

Just like the zombie apocalypse, this tasty collection of terrifying tales is best enjoyed with a nice pint of your favorite beer or beverage as the horror slowly sinks in while you read it.

I have joyfully unpacked five stories of eighteen to review:

The first tale, *Not Working* by Russ Bickerstaff lulls the reader in with a false sense of secure, “Oh, nothing is wrong here,” mindset which is only amplified by the bored sluggishness of the employee as the mysterious dark-haired woman disappears into the night - **then** the repetition of his day and the same event hits like a temperature drop, ending chillingly on the words, **“Hopefully I won’t wake up late this morning, or last night or whatever.”**

I appreciate the mysterious atmosphere and relatability to the setting the story had also afforded and hope that Mr. Bickerstaff continues to delight and chill with his craftsmanship.

The next tale in this collection, *Factor Fifty* by Tom Brennan is a lovely, suspenseful read. The immediate thought that rolled through my head in the first paragraph was, “Are there *more* vampires in the town to the point where the counter girl innately knows to press the panic button when Yaro walks into the store or was he just an outlier? Is her agent a vampire too, or is she just *really* tired?” The story keeps you on your toes and sticks with you until the last line.

The next tale, *The Last Sunday* by Patrick Tumblety, starts and sounds like a very emotional western and that feeling carries it throughout the story up until the bartender begins telling his customer what’s on the bar TV. Then immediately the reader is taken into a sci-fi movie’s worth of compelling backstory as the Heralds are battling sea monsters and terrifying Leviathans - which in a lesser work, would be jarring and off-putting. The last line is also very compelling with the yellow ticket stub.

The next tale, *The Night Customers* by Zachary Rosenberg is a sincerely gripping masterpiece and to explain why in detail would just spoil the thrill of it. In short, if you want to see a gang of teenage skinhead punks get rightfully swallowed alive and justice be served, this is the story for you.

Swimming seven pages ahead for a moment for this next tale, *Ed's Worm Hole* from Laura Garrison gives you the perfect amount of maritime deliciousness that only a combo fishing shop and diner's worldbuilding provides - from the restaurant's lack of air conditioning leading to the window being wide open sweeping Lars (the middle brother of the trio of Hubert and Rusty plus a red-hot-fry chewin' daredevil) out the window and rolls him down the grassy plot hill, kickstarting the mystery when more and more drunken souls launch out window after window like fish only to land like suckers on an octopus creature.

Did I mention that there's a mutant octopus and an actual time wormhole? There's a time wormhole and a cool monster octopus called Suckerbitch. *Ed's Worm Hole* will keep you hooked from beginning to end, as will *Open All Night* in general.

So grab some snacks and pints with friends, lock your doors and windows, ignore the eerie moaning outside and log onto www.atomiccarnivalbooks.com to order today!

