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Lord Byron

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Acrimony

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To the Editor...

I can't believe you let people download Acrimony for free. You've really got a good thing going here and you should charge for downloads.

Banshee

I agree. Get it free while you can ;)

You're all a bunch of psycho-wankers!

Anonymous

Most of us, not all of us. Jenny (advice Jenny, not comic Jennie) is more accurately described as a Danzig-loving-sex-deprived-blonde.

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Fallen Halo



by **Dan Shaurette**
Daniel@acrimony.org
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*"And in between the moon and you
The angels get a better view
Of the crumbling difference
Between wrong and right."*

Counting Crows,
-- from "Round Here"

In the beginning, there was nothing. God looked upon the nothingness and yawned. Michael, Gabriel and Lucifer looked upon the nothingness along with their angelic brethren and smiled. They knew that their God loved them and all angels in the Chorus with infinite, perfect Love. They noticed, however, that God was disturbed by something. Lucifer, loved above all, was first to ask what was troubling Him.

"My Lord, you seem preoccupied. What troubles you?" Lucifer asked. "I'm bored, to be quite honest, Luc. Don't you ever wish there was more to do?"

Lucifer pondered with impish desires and said, "You have always provided whatever we should want. And we delight in being a part of your Celestial Chorus and bringing you joy through song. Shall we Sing for you?"

God, confidant he had discovered the answer just then said, "Not today... I feel like singing now — a new Word."

Michael and Gabriel who had already donned their Choir garb in anticipation looked at each other with disappointment. Gabriel turned to Michael and said, "The last time He sang, He created us. I've got a bad feeling about this."

Michael returned, "Nonsense, Gabe. It's probably just an experiment. You know how He is."

Lucifer overheard the two and suggested, "My Lord, how about a grand Experiment?"

Pondering the suggestion, God asked, "Hmmm... what kind of experiment?"

Lucifer smirked and said, "How about a change of scenery?"

God said, "I know... how about **Firmament?**"

With that Word, Lucifer saw the tiniest point of light in the distance.

The Lord God saw the disappointed look on his favorite Angel's face, so he cleared his throat and said, "*Let There Be Light!*"

With that Word, the point of light EXPLODED! In a glorious swirl of lights and colors, fire and gases took shape into stars and planets. These in turn swirled into solar systems, constellations, and galaxies. Lucifer marveled at the awesome display before him.

Michael and Gabriel stared at the diamond-sown Universe that sparkled around them. Michael said, "This is beautiful, isn't it?"

Gabriel sighed, "Sure, but I doubt he's finished."

Lucifer overheard again then asked God, "My Lord, no more marvelous thing have I witnessed than this — is there more?"

God said, "But of course. Do you see that small blue-green planet way over there? The one revolving around that yellow sun?"

"Yes," smiled Lucifer, "that one is my favorite."

"Watch," God simply stated.

As the days passed, God, Lucifer and the whole Chorus watched as the Earth's volcanoes spewed its atmosphere, which collected into seas and oceans, dividing the quickly-greening continents.

Shortly, the first signs of Life emerged in the seas and on the land. These stationary things God called Plants and then He distinguished them among their species. Then came swimming and crawling things, which God called Animals and again named their species.

Lucifer saw large reptiles, which God called Dinosaurs, dominate the planet. Lucifer asked, "What a glorious beast — are they to inherit this Earth?"

God only smiled and said, "It is not my will to see them survive or perish. I only want to see what interactions they will have with the rest of the Universe."

Just then, Michael saw a large chunk of rock hurtling towards the Earth and asked Gabriel, "Do you think it will strike the planet?"

Gabriel smiled, "Full impact, I would imagine."

Lucifer asked God, "Don't you want to save your Dinosaurs?"

"No," said God, "they did not sing to me. If the comet strikes and they die then that shall be their fate. But, do not give up so easily on the Earth."

Lucifer watched with his brothers as the comet slammed into the Earth, spewing dust into the air, choking the creatures of oxygen and sunlight. The planet soon became cold and forbidding.

Lucifer frowned, "Such a pity."

God did not want to see his beautiful Lucifer sad, so He decided to do something special. He said, "Look as the glaciers melt away."

Lucifer and his brothers watched a mammal evolve into the form of a Man and another into that of a Woman. God said, "To this species I will give a gift — a Soul."

At this point, Gabriel stopped talking to Michael and asked God directly, "A Soul? What is that?"

"A spirit similar to your own," he said smiling.

Lucifer smiled as he imagined them to be like new children. Gabriel however scowled, "Do these... *monkeys' souls* give them Free Will like us?" Michael tried to calm Gabriel down.

God scorned Gabriel saying, "No, they do not, for they are

NOT angels. But Gabriel, I resent your question. If I should desire to give them Free Will, I will!" With that, God infused the pair's souls with Free Will. When he was done, he named them Adam and Lilith.

Filled with Jealousy, Gabriel stormed off. Michael apologized for his brother then ran off after him. Lucifer turned to God and said, "Do not be upset with Gabriel. He tends to be jealous of me as well."

God smiled and his anger subsided. He turned his attention back to Adam and Lilith. He saw some Angels fawning over Lilith, for she was the most beautiful creature they had ever seen. The angels saw that her beauty rivaled that of their own, but they were not jealous. Instead, they playfully decided to give Lilith wings of her own!

"Oh no, not again," sighed God. "Free Will can be so taxing some times." Just then, Lilith and Adam had an argument and she flew away. Adam stared towards the Heavens and sang a sad song.

Lucifer sighed, "All alone, no one to Love."

God smiled as he heard the Song and put Adam to sleep. He took a bone from his ribs and fashioned Adam a new bride. "Waste not, want not," he joked. This new bride he



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the blood is eternity,
but at what cost?*

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named Eve. Adam thanked his God and sang his praises.

This lifted God's demeanor, "I like these Humans, but I am wondering about my gift of Free Will. Maybe I shouldn't have gone that far."

Lucifer anxious to play with the new Children asked God, "How about a test to see how well they handle their Free Will?" However, before God had the chance to answer him, Lucifer flew off to the Earth.

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"*What Have You Done?*" bellowed God at Lucifer upon his return from Earth.

"Wha- But I - I thought I would, um, test them," stammered Lucifer afraid of his Lord's anger.

