



So What Is Novelleta?

Novelleta Magazine is a compilation of literary and artistic work created by the student body of Marwayne, these works can range from paintings to essays and everything in-between!

So How Can I Place My Work in Novelleta?

Well it's really simple, so let's say you have a poem you made for Language Arts Class, to submit that to Novelleta you just have to send it to us via email. To do this write "Submission" and your grade in the subject area of your email then just attach a file that has the poem you want to submit. Also note that you have to put your grade and name in the email. If you do not wish us to include your name and/or grade in publication just tell us inside the email and we will not include them in Novelleta. Please understand that we here at Novelleta have a limit to how much we can put in one issue so if yours doesn't make it into the next issue don't worry, we will showcase your work sometime in the near future!

Please note that artists will have to submit a digital copy of their artwork for it to be published.

So Are There limits To What I Can Submit?

Well we do operate through the Buffalo Trail public school system so authors will have to work under school rules. Those rules are:

1. No content or themes that could be taken as offensive like profanity or discrimination
2. No explicit violence like blood or gore
3. No Sexual themes

Novelleta will contact authors if their submission breaks any of the above rules via email. Authors will have the chance to work out any content that breaks the rules and resubmit it at any time. Submissions that break the above rules and are not fixed and re-submitted by the author will not be showcased in Novelleta. Other than the above rules we will only ask that authors should spell check their work.

What If I Have Something To Say About The Magazine?

We'd be honored to have people giving their two cents about our magazine! If you have any questions, suggestions, or anything else just email us at NovelletaMagazine@gmail.com, but please put "Comment" in the subject area of the email so we don't misinterpret your email as a submission!

A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

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I was face to face with the beast; he eyed me like a lion about to pounce on his prey. As I gripped my rifle as tightly as I could, he circled around me, waiting for a chance to strike. I knew that I only had one chance to get him before he would tear me to shreds. It felt like an eternity, with both of us trying to wait for the other to slip-up. The beast was the largest animal I had seen before or since; his breath escaped him like a cloud of mist in that cold December night. I knew only one of us would come out of that chasm in one piece, and like the arrogant youngster I was, I thought it would be me... I was dead wrong.

“Francis, stop trying to scare the kids!” yelled mother as she emerged from the dining room. “All you do when you come here is try to spook my children with your old made-up stories!”

“White-Mist is not made up! I fought him; he was the reason I couldn’t move for a year!” shouted back Uncle Francis as he rose from his chair. Uncle Francis was the family hunter, and he had recently come back from a two-year hunt in Prussia to help investigate missing livestock in the area.

“Oh stop spouting that nonsense; you broke your bones in that fall into the ravine, not because of some wolf. No wolf could break bones and not cut the skin!” Uncle Francis waved Mother off while he stormed out of the house. Mother shook her head and gave out a large sigh. “When will that man just give it up already? I swear his ego can’t accept his own faults.” Now I love Mother, but Uncle was special; he only came around once in a blue moon. I chased after Uncle, and maybe I shouldn’t have. When I came out of the house and turned into the yard, I saw something strange - my sister’s chickens running around in a frenzy.

“Get back inside the house; it could still be here!” screamed Uncle Francis as he stood over an injured chicken. I froze. What was happening? Then, like a coat of lead was draped over me, I felt a presence from behind, like the eyes of a demon had made contact with my soul. My body shook like I was in the middle of an earthquake where even my uncle’s screams could not reach me... until the feeling stopped as quickly as it had begun. The last thing I could remember was becoming aware that the weight had disappeared, and then I felt my body hit the ground.

I awoke lying in my bed. I realized that it was night, as there was no light shining from the window above me. All I could see was the dim light from the kitchen seeping from the cracks in my door. I rubbed my forehead, trying to remember what had happened to me. Then, like a lightning strike, I remembered the presence and uncle. I shifted out of my bed onto the cold floor below and walked over to my door. Before I could open the door I overheard my mother talking to someone. The words were muffled, and I could only make out a few words. It appeared like she was talking about someone. I gently placed my ear over a crack in the door to hear what she was saying.

“I swear that the animal will take its last breath when Francis gets a hold of it! This is the sixth time that the creature took livestock this month!”

“What was it?” asked another voice. I realized that Mother must be talking to our neighbor inside the kitchen.

“Francis judged by the tracks that it was a wolf of all things! It must have been fast to get two chickens and run off before we realized. But I can’t believe a wolf would be behind this. They only live in the middle of the forest! Why would it come all the way out here? At least Francis is going to dispose of it in the morning.” I stopped listening and walked back to my bed. I was trying to understand how a simple wolf could have made me freeze like a statue; I’ve hunted bigger animals, and I never felt anything like that. I didn’t even see it! I needed answers, so I fetched my black-powder rifle and coat from my cupboard and crawled out of my bedroom through the window.

