

A silent symphony of screams

by Shayne Cunningham

In a little drinking place in a small town or a big city, a man at a barstool tries to drown his fear in beer only to come home and have them re-emerge. All the hate and fear and anger bottled up inside him since his "childhood" come slamming out of his mouth like a runaway freight train bursting from a long, dark tunnel where he learned to hate, punish and abuse those he loved. He teaches his rules with his fists, devouring his only source of love. He is a mishmash of inconsistencies, with a kiss and a hug one minute, a fist or an open palm the next minute. He is loud, so loud, loud enough to kill. At these times he is but a manifestation of hate, called up from his childhood nightmares.

She walked with a stutter amid the clutter because her nerves were clogged with fear, eyes blurred by tears, battered and tattered, but still... not shattered. The shocking stillness of the chaotic calm, enveloping her abbreviated thoughts.

Determined though she might be to better the situation, it is but fragile lines of official force that she wields, then yields to his promise of "Never again, honey, I love you." The aborted notion to end the aimless devotion and thoughtless motion.

The punched-in jaw happened suddenly, as do most incidents of violence. She realised that fragments of her life were being stolen, especially when hospital stay was required. She was always day-worn and night torn, tired and mired in the quicksand of our civilization. Now,

some months later, her body's on the mend but her mind's still around the bend.

She also realizes that she wasn't the only one, that thought she was the only one. Now she sits sometimes, and stares out the window at the myriad of other apartment boxes, houses or mansions, knowing that there are many other women in her position, being berated, abused, maybe even killed. A silent symphony of screams mostly unheard of by the newspaper readers, the voters, and of course, the politicians. The neighbours and police hear it, but all too often say that they can't interfere in a domestic dispute.

True, this account is depressing, but it's also reality and there's nothing more depressing than that.



DANIELLE BOUDREAU

A day in the life of a bagel

by 'Nis

You know, we bagels are one of the many wonders of the modern world. We may not be quite as popular as croissants (those damn croissants! Snooty little half-moon puffy bits of nothing, why I oughtta...), but we have forged a place in a Canadian coffee shops comparable to... coffee.

Look, if you're not interested, you can eat me. You really can. Some nutty chick at the Gazette demanded my story, and I'm here. I'm just a plain bagel, you know. Not much without some cream cheese or sesame seeds or, if you're absolutely desperate and without any class whatsoever, peanut butter and jelly. That's just the way it is. Some people get born people, some get born doughnuts (greasy, filthy, sugary, lumps of crappy human skin and hair bonded by 350 degree fat... WOW do doughnuts EVER disgust me!), and some get born bagels.

Do you have a problem with that?

Well I do. I wanna know things. I wanna know what the FREAKING cinnamon-raisin bagels are always do-

ing hiding in the back of the store while the rest of us are stuck out on display like cheap porno. I wanna know why I always get jammed in between two "all dressed" bagels (what the hell am I? Half-dressed? Naked?), so that people who like "all-dressed" take an "all-dressed" bagel, and people who DON'T like "all-dressed" won't take ME because I SMELL LIKE AN "ALL-DRESSED" BAGEL!

Sesame-seed bagels. Hmph. What's so great about seeds anyway? Why are they there? Do you people TASTE them? Do you like the TEXTURE? What are those little black and blue seeds on those other bagels? Ever wonder what makes them STICK? No bagel has any kind of grip, let me tell you. Put us on a slope, we roll right over the edge. Ever try to spread something on the outside of a bagel? That's so cruel! I suppose you'd then eat us alive without killing us first? Well anyway, it can't be done, except on those seedy bagels, and I'll tell you why.

They're aliens. Aliens hitching a ride on some unsuspecting and helpless bagel to the aliens' secret paradise: your bowel. That's right. Your small intestine is the land of milk and honey to these aliens, where they can laugh and play and feed and, yes, even reproduce! Don't

worry, though. They've been doing it for centuries. Getting upset now is just a waste of time.

Regardless of aliens, croissants (OOOOH, I HATE CROISSANTS), and doughnuts (I can't believe people compare bagels to doughnuts. They're so DOUGHy. Just think of that moronic Homer Simpson... "DOUGH!" and he eats doughnuts too! Do you want to be like him? Intellectuals eat bagels. That's why they're in university coffee shops... wait a minute... egg, chicken, egg, chicken... I'll have to think about that. Incidentally, one needs eggs to make decent bagels), life (was that parenthesized bit too long? let's back up: regardless of aliens, croissants, and doughnuts, life...) on Earth is significantly more pleasurable due to the existence of bagels. Of course, due to the existence of humans, life for bagels is considerably short. We don't usually get to be this long-winded. Nope. No sir. Or learn to type. That was tough.

Wait a minute... one of the seeds on the "all-dressed" bagel is coming to life! He's summoning a... a horde of aliens! That might not seem alarming to you, but the only place one finds hordes

of aliens is in the gut of an obese human. I hear him coming. I know it's a him, because... well, I can't explain it, bagels know these things! Wait... I recognize his footsteps! It's that really fat guy with the Harley-Davidson sweatshirt, complete with sweat, greasy hair, and a stupid grin. There's only 6 of us left! He's going to eat us all! No! It's not fair! I want to be eaten by an intellectual! I don't want to be digested slowly in a stomach filled with doughnuts, beer, asphalt, and raw meat! Oh the horror! Between vegetarians, alcoholics, "meat 'n potatoes people", bulimics, and those park people who sometimes rip us up and feed us to water-fowl, it's difficult for a bagel to meet a proper end. Well, it's only been vaguely irritating talking to you. I go now in the hopes that, when the bagel is gone, the hole can go on (it's a stupid belief, I know. The logic is that a hole that isn't plugged or filled can never truly be destroyed. But how much of us exists in the hole, and how much in the flour? If I find out, I'll get back to you.)