"I did not Ask you, nor Command you to test them," He said. "And even if I agreed to a test, I would not have allowed you to Tempt them! Using Temptation is cheating; you tested nothing but their virginal ignorance! Now they have sinned! They knew they were not allowed to eat of the Fruit of Knowledge."

"Then why," Lucifer asked confused, "does the Apple exist?"

"It exists because Good and Evil exist," He explained. "When

I created you and your brethren, I made you Good. But when I gave you Free Will, the possibility that you would choose to be Evil existed, because Evil exists.

"When I created the Humans and gave them Free Will, the Fruit of Knowledge of Good and Evil grew in the Garden of Eden. I wanted them to have Free Will but I did not want them to choose Evil over Good so I commanded them not to eat of the Fruit. Your Temptation has tainted them."

Worried about his fate and that of the Humans, Lucifer asked, "What's going to happen now?"

Frustrated, God replied, "I must punish them... and You. For Humanity, I punish them with Four Hardships."

Four Angels stepped forward to receive their Words; "**Famine, Pestilence, War, and Death!**"

The four Angels became somber, as they understood their duties. Lucifer, who had never known these Words, feared them and asked God, "When shall Humanity be visited by these Angels?"

"Throughout their existence — however, all four mean that the Lifespan of a Human is now finite. I do not wish to remove Immortality from their grasp

completely, so I will make them able to Copulate. For now, I cast them out of the Garden of Eden. There the Angels will visit them."

Lucifer absorbed the knowledge of these new Words... the very idea of a finite existence frightened Lucifer, yet the concept of Copulation intrigued him. At once he pitied and envied Adam and Eve. Then he realized his punishment was next.

"Lucifer," God said sternly, "you have Fallen from my Grace. As such, you are cast out of Heaven, such as I cast Adam and Eve out of the Garden."

Fear of his Fate turned into Hate behind Lucifer's eyes. He hated Humanity as a furious parent would hate his immature children. With a shortness to his voice he asked, "Where will I go? What would you have me do?"

God sensed that Lucifer was bordering that Ineffable line between Good and Evil, and He wept for what He had done. He steeled himself to accept Lucifer's Fate and said, "I care not where you go, as long as you do not stay here."

Lucifer grumbled, "I do not accept your punishment. I do not accept your statement that you would Love Humans more than Angels... more than ME! I Defy You! I Defy Your Word! I Defy Your Love!" Burning with

rage, he shouted, "*I would rather be the Master of Hell than a Servant of Heaven!*"

God said, "**So be it!**" With those words, Lucifer closed his eyes and Fell. He tumbled for what felt like an eternity, accelerating faster. As his speed reached terminal velocity, he burst into flames, and laughed as his halo fell away from him.

Back in Heaven, the Angels were stunned. They had watched and heard the bold statements between God and Lucifer. They mumbled to each other about the consequences. Michael and Gabriel returned from their repose to hear the commotion. They started to argue over who was right, more importantly, what was right. The other Angels began arguing about what had happened.

God was still reeling from Lucifer's Fall. The shouting of his Choir brought his attention back to the situation. God yelled, "Enough!" The silence quickly overcame the cacophony. God said, "When I gave you all Free Will, I knew this day should come. I now have two Creations of Mine with Free Will — Humans and Celestials. I cannot watch over all of you. In fact, at the rate that Humanity is developing, I will need Angels to watch over them. Will you do this for me?"

The Archangels stepped forward. Michael spoke first, "My

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Lord, I am yours, Thy Will be done."

Gabriel spoke next, "My Lord, I am yours, Thy Will be done." In his heart, Gabriel cursed Humanity, but swore he would do as he was told. God sensed this, but knew Gabriel was loyal, for now at least.

Most of the rest of the Archangels followed suit. Other angels stood behind their archangels and took their Word and their Fate in their hands. The Choirs were aligned and ready for what Eternity would bring.

Those that sympathized and agreed with Lucifer also fell to the Abyss of Hell. There they joined Lucifer as he became Satan, "The Adversary", Lord of

Darkness. The archangels that fell became his Princes and those angels that fell joined their Infernal Bands of Demons.

The Great War in Heaven Had Begun.

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*"Oh, I got here
by killin' off all my friends.
I think I've figured it out:
my life begins when the fun ends.
I got my wings,
I'm free to go as I please.
Yeah, I got my wings
now nothing really pleases me
'til everything falls apart"*

**-- Dog's Eye View,
from "Everything Falls Apart"**

Even with a war in Heaven, life goes on in the Physical realm of Earth. Ever since Adam and Eve were tempted into

committing the Original Sin, life has been finite. Four angels have been given the task of visiting the Earth and ensuring the cycle of life and death. They are War, Pestilence, Famine, and Death. They will be given special charges when the Seven Seals are broken, but that time has not yet come. In the meantime, they fulfill regular duties as required of them.

Since Humanity has spread to the extent that it has, these four angels have become Archangels with other angels below their charge. The fourth angel, the rider of the pale horse, has many working for him, since his charge requires him to take care of those who die of old age, accidents, homicides and suicides.

There are other angels that deal with death that don't work for any of these four. I am one of those few angels. It wasn't always that way. But then again, since I was once an angel of Mercy, I have been given a special charge.

In my present capacity, I have a role as half guardian angel, and half shepherd. I try to help people make the right decisions to prevent them from dying before their time. If I succeed, I help them to prepare for their ascension. If I fail, well, depending on the circumstances of their doom, they may be shepherded to one of two places.

As it happens, I have had many angelic professions. I have worked as a messenger, as a guardian, and as a shepherd. But, there was one time, when all of this was denied to me. Denied to me after *my* Fall from Grace. My Fall happened after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Abraham walked with God one day. This was one of the few times God didn't send a messenger angel, like myself. Anyway, God told Abraham that he was furious at the towns of Sodom and Gomorrah because of their blasphemous ways. Abraham however had family living in Sodom who were righteous, even if he agreed that the rest of the people were sinful. Abraham asked God, "Would you spare the town if there were 50 righteous people living there?"

God replied, "I would spare the city for the sake of 50 people."