The forest was just outside of town, so it took no time at all to get there. I looked up to the sky; the moon was out, so the bright blue light it gave off would be enough to see. I loaded my gun and pulled the hammer back. My reasoning for going out into the forest at night looking for deadly predators was this: if I could kill the wolf, then maybe I could learn if it was responsible for freezing me in place. I was rather stupid back then. But I pressed on, unaware of what was to come. I walked slowly and carefully through the trees and brush, not knowing where to look for a wolf, but rather electing to hopefully stumble on one without alerting it to my presence.

It must have been an hour or two of walking at least before I stopped and realized that up through the canopy, clouds were rolling over my only light source, the moon. My vision slowly narrowed until the dark completely took my sight. I stood in place, trying to think of what I would do without sight, when I heard rustling behind me. I swung my gun to where the noise was, and in a frantic panic I pulled the trigger, but I heard no gunpowder go off.

“Whoa, little girly, calm down. What were you thinking, trying to shoot me unprovoked like that? Did you not even think of asking who was behind you?” I realized that the voice was a man’s and that I could feel a weight pressing down on my gun. I lowered it and heard a re-cocking sound come from my rifle. “That hurt my hand you know; your gun’s hammer must have made a mark.” I realized that he had stopped my hammer from hitting the powder; I couldn’t believe how someone could do that so quickly in the dark.

“Who are you?” I asked.

“Who am I? Who are you? I find you wandering around the forest at night of all places! What could possibly have compelled you to do this, girly? You realize there have been wolves killing livestock lately, and that this is where they live?”

“I-I’m sorry, my name is Clara.” By the sound of his voice the man must have been a younger adult, and he was taller than me. “I’m hunting... wolves.” There was a pause before the man spoke again, like he was trying to gather his thoughts.

“How old are you, Miss Clara?”

"I'm almost eighteen," I replied.

"Then you should have rational thoughts at your age," the man scolded. "How about we make a deal? I'll take you to where you'll find wolves, but in return you have to listen to what I say along the way with an open mind, alright?" That was quite the deal, and I didn't want to stay in the dark alone any longer, so what else could I do but accept?

We were walking in complete darkness; I could only follow the man by sound alone. He was only five paces in front of me, but I had a hard time making out his footsteps. It was as if he did not step on one branch.

"Excuse me... sir? When I asked for your name, you brushed me off without giving it. May I ask for it again?" I tried to ask as I narrowly escaped a low-hanging branch made visible by touch alone.

"What a polite girl... You may call me Ashur, but know that I have many names and titles." What a peculiar man he was, with an even more peculiar name. At the time I assumed he must have been a foreigner, as Ashur matched no French name I knew of.

"Um, Mister Ashur, you scolded me for being in the forest, but I can't help but wonder why you are in the forest too?" I heard the sound of feet landing on earth and wondered what Mister Ashur was doing before I fell over a log. Mister Ashur came back and helped me up to my feet.

"I would rather be called just Ashur, Miss Clara. Mister would infer that I was worthy of respect. I would ask you to hold off that title until I am deserving of it." Ashur took hold of my hand. "It's best that you hold onto me for now; you can't see and you don't know your way around this forest either." He started leading me forward. "I guess you could call me a hermit, as I live in this forest." That broke my foreigner theory and created a lot more questions.

"I did not know that there was someone living here," I replied.

"No one from the town does. It has been a long time since I came out of the forest, and they have all forgotten the past." Ashur leapt over a log and I followed suit.

"But you must be scared to live here, right, knowing that there are killer wolves running around?"

"Let me ask you something, Miss Clara. You came here to kill wolves because they have been killing livestock, yes?" I thought about his question and decided to keep my fainting story to myself. I answered yes. "Have you ever thought about why the wolves kill? Or why any other animal kills for that matter?"

"For food right?" I stated, while side-stepping out of the way of a tree.

"That is only half correct. Animals kill because they are hungry or to defend themselves or their group. Not every animal kills for food, but each thing on this living earth, big or small, knows to

defend itself when in danger. Even humans. They kill for food and clothes, but also to keep themselves and others safe from danger. That is exactly what you are trying to do also - kill the wolves so that your family has food on the table. And no one can say that is wrong; that is why I am not stopping you. But wolves also kill for that precise reason.”

“What do you mean?” I questioned as I tried to piece together where Ashur was going with this.

“Have you ever stopped to ask why the wolves are killing livestock now when they have never done so before? Humans are different than other animals - they do not know when to stop taking. This forest, it has been standing tall for well over a hundred years and has brought sanctuary to the animals inside its walls. But sadly, it has been slowly losing ground to the human settlements around it, and I cannot detest those who are taking the forest’s trees for shelter. But when the forest loses one hundred animal homes for every one human home, it causes damage to everything relying on those trees. With the loss of every tree, the forest loses more and more creatures that needed that tree to live. It hurts me to see that, because humans can live in shelters for much less. This overuse of resources causes much more loss than is necessary. And now it has come to a point where even the once great wolf has to stoop to stealing from the human settlements. Do you see now, Miss Clara? The wolves kill your livestock because that is the only thing they can turn to. I can see why that is wrong, but is it wrong for a living creature to do anything it can to keep itself a step away from death?”

