said.

"What?" Katy asked.

Dana looked at Katy. "You know from all of those forensic science shows. They can usually tell what a dismembered corpse was hacked up with by..."

"Okay, okay. You don't have to go all CSI on me. How do you know all of this stuff?"

"I dunno," Dana said with a shrug. She thrust the hand in Katy's direction with a maniacal laugh.

Katy raised her candy bag and she slammed her plastic parcel against the hand.

The hand fell from Dana's grasp and it landed on the pavement with a loud thwack.

"Ugh! It even sounds gross!" Katy exclaimed.

Dana fell into a crouch. She snatched up the hand.

"Relax Katy," Dana said standing upright. "This is just a prop. A well made one."

Dana looked at the severed hand. "Its probably from the Johnson's yard."

"How do you know?"

Dana looked at Katy. "The Johnson's did a serial killer theme thing this year with bloody body parts and stuff. And Mrs. Johnson does special effects for horror movies."

"I thought Mrs. Johnson and her husband were engineers."

"They are. But Mrs. Johnson does the movie stuff too."

Katy pointed at the hand with a cry.

"What's that green stuff leaking out of it? Ew, its dripping off of the skin!" Katy asked.

Dana looked at the severed hand.

"Yeah that is gross," Dana said. "The Johnsons probably used pig skin on top of the latex for this hand. You know for effect."

"Why would they use pig skin?"

"Scientists use pigs for decomposition experiments."

"They what?"

"Just forget I said anything. Come on; let's just put this back where it belongs. The Johnson house is the last one on the block."

The low hum of an approaching motor echoed in the street behind the two young women.

Dana and Katy turned around. They looked behind them and saw a large rusty car resting in the street a few paces away from them.

The driver side door of the car fell ajar.

A tall man climbed from the interior of the automobile.

The man was dressed in a tattered grey suit. His face was a sickly green color. Half of his head was gone. Several huge shiny black beetles fell from the large hole in his skull. The dark insects bounced atop the man's shoulders before the creatures landed on the ground with loud clattering noises.

"Wow look at his costume," Katy said.

"Yeah it's cool," Dana stated.

"Those bugs look real. Some of 'em are running."

"Yeah, that's like the best zombie costume I've seen this year."

The tall man moved away from the rusty automobile. He walked clumsily forward and clutched at his left arm. The man stopped in front of Dana and Katy. He smiled at the two young women.

"Hello," the tall man said.

"Hi," Katy stated.

"Hello," Dana said.

"How are you tonight?" the man asked.

"Good," Katy replied.

"We're alright," Dana said. She raised the severed hand and thrust the object in the tall man's direction. "I have to tell you that you're wearing a cool zombie costume."

"Um thanks," the tall man said with a grin.

"Yeah," Katy said. "You look like one of those zombies from one of those movies."

"What movies?" the tall man asked.

"You know," Katy said. "The zombie movies with the zombies that can like run and chase people to eat them if their body parts aren't falling off. Really scary."

"Yeah," Dana added. "If I had a shotgun and was really scared, I'd probably shoot you in the head."

"Dana," Katy hissed turning to Dana.

Dana lowered the severed hand in her grasp and she turned to Katy.

"What? His costume is that awesome. That was a compliment, Katy."

The man stared at the severed hand in Dana's grasp.

"That hand!" the tall man cried.

Katy and Dana turned away from each other. They stared at the tall man. "It's a horror prop," Dana said. "What about it?"

"Where did you find it?" the tall man inquired gazing at the limb with a quick lick of his lips.

"Uh...some kid was smashing pumpkins and it was kinda inside one of them," Katy replied.

"I've been looking for it all night," The man said. He looked up at Dana. He smiled at her and thrust out his right hand. "May I?"

"Yeah," Dana replied thrusting the hand in the man's direction. "It totally goes with your costume."

The tall man took a shuffling step forward and his left arm fell from its perch atop his chest.

Katy and Dana stared at the tall man's left arm.

A ragged maggot infested stump lay at the upper portion of his wrist where his hand had once been.

The man stopped in front of Dana. He raised his right hand and took the severed hand from Dana's grasp gently.

"I have it," the tall man whispered.

The tall man raised severed hand in his grasp. He looked at the shining ring atop the discolored limb's fourth finger with a smile.

"The ring is still here. I can't tell you what a relief that is," The tall man said. He placed the severed hand atop his ragged left wrist. "I thought I'd lost it. And I need the hand too but the ring is sentimental. I guess you can say that I'm an old fashioned romantic."

The tall man twisted the severed hand atop his ragged wrist stump.

Small black worms fell from the slimy stump. The slithering creatures landed on the ground with loud slapping sounds.

"I think that should do it," the tall man said releasing the hand.

The hand sat atop the slimy the tall man's shiny stump for a few seconds before it slid from the ragged portion of skin with a loud popping noise.

The tall man raised his right hand and he caught the sliding hand before it fell from atop his wrist.

"Let me try this again," the tall man said.

The man placed the severed hand atop his ragged left wrist. He twisted the limb vigorously atop his stump.

Small shreds of blackened flesh fell from the tall man's wrist. The discolored bits of skin landed on the pavement with loud plopping sounds.

"Hmmm...its not staying put," the man said. "Say, do either of you have any super glue that I can borrow?"

The tall man looked up from his festering limb and stared at the space in front of him.

He was alone.

Two large plastic bags of candy lay on the ground a few paces in front of him.

Katy and Dana were running across the pavement a few hundred yards in front of the tall man.

The two young women were deathly silent while they sprinted across the dark street with quick graceful movements.

Katy and Dana continued their rapid trek forward before they ran around a corner and disappeared from sight.

Chapter Five

"Oh well," The man said.

"Larry is everything okay?" a high pitched voice asked.

Larry pulled the hand from atop his wrist. He slid the limb inside his pocket. He turned around and moved to the car. He paused in front of the opened door and entered the vehicle.

"Yeah everything's alright. I found my hand," Larry said cheerfully.

Larry closed the door at his side. He turned away from the windshield in front of him and stared at the blonde woman seated at his side.

"We should be able to find your arm soon Sally," Larry said gently.

"That would be so nice," Sally said with a smile.

Larry turned around. He peered into the rear portion of the car.

A headless corpse was seated in the backseat of the vehicle.

The form wore a faded dress of pale blue. A pair of shining silver knitting needles was in its white gloved hands. A large ball of yellow yarn lay within its lap.

Loud clicking sounds filled the interior of the car while the steel rods moved in quick rapid motions in the cadaver's grasp.

"And Mother's head," Larry said.

"Yes we can't forget about Mother," Sally said with a nod.

Larry turned to Sally with a weary sigh.

"Those kids with their pranks," Larry said. "I'll be glad when someone tells them that it's wrong to dig people up and hide their body parts. But kids will be kids."

"Yes," Sally said. "They're just having a bit of fun."

"Fun at our expense," Larry stated.

"Oh dear. It's just one night a year," Sally said.

Loud rhythmic banging echoed from the backseat of the vehicle.

Sally turned around. She stared into the rear portion of the automobile.

"Yes Mother. I understand," Sally said. She turned to Larry. "Dear, we have to really hurry with our search if we're going to find Mother's head by dawn. The night is almost over."

"You're right darling. Let's go. And watch your speed. The police are out tonight," Larry said.

"Yes dear," Sally said.

Sally turned from Larry and she stared at the windshield in front of her. She pressed at the gas pedal and the car moved forward.

About the Author

Amanda Lawrence Auvergne writes fiction.
Amanda writes horror, humor and dark fantasy stories.

To read more of Amanda's short stories, please visit her website

<http://auvergne.com>

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