Abraham realized that He was a fair and just God, but also realized there probably weren't 50 righteous people living there. In fact, beyond Lot, his Wife, and their daughters, there were none. So, Abraham began to actually bargain with God, all the way down to his last offer. "I will not ask again," Abraham said, "but would you save the town for the sake of 10 people?"

God hesitated, but because He knew Abraham had a personal stake in the fate of the town, he made a deal. "If there be 10 righteous people there, I shall spare the town. If there are less, it shall be destroyed."

Abraham knew at that point that this was the best he could do, so he agreed. God on the other hand knew there were fewer than 10 righteous people, so he charged two angels with a special task.

I was one of those angels. He asked us to go to the town of Sodom and find any righteous people. If there were more than ten, He would spare the town. But if he was right, and there were fewer, we were instructed

to help them escape before the town was destroyed.

Upon arriving at the gates of Sodom, we found Lot was waiting for us. No doubt a messenger angel was sent to let him know of our arrival. He let us in and told us that we could stay with him and his family before the morning when we were to survey the town for other faithful citizens.

With the rise of the morning sun, riotous knocking came upon Lot's door. All of the townsfolk, every single person, had surrounded that house. They were clawing on the walls, banging on the doors and windows, and trying their damndest, literally, to break in.



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Those that weren't trying to get in were fornicating outside within sight of us. The rest were naked and demanded that Lot send us "newcomers" out so that they might "know" us — in this case, they wanted to rape us.

Lot would not send us out, in fact, he offered his own daughters to the throngs that we might be spared. His sacrifice was noted, even if it was fool-hearted. We decided that Lot's family was truly the only people worth sparing. After dark, when the townsfolk had fallen asleep — which was late because many of their orgies lasted well into the evening — we helped Lot's family escape.

As we were leaving, the other angel told Lot and his family not to look back on the town. It was none of their concern anymore and they should not look back to that life. As we came to a hill overlooking the city, Lot's wife turned around to watch the destruction of that unholy city. When she did so, God's wrath at her disobeying the angel was unleashed on her — He turned her into a pillar of salt. I was totally distraught and upset over the punishment. After we escorted the rest of Lot's family to their new home, I had an argument with the other angel.

"Do not be upset. God's will must be obeyed," he said.

"But He promised Abraham that Lot's family would be spared," I yelled.

"Only if they were righteous in his eyes. He is the Judge of these tribes," he retorted.

"All she did was look back. She did not disobey God, she disobeyed you!" To my shock, the angel that stood before me changed his visage into that of Yahweh, Lord Elohim, our God. I immediately threw myself to my knees.

"Now you know the truth," he said, his voice deeper and wiser. "I had to go there myself to see how they lived. I could pass no judgment otherwise."

"I understand, my Lord, but was her punishment truly necessary?"

"It was, she disobeyed me."

"Had she known who you were, I doubt she would have," I reasoned.

"Not true, in her heart of hearts, she was more concerned with the life she was leaving behind than the welfare of her family or with the fact that we had rescued her from the destruction," he said authoritatively.

Still, even knowing he could tell what was in her heart, I resisted the idea that God could be such a cold judge of a

woman whose only sin was that she looked back. For one moment, she looked back. "My Lord," I continued, "how could you do this? What about Lot and his daughters? What about Abraham?"

"They will go on. I have a covenant with them."

Then something stirred inside me, my frustration oozed from every celestial fiber of my being. I challenged Him, "What about me? You lied to me. You didn't need me to be here if you were coming to see for yourself. Why did you bring me along?"

"To test your resolve as well as that of Lot and his family."

I was flabbergasted! "To test me?! What have I done to warrant such an exercise?"

"You have become more and more protestant of my judgments of late," he calmly stated.

I swallowed hard and said, "I may have voiced my opinion of how you handled Cain and the Flood but I never disobeyed you."

"True, but you have been distancing yourself from my Grace with every disparaging word. Your light is dependent on my Light. The more you disagree with me, the less my Light shines through you. If you don't

watch yourself, you may find yourself in Lucifer's shoes."

Anger came from nowhere and I rebutted, "Is that a threat?"

He winced as he realized I was about to Fall, so he said, "No, it is an observation, my Child. I do not want you to Fall. Walk with me back to Heaven?"

Reassured by his demeanor, I joined him on our trek back to Heaven's Gate.

When we arrived, we were greeted by an unexpected guest standing outside the gates. The visitor smiled a truly evil grin and said, "So, how was your visit to my little home away from home?"

God replied, biting his tongue, "I knew you had something to do with their sinful appetites, Lucifer."

"On the contrary, Father," he sarcastically noted, "I was not I that gave them their lustful desires. That was your doing. I simply removed their inhibitions by showing them the way from your stifling, repressive Laws."

"And now I have shown them the consequences of disobeying my laws," He shouted.

"Oh bravo, the big bad God has shown his temper once again. And look how my army of Darkness grows with the added souls."

It was at that moment that I realized that God had played right into Lucifer's hands. What was worse was I actually enjoyed that knowledge. That sweet ecstasy of knowing I was right and that God was wrong washed over me. I suddenly felt engorged with the warmth of believing that God had made a mistake. Moreover, he was played for a fool to further the cause of this stupid war. But, the true impact of that last thought didn't hit me until later. Somehow, I came to feel as if I could sympathize with the Devil.

So I Fell away, and as I Fell, I saw tears rolling from God's eyes, and I laughed.

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*"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."*

**-- Rolling Stones,
from "Sympathy For The Devil"**

One of the first things I noticed about Hell was how infinitely dark it was. It was as dark as the empty space between Heaven and Earth — "between the Moon and You" as Counting Crows recently put it. I spent a lot of time in that void. I am not sure if I was cold or hot, because I had never experienced temperature before that moment, but I was very uncomfortable.

"That will pass," came a voice in the distance. But I couldn't tell from which direction. It almost seemed to surround me, that voice, like the darkness itself. "That would be a fair analogy," the voice answered my unspoken query. "For here, I am the Darkness."

The voice crooned to me. With simple words, he lulled the fear of where I was out of me. The extreme temperatures I felt seemed to pass, too. Then I saw Lucifer standing above me, his hand stretched out to offer me a chance to stand.

