

An Unexpected Visitor

by Melissa Picco

Clinking gently, Amy's crimson high-heeled shoes carried her to the front door on a balmy summer night. Upon reaching the door, she rummaged for her keys in a glittery black purse. The moment she turned to grasp the knob, her golden keys shining in the moonlight, she became aware that the door was slightly open. She let out a long, exhausted sigh and laughed at her careless mistake. Shoving her key back into the purse, she stepped inside.

Her eyes scanned the cluttered apartment. There were clothes of various colors and patterns strewn about, a week-old banana peel, twenty different pairs of shoes, silver wrappers, brown boxes, and wrinkled papers. What a mess! The only light in the room, she realized, was coming from a dim lamp, covered by a thick, polka-dotted magenta lampshade. Making a quizzical face, she attempted to recall when she had last used the lamp. As a matter of fact, she could not remember *ever* using it! Her heart began to drum slightly faster than its usual tempo. She sucked in an enormous breath, but even that did not obliterate the massive lump weighing in her throat.

She took another step. Amy's eyes popped wide open to a sudden rustling in the kitchen, and her face turned the bright white of her eyes. She started to tremble. Slipping out of her shoes, she tiptoed into the living room and snatched a fluffy pillow for protection.

Again, she heard something. The noise was much clearer now and it sounded like a footstep. Terror flew through Amy's body as she froze for a second in total anxiety. She turned to flee but slipped. As flashes of pain pierced her leg, she let out a bloodcurdling gasp and slammed onto the floor.

Minutes passed like years. Paralyzed with dread, Amy remained on the cold, hard floor. Her body had stopped shaking, but her head was spinning and her insides were still screaming. The room was in dead silence. Light from the lamp seemed to have dimmed a considerable amount.

Suddenly, a voice shrilled through the dark room, saying, "Someone's crying upstairs." The voice rang clearly and smoothly as it zoomed through the room.

Amy looked up to catch a glimpse of a small figure hovering over her. It pointed a tiny finger toward Amy's upstairs room, and then vanished.

Seconds later, Amy heard snuffles.

The Horrific Storm

by Stephanie Hum

In the dead of night a small fishing boat, lost in the dark, murky waters of the sea, sailed right into the midst of a violent storm. The sky was completely covered with thick, gray storm clouds. Huge droplets of water poured down from the sky and splattered onto the scared faces of the few people scattered along the boat's deck. The ice-cold winds blew all around them freezing every bone in their bodies. Electrifying lightning bolts sprang from the clouds, making the crew jump, for the deafening thunder boomed shortly after. Desperately, they searched for a way out of the storm, despite the truth in the back of their minds that they were not going to survive. Despite their doubts, they struggled to save themselves from their fates. The staggeringly huge waves were like giant monsters ready to take the lives of the crew at any moment and rip the boat up board by board. The mighty waves fiercely rocked the boat, pushing the small crew off the edge and into the deep depths of the water, leaving the small boat utterly defenseless against rage of the ocean. Holes sprung up along the boat's wooden surface and shot water back to the rushing waves. The boat was slowly making its decent toward the murky bottom of the ocean, until the very tip of the boat was the only thing that could be seen above the water. Then it too plunged down out of view.