That was when I realized I was flat on my back on a surface that felt like a downy soft bed of nails. It was a physical contradiction, and it was only one of many I would find there in Hell. For example, even though I was enveloped in total darkness, and Lucifer was dressed in black, with no light shining on him, I could clearly see him in front of me.

I took his hand in mine and pulled myself up. He patted me on the back as I arose to his height. "It seems to me," he said, "that we could all use a little Mercy, my brother."

"I used to think so. I used to think Mercy was the most important thing in the Universe," I sighed.

"And yet, the Most Merciful Lord Above has just shown you
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that it isn't. That Punishment is just as important." He paused, and then added with a sneer, "All the while calling it Justice."

"Justice," I coughed on the word. How could his God call killing Lot's wife, Justice?

"What about the Flood? Sure, let's save a handful of humans and assorted animals from a flood meant to wash the sinners away?"

I added, "You mean drown thousands upon thousands of people. They could have found Salvation. Why would he only show mercy to Noah's family?"

"He doesn't understand Salvation. He forces his believers to do what he says, to follow his rules," he began.

"And if they don't, he floods them or destroys their cities. That can't be right!"

"It's not," he encouraged. He smiled and said, "We could use someone like you down here, to show us and Him what Mercy is." He paused long enough to let his words sink in, and then laid down the bargain, "Join us — lead my armies with me. Together we'll knock on Heaven's door and show him how wrong he is."

He handed me a blood red rose that was so beautiful to behold. I stared at what was another physical contradiction. It was a rose perfectly perfumed and blossomed into maturity that seductively begged me to take it from Lucifer. I grabbed

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it and felt the pain and pleasure of the razor sharp thorns as they burst into my celestial flesh and I bled light. As the light seeped from my hand, I could see the ranks of lost souls he had collected from God's wrath.

I put the deep red rose into my lapel and that was when I knew I had a job to do.

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*"Just as every cop is a criminal
And all the sinners Saints
As heads is tails, just call me Lucifer
'Cause I'm in need of some restraint"*
**-- Rolling Stones,
from "Sympathy For The Devil"**

The faces of the lost souls haunted me as I marshaled them together into troops. There was, of course, no organizing them. Chaos had to prevail down here. But at least everyone was accounted for. I spoke with each soul. I learned of their sins and how they were punished. But I didn't let my anger over their punishment dissuade me from my task. We had an appointment to keep.

Not every soul would confess their sins to me. In fact, most of the souls were to stay behind. The truly damned would not be able to join us. Lucifer didn't mind leaving many behind. He knew it would be good for the morale of the other demons to have souls to torture.

So one night, we set out for Heaven. As the daylight came, all of us paused to adjust our eyes to the brightness of it. When the light of day gave way to the Light of Heaven, we charged towards Heaven.

Before we could reach Heaven's Gate, the Archangel Michael and God Himself stood in our way. There were no other angels or souls to defend their gates. Michael ran up to Lucifer and flat out punched him. Lucifer put up a strong fight, but Michael was his equal in fighting. So eventually they tired of battle and stopped in order to rest.

I walked up to God and some of my anger welled up again, but I bit my tongue and said, "Have Mercy on these souls and let them enter Heaven." After I spoke the words, Lucifer yelled over to me, "Traitor!"

God ignored Lucifer's remark and asked, "Why should I?"

Calmly, I replied, "It is true that they have sinned. But they seek Salvation for their sins. Punishment is a course of action when people won't repent. But they realize that they were wrong, they have paid their dues. They seek your Forgiveness. Others in Hell will not repent, and they should stay there to be punished. But have Mercy on these souls and forgive them."

Sorley Boy McDonnell and his Castle



by **Pamela Logue**
pam@acrimony.org



Dunluce Castle as it stands today.

Flamboyant Sorley Boy McDonnell, of the McDonnell clan is my type of man, formidable but charming, and had I of been alive in 1565 for sure I would of wagered a bet on getting his attention!

Sorley attacked and took the Castle, called Dunluce right out of the hands of one of Chief Richard de Burg's followers' called the McQuillens'. Sorely planned this particular battle well and laid a trap of twigs and rushes over a boggy area so when the McQuillen soldiers advanced, the McDonnell army attacked. The McQuillen soldiers becoming easy victims who got stuck in the bog, and they were shown no mercy when they fell to the blade of the McDonnell sword. A saying

still exists in my part of the world today, 'There had been nobody fooled by a rush but a McQuillen.'

Now, we can almost taste Sorley Boy McDonnell's victory as he marched up the drawbridge, seated upon his white crested horse and his army following. You can imagine the Conqueror as he breathed in victory with a winning smile, before rushing deliriously to the inner sanctum of the Castle. His servants scurrying to bring him mead to toast, and make merry the success of battle with his knights.

Such a rogue character did McDonnell have that he risked Queen's Elizabeth's I displeasure when he captured a

battle standard after a skirmish with the English and gained a reputation of respectful notoriety with the locals. Sorley seized every opportunity and took advantage of four salvaged canons from a ship called, "The Girona". The ship was a part of the Spanish Armada fleet; he mounted her cannons upon the Castle walls in 1588.



Sorely, however, did not rule his roost forever and retired to Dunaneenie. His son Randall came into possession of Dunluce Castle, and he set about restoring it to its former glory and re-acquainted himself with Royal Court. He impressed the royal courtiers with his lavish spending. Lady Katherine, his wife, also adored spending and buying luxury tapestries, silks, and curtains, and it was reported one set had belonged to Cardinal Wolsley of Hampton

Court. I do not think I could have spent Randall's money any better! Well... except perhaps on new kitchens!

Katherine furnished the rest of the Castle with elaborate upholstered chairs and stools; there were finely inlaid cabinets and many more interesting objects like telescopes, celestial, and terrestrial globes. Even Randall's horses benefited from saddles worked with gold and silver. The roof of Dunluce Castle was ornate with the signs of the Zodiac.

It's fascinating to think that humans today, even with all technology still consult our zodiac, read the runes or tarot as our ancestors did, so perhaps we are not as far progressed as we would like to think we are.

Now, getting back to the kitchen this is where local fable takes over a little, and all us Irish start telling a story by saying, "Did you hear the one about..."

Well, let me tell you the one about the kitchen...

One windless evening, in 1639, the Count and Countess held a banquet in Dunluce Castle. The fine Lord's and Ladies arrived thundering over the drawbridge in their Cinderella coaches, and were greeted by the livery uniformed butler who

announced their arrival to guests in the Great Hall. A fanfare sounded as they entered, and nodding to their fellows they would wander off to make merry and watch the Court Jesters, only stopping to lift a glass of the best claret, or mead from one of the servants. It was a point of great mirth to the locals, that some of the fine ladies had baited mice traps in their grandiose hairstyles!

The music played was the latest waltz of the day, as the Lords and Ladies danced and vied to win the attentions of the Count and Countess. Next servants would enter with silver platters rested upon shoulders, and the butler hit the brass gong with a soften drumstick that indicated dinner was ready. The sound of silk rustling filled the Great Hall as all made their way into the gallery for the feast.

Servants laid out the aperitifs, sweetbreads, and little bites with cheeses from a local goatherd, and served the honeyed mead to prepare the guests for their forthcoming feast of goose, duck, chicken and wild boar. Excitement was in the air, as dinner at McDonnell's was always such a treat. Dinner commenced when Randall McDonnell stood up and with a gracious but overbearing attitude would announce, "Milord's and Ladies, dinner shall now be served."



Excited chatter would fill the room, but soon died down to a feared icy silence as the rumble got louder. People looked questioningly at each other as the noise and sounds of horror grew louder and yet louder with each second. The fine ladies looked around with frightened eyes, the Lord's winced at the unknown that penetrated the space...their place, which once felt safe.

A terrified scream came from Mistress Hampton, as she watched her husband clamber on all fours over the table knocking over his golden goblet and others in his blind panic to vacate the room. Others followed. A stampede occurred. Count McDonnell who was standing, held together his last strands of bravado, raised his protesting arms in the air, and beckoned pleadingly that his

fellow courtiers stay and enjoy the banquet that had been prepared.

Blood curling screams and complete pandemonium overtook the Lords and Ladies as the servants rushed out pushing their way to safety over the top of the crême of society. One screamed, "Milord the kitchens...the kitchens.... they are falling over the top of the cliff and crashing into the rocks and oceans below. Lord help us all, run for your life! Run for your life, or the Devil will take us all!!"



The Cliff off which the kitchen fell.

However it is said that this was not the work of the Devil, but of Sorley McDonnell himself. He was setting a curse upon his son. The kitchen

tumbling into the wilds of ocean should have slain him, but fate served to save him to teach him the lesson that it is not riches or being a courtier of the Royal Court that makes a man who he is, but rather how he holds his sword and honour through his life.



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The Vampyre

The worlds first piece of Vampire Fiction

by **Mark Sesin**
sesinmk@aol.com

Who would ever have thought that the two most enduring monsters of our time would both be created on the same rainy holiday in Switzerland, but in 1816 when the poets Byron and Shelley both rented villas on the shore of Lake Geneva that's exactly what happened. Shelley, with his wife Mary and stepsister Claire, rented a chalet at Montalegre, while Lord Byron and his personal physician Dr Polidori, rented Villa Diodati.

Because of the heavy rain on the trip, the group spent many tedious hours indoors. They would amuse themselves reading to each other aloud and

drinking large quantities of laudanum, which was a heady combination of brandy and opium.

They read from a book entitled, *Fantasmagoriana* by Jean Baptiste Benoit Eyries. The book was a collection of ghost stories which had been translated from German into French. The book included a story called "Les Portraits de Famille," in which each member of a family had to compose a supernatural tale. This gave Byron, Shelley and their guests an idea, and they decided they would do the same.

The two great poets failed to produce anything of any note. Shelley tried, but failed to write a short story



Lord Byron



Dr. Polidori

about a strange event that happened early on in his life. Byron managed to compose half a story, about two men who decided to travel to Greece. Whilst there, one of the men died of an unknown disease. The other man returned to England to find his friend alive and seducing his sister. Mary Shelley's story would eventually become the very first novel about the crazed scientist, Frankenstein. While Polidori's tale was about a Swiss patriot's incestuous relationship with his sister.

Polidori, however, was far more interested in Byron's story of the undead lover, and he began work on his version of the story. The main character in the story was, Lord Ruthven, and Polidori modelled this character very heavily on Byron himself.

Polidori never published his work. In fact he put it away and completely forgot about it. However, three years later it somehow found its way into an edition of English publication, *New Monthly Magazine*, in April 1819, claiming Lord Byron as the author. Whether or not this was deliberate to cash in on Byron's notoriety is not known, but it did guarantee the story was widely read.

The story was an instant and immense success, and demand was so great that a cheap edition was published



Newstead Abbey around the time Lord Byron lived there

as soon as the magazine had sold out. Within months the story was translated into French, making Byron's name as an author there, and his French publishers quickly incorporated the story into a collection of his work Byron insisted that they remove the story from the second edition, but the work was in such demand that he soon gave in. The third edition of the collection ran with *The Vampyre* reinstated.

Byron thought that Polidori had cheapened his original story, and was furious. Polidori was also furious, for he had not been asked about the publication or offered any money either. Belatedly, Polidori was paid thirty pounds.

Byron appended most of his version of the tale to his next poem, *Mazeppa*. He deliberately edited out the last section, in which Darvell returns from the dead, to underline the

point that he had not written *The Vampyre*.

Polidori, author of the world's first ever vampire novel died two years later in August 1821, at the age of 25. There was a suggestion of suicide, but the official coroner recorded a verdict of "Death by the visitation of God."



This is Mark Sesin's first contribution to Acrimony



Photo courtesy of
<http://www.lilgothling.com>

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There are 3 steps to getting your work in Acrimony.

1. E-mail your content to editor@acrimony.org or mail it to Acrimony, P.O. Box 215, Ontonagon, MI 49953.
2. Include an email or written letter stating that you own all of the rights to the content and grant Acrimony the right to publish the work.
3. Payment for work published is handled through PayPal.com. Include in your correspondence your PayPal account name. If you do not have a PayPal account, you can sign up for free at <http://ad2.acrimony.org>

Why...

Don` t you hear my cry?
When I call
Against the wall
Like an echo
In the fall...
You don` t listen
At all.

Why don` t you hear me
When I speak?
You don` t say
The words I seek...
You don` t know me
You don` t care
At all...

Why do you always lie
You don` t care if I die
Why do you leave me...
Alone...
Like this abandoned stone...
You don` t care if I die,
And if I` m left alone.

I call out for you
But you` re not there
You` re everywhere and still nowhere.
You never have the time for me
And only for me...
You are always unfair.

I might cry on forever
And yield this river of pain
You don` t understand, ever
Everything stays just the same
I am darkened by this context
I am tired of this game!



Marcus Armand Forsythe
Romania, Transylvania
lestat7@cluj.astral.ro

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Decadence

by **Tom Scott**

necromancer@acrimony.org
<http://www.UndeadRadio.com>



John



Joshua



Samyael

Decadence is a band like no other. Originally hailing from the Philadelphia music scene, Decadence has recently moved to Chicago. Taking their name from the 1890's movement of the same name, which was influenced by the writings of Baudelaire and the art of Gustav Klimt. Though heavily influenced by David Bowie, The Cure, The Smiths, Depeche Mode, and Dead Can Dance; Decadence over time developed a unique sound of their own. It was originally founded in 1998 by Samyael, the former vocalist for "A Murder of Crows".

On Decadence's website, <http://www.honeywired.com/decadence>, you can find four exceptional tracks of theirs. These are the only songs you will be able to score over the web, there seems to be no way of purchasing their CD's unless you live in the Chicago area. Also surprisingly, the band has absolutely no show dates listed at all. Hopefully, the Windy City music scene will not intimidate this fine group of gothic rockers.

In listening to A Factless Open Body, it is quite easy to hear the David Bowie influence in their music. It sounds very

orchestrated, but in a good way. Unlike the spontaneous hardcore and punk bands of today, Decadence sounds very relaxed. Simply put, Decadence is perhaps the darkest-sounding orchestral music you will hear in your life (and afterlife, perhaps).

So if you can find it, get this CD now. It's quite astonishing to hear such great production work and musical talent come out of an underground band. Truly, Decadence is a group to remember.

In July uBn (Undead Broadcasting Network) goes live and you can hear all of Acrimony's Artist's of the Month there. Just go to www.undeadradio.com and follow the links to get started.



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Memories Dust

Cold fingers grasp a heart stone born upon twilight morning comes, to death unveiled a world of pain the dawn awakes undone

Hail to those whose grasp holds still the mist of morning gone, upon shadows dark a dusk unveiled to claw the evening sun

Pale the bones of hands raked heart delve unto the ground a song, emerges souls lost grasp upon the dawn to dust is done

Scream again the dead sound rings unmarred the hollowed ground, call your name again upon mist the decayed fortune found

Clasp tight the dream so frayed a distant memory to hunt beyond this world benign your thoughts thrown away

Still to clasp the morning sun that turns to dust all that will be gone came again undone, told the dreams of future faith ripped apart the sun

Shattered course to follow unto the ends of twilight dusk rising new again still cold hearts of aging rust

Yet still hold true the twilight moon hopes past unto dusk a death like hand grasping still frayed the remnants of one's past



by **Scott Cooper**

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Threshold Valedictions

It's a mood,
Its ascetic solitude.
Do not knock my door
Just go away.
No valedictions of threshold warmth
Black, cold welcoming death
Kill those survivors of solitude!
How dare they have mirth?
Ha! bludgeon their happiness
With their decrepit nonsense
Pull shut, the grille behind me.
No valedictions of threshold warmth
You are not wanted.
Just go away.
It is my ascetic solitude
And you
Have no room in my silence.

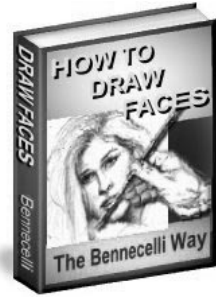


by **Pamela Logue**
pam@acrimony.org
- June 2004 -



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Calendar

July 1st **Kalends of July**

If July the first be rainy weather it will rain four more weeks together.

July 2nd **Feast of Expectant Mothers**

Today in ancient Rome, pregnant women gathered at the temples of several goddesses of fertility and childbirth to be blessed. These included Lucina, Diana, Juno, and Bona Dea.

July 3rd **Dogs Days, Athena, Witch of Gaeta**

The Dog Days are ruled by Sirius, the dog star, or Loki's brand in Norse tradition. Loki is the Norse god of strife, discord, and evil. He also presides over tricks and practical jokes.

This is said to be the hottest time of the year.

The goddess Athena was honored on this day in ancient Greece.

This day was sacred to the witch of Gaeta in Italy.

July 4th **Pax, Concordia**

The Day of Pax, or Concordia, was celebrated today in Rome with a considerable feast.

July 5th **Terrestrial Aphelion, Matt**

The earth's orbit takes it as far as it gets from the sun on this day.

This day is sacred to the ancient Egyptian goddess Matt, patroness of wisdom and truth.

July 6th **Julian**

Today is the day of remembrance for the Roman emperor Flavius Claudius Julianus (331 - 362) who restored pagan religion to the Roman empire.

July 7th **Consualia, Caprotina, Ferae Ancillarum, Nones of July, Celtic Tree Month of Duir ends, Nonae Caprotinae, Nones of Quintilis**

The Roman festival of Consualia is sacred to harvests. Today is the festival of handmaid's, or the 'Maid's Day Out.'

This day marks the most ancient of the Roman women's festivals, the 'Nonae Caprotinae.'

July 8th Sunna, Celtic Tree Month of Tinne Begins

Today is the feast of Sunna, or Sunniva, the Norse sun goddess.

July 9th Panathenaea, Dionysus, Rhea, Vestalia

On this day in Rome, the hearth goddess Vesta was honored in the festival of Vestalia.

In Greece, this day was sacred to Dionysus, the god of wine and fertility. Rhea was also honored, the mother of the gods and of earth.

Every four years on this day, an observance for the goddess Athena took place in ancient Greece.

July 10th Holda, Hela, Skadi, Lady Godiva, Knut the Reaper, Goddess Month of Rosea ends

Holda, Hel, and Skadi are Norse goddesses of Niflheim - the underworld.

On this day Lady Godiva rode naked through the marketplace of Coventry, reputedly to shame her husband Leofric, the earl of Chester, into reducing the taxes.

July 11th Theano, Goddess Month of Kerea begins, Kronia

Theano was the wife of Pythagoras, and is regarded as the patroness of vegetarians.

The Greek god Kronos, who presided over time, and the goddess Rhea, the mother of the earth, are honored on this day.

July 12th Luckiest Day of the Year

In some traditions, anyone having the forethought to be born on this day will enjoy good fortune for the rest of their life.

July 13th Birth of Osiris

Today marks the birth of Osiris, the Egyptian god of agriculture, learning, and law.

July 14th Runic half-month of Ur begins, Horus

Ur is primal strength, a time for beginnings.

The Egyptian god Horus is honored on this day by the burning of frankincense.

July 15th **Ides of July, Rowana, Set**

Rowana, the tree goddess, is patroness of the knowledge of runes. The rowan is the tree of protection, and amulets cut from it this day will be particularly effective.

The Egyptian god Set is honored on this day. Set is the god of darkness and magic.

July 17th **Isis**

The Egyptian goddess Isis is honored on this day. Isis is the patroness of loving wives and mothers.

July 18th **Nephtys**

The Egyptian goddess Nephtys is honored on this day. Nephtys is the goddess of death.

July 19th **Adonis, Egyptian New Year**

Today is the mid point of the half year of Adonis' presence in the world, marked by his wedding to Aphrodite.

The ancient Egyptian New Year fall on this day. The Egyptian gods Isis and Osiris were married today.

July 21st **Damo**

Today is the remembrance of the seeress Damo, the daughter of Pythagoras.

July 23rd **Neptunalia and Salacia, Aegir and Ran**

Today is the festival of Neptune, god of the deep, and his wife Salacia, goddess of the salt and the ocean. She is also sacred to mineral springs. Neptune and Salacia are Aegir and Ran in Norse mythology.

July 25th **Furrinalia**

Today is sacred to the goddess of springs and waters.

July 26th **Sleipnir**

Today is the Norse festival of Sleipnir, commemorating Odin's eight-legged horse which could travel from Asgard to Midgard to Utgard. (From heaven, to earth, to the underworld.)

July 27th **Procession of Witches**

The procession of witches takes place on this day in Belgium.

July 28th

Domhnach Chrom Dubh, John Barlycorn

The Irish god Domhnach Chrom Dubh and John Berleycom are associated with grain, which dies at this time by being cut.

July 29th
gins

Thor, the runic half-month of Thorn be-

Today is the festival of th Anglo-Saxon god Thunor and the Norse god Thor. A time of ascendant power and order.

July 31st
Lugnasa

Loki and Sigyn, Lammas Eve, Oidche

Today is the festivalof the Norse god Loki and his consort Sigyn. Loki is the god of strife, discord, and evil. He also presides over tricks and practical jokes.

This is the celtic observance of Oidche Lugnasa, in honor of the sun god Lugh. Lugh is also the patron of sorcery, poetry, history, and carpenters.



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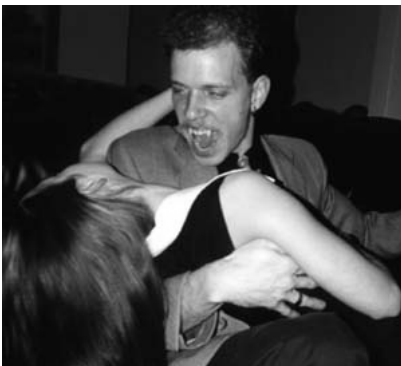
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Ask Jenny!



by **Jenny Slocum**
lilwhip@acrimony.org

Dear Jenny,

What is necrophilia, how common is it, and is it right or wrong?

Guy without a Dictionary

Dear Guy,

Necrophilia is an abnormal fondness for being in the presence of dead bodies. Also called necromania, it is sexual contact with or erotic desire for dead bodies. So basically in a nut shell, you get off getting naked and/or having sex with corpses. It's not only wrong, it's disgusting! Necrophilia is rare. How many people do you hear of anyone getting jiggy with the dead? Ewwwww. Just ewwwwww. I am creeped out thinking about it.

Dear Jenny,

How do I get my girlfriend to quit spending all of my money?!?! She is beautiful and I love her, but she doesn't work (except for driving to the mall with my credit card) and it is seriously impacting my bank account and our relationship.

Broke for Beauty

Dear Broke,

Your girlfriend will only do what you allow her to do. Is she a stripper, or a kept woman? What I mean, is she only around for your money? Tell her you're not her banker. Let her know it is not financially possible for you to dole out your money, or pay off a large credit card bill every month. If she loves you, you have nothing to worry about. If she leaves because of it, you are better off.

Dear Jenny,

Should a girl go all the way on Prom night?

Luv,
Dancing queen

Dear Queeny,

Have you already been "All the way"? If so, my answer does not matter. If you're still a virgin (and kudos if so), I say no. If you have waited all these years, wait a few more until you are married. Then you have fewer concerns with being a teen than your friends do. You don't have to worry about teen pregnancy, catching a venereal disease, or coping with the emotions that come from sex. Keep in mind, guys LOVE the virgin. And most, more than most, respect the fact that you are. It's a total turn on for them. Just be patient. Do not try to grow up so soon, or in one night.

Dear Jenny,

Can I have your phone number?

Your Lover

Dear Lover,

Well sure! I ALWAYS give my number out to people I:

A) Don't know

B) Email me

So here it is: 1-713-869-4902. I'll wait for your call.

Dear Jenny,

Every night I have bad dreams. Not nightmares, just bad dreams. What can I do to stop them?

Snow White

Looking for a new hobby?

Candle making is simple and fun. Make candles for yourself or others.



<http://www.acrimony.org/candles>

Dear Snow White,

Relaxation is a must, as is maintaining good and steady sleeping methods. As you fall asleep, pay attention to the kind of thoughts going through your mind. This will usually be a clue as to what your dreams are going to be about. Also, eat a well balanced diet. Poor nutrition is a very common cause for dream recall failure. Never eat heavy before going to bed. I found the following web page for you to peruse. Sleep well!!

<http://www.dreammoods.com/cgibin/dreambank.pl?search=catdream1&method=exact&header=dreamid>



Jenny's column is run exclusively in Acrimony. Email your question to her at lilwhip@acrimony.org

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Horoscopes

by Michael Ramses



ARIES (March 21 - April 19): You feel like you're backed into a corner. It's not the most desirable feeling either. The question is, how did you get here? It would be helpful if you looked past the turn and saw the road ahead. The problem with being an Aries is you're always rushing in. You'll get out of this predicament okay... After a little work and wiggling. However this time, take knowledge from the experience and don't get into the same situation again.



TAURUS (April 20 - May 20): Boy was last month refreshing. You experienced an unusual closeness with family. This is always special to a Taurus, but last month it seemed to be more important. This month the luster fades a bit, but try to remember the importance of family and build upon what was established last month. You'll be much happier in the long run.



GEMINI (May 21 - June 20): You drifted apart from someone you love. It's time to set sail and head toward them. You allowed the fracture to happen, and it's up to you to repair it. On a different note, there awaits a financial opportunity for you if you're ready (or able) to take the risk. Don't be afraid. This could pay off big.



CANCER (June 21 - July 22): Last month was hard, very hard, for you. Work seemed to overwhelm you and it looked as if there were no end in sight. Things calm down a little this month, but there is still a lot to do. If you're steadfast (and most Cancer's are) you do just fine. Keep your eye on the brass ring.



LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22): Your birthday is coming up. Most Leo's deal with this just fine, but if you're that Lion that dwells rather than pounces you might be in for a rough patch. Getting older isn't a big deal. It happens a little bit every day. Most likely though, you're the Lion that pounces. You'll head into your next year in full stride, ready to hurdle any obstacle in your path.



VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22): The virgin is said to be gentle but look out when the virgin is mad! You're going to need to watch your temper this month. It will feel like things are being heaped upon you. It's going to get thick, and it's going to get hard. You'll be challenged at work, you'll be challenged at home, and you'll even be challenged at the supermarket. Keep your head on your shoulders and you'll get through everything just fine.



LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22): Sometimes you're a little harsher than you intend to be. You'd help yourself out if you remembered this right before you started yelling. Stresses will come to bear this month so try to be aware of your harsh tongue. Those close to you, although knowing your temperament, will most likely take you too much to heart. The result will be many hurt feelings. Over time, feelings hurt once too often cannot be healed. Remember that once something is said, it cannot be unsaid.



SCORPIO (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21): Look to a close Cancer to help this month when the going gets rough. Although not in your nature to accept help, this Cancer is in a unique position to render aid. You could do it alone, but why put yourself through such difficulty when there is someone there willing and able to assist.



SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21): Recent reevaluations of your life have left you wondering. It's time to stop wondering and start doing. You are positioned to make several advances in your life. You need only apply yourself and move forward. Wherever your life needs work, put forth your greatest effort. You will see positive results, as this is the best month for Sagittarius to advance change.



CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19): For some time you've been working toward a long-term goal. You are starting to see results from your efforts. Keep on with what you've been doing. This will appear that will try to distract you, don't let it happen. It may be a new relationship, or a new project at work. Whatever the case, keep focused and stay on the path you are on.



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18): Sometimes people forget what's really important in life. This is especially true of Aquarius. Friends and family may feel like you've been drifting away lately. That may or may not be the case, but you need to reassure them and let them know you still love them. The summertime continues to be a good period for Aquarius. You can go far this year.



PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20): Things shape up a little better this month for Pisces. Someone who you've overlooked in the past catches your eye. It's a good time to make new plans for the future. A lot will be changing with you in the second half of the year. Things will most likely work out well; you just need to be aware that change is coming. A family member with whom you have been fighting offers a truce.



Michael Ramses has been a horoscope writer for over 12 years. His speciality is personal natal charts. Look for his column right here in Acrimony each month.

<http://www.MichaelRamses.com>

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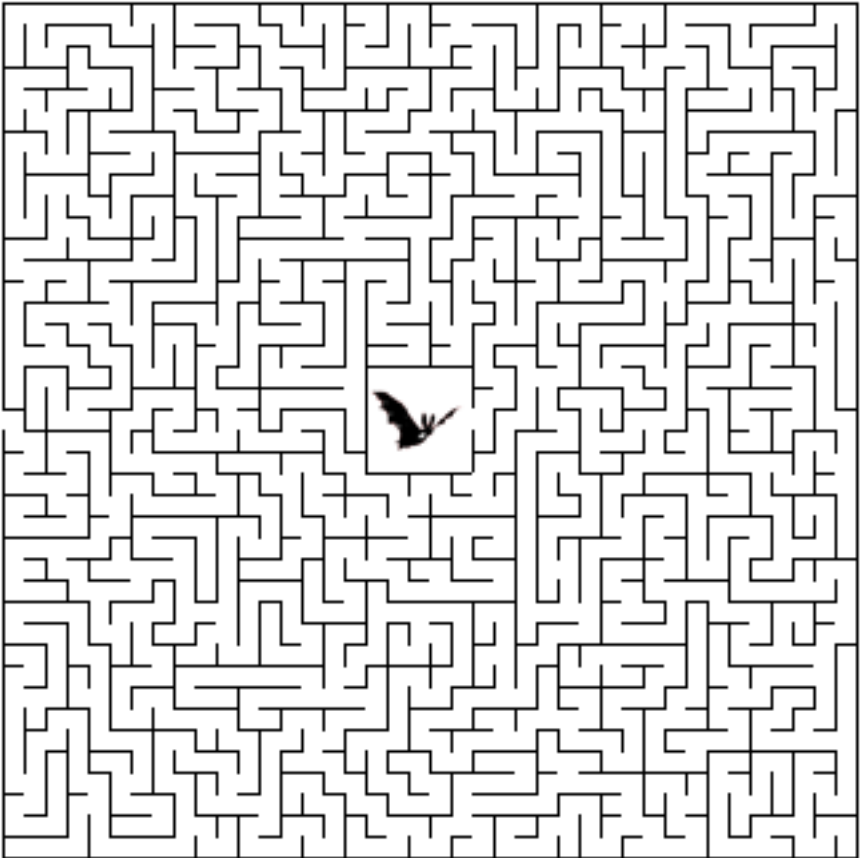
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