“But when it threatens the livelihood of others, they have to defend themselves from death too, right?” Ashur stopped in his tracks for just a moment.

“Yes, that is exactly right, Miss Clara. I’m glad you have been listening.” Ashur continued forward. “That is why I cannot raise my finger to humans taking a stand like you. They are entitled to their lives just as much as the wolves. But when do we stop fighting each other over who deserves to live past the other, when we are both equally free to live our lives in this world?” He paused for my answer, but I did not have one. “That question is not just for you, Miss Clara, but it is one that you will have to answer soon. Your country’s customs suggest that you are too young to answer a question like this, but in my opinion you qualify more than enough to tackle a question of this magnitude. There’s only thing left for you to do, and that is to answer it.” Ashur became silent; I tried to go over his question looking for clues to what he wanted me to say. “You hold the gun, Miss Clara, so only you can answer this question. Kill for the protection of your livestock and your family, or let go and hope you can approach this situation another way, without spilling blood.”

“I’ve been meaning to ask, Ashur. You told me you lived in this forest and that you had not come down in a long time, long enough for the townspeople to forget about you, so how do you have so much information about wolves taking our livestock? Uncle Francis only just found out that wolves were behind it.”

“What a sharp listener,” whispered Ashur under his breath. We stopped, and he let go of my hand. “Here we are, Miss Clara; this is where you will find your wolf.” I realized that the dark was fading away and I could start making out silhouettes. We were in a clearing with trees

surrounding us in a circular fashion. I could not make out Ashur's face, but I knew that he was almost as tall as Uncle at around six feet. "Now tell me, Miss Clara, will you kill your wolf?"

"I don't know!" I stated while I shook my head from side to side. I noticed that there was a lake to the left of Ashur, and I realized that the moon was emerging as it reflected its bright blue light off the water. I could now see through the dark! I turned to Ashur to see his face, but instead I was met with a giant white wolf in the place where he had stood. It was large and towered over my small body, its breath spewing forth like white mist in a cold December night.

"It is time for you to answer my question for yourself! Will you kill me and protect your livelihood?" As my body succumbed to the familiar feeling I felt in the yard, I realized that I knew this voice... It was Ashur's!

Don't Wait For Me

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Some say that high school relationships will last a lifetime. John and Victoria were no exception. Every day they would say I love you to each other, eat together at lunch, defend each other in arguments, and were never more than five feet apart. Even the more “romantic” couples stated that John and Victoria were a pair to be admired.

The two promised each other that as soon as they were out of high school, they would have a beautiful wedding. Victoria had everything planned out. Right down to the napkin ring colors. In his past time, John would go to work at the local grocery store and save up money for a ring. His father gave him a large portion of land to build a house for him and his family. Over the summer of his final years of high school, John would build onto his foundation and dream of his soon-to-be wedding day.

Graduation came and the wedding plans were set. The band was hired, the guests invited, and the date set. Everything was going to be exactly the way it was arranged. A few days before the wedding, Victoria came down with a fever. “No reason to postpone the wedding,” her mother would tell her. One minor setback wouldn’t make a difference. It was nothing to worry about.

The wedding day came and went with no engagement. Doctors had quarantined Victoria’s house because they didn’t know why she wasn’t getting better. Her ginger hair was ruffled and oily, her skin pale and cold, and her sapphire blue eyes cloudy and glazed over. “It will be okay, my child. You will be better soon and be happily married,” her mother would tell her while wiping her forehead with a damp, warm washcloth. But Victoria didn’t get any better. She passed away a few days later. John was just putting the final touches on their new home when his father and a priest came to break the news.

Poor John was devastated. His skin lost its color; his dark brown eyes looked lifeless and filled with sorrow. At the funeral, everyone shed tears, except John. He just stood, watching two men lower the casket into the grave. He wished that he was in it with Victoria. At least then they would still be together.

For the next few days, John sat in the middle of his newly built house, motionless and silent. He didn’t sleep, he didn’t eat, and he didn’t even go to the washroom. There was no need for it. He was like an empty shell. It was only when his father came to visit him that John actually moved from his position.

“John, you need to pull yourself together. What you’re doing isn’t healthy. I know you’re mourning over Victoria’s death, but you need to move on.”

“She meant everything to me. You have no idea how I feel.”

That night, John lay motionless in his bed, staring at the ceiling, his mind racing on what his father had told him. How could he move on? Victoria was his life. She meant everything to him. Now that she was gone, he had nothing to live for. At that moment, a mysterious bright light came from outside his window. John got out of bed and looked out into the darkness of night. An illuminated figure was walking across the field of grass towards the house. As it drew nearer, John began to make out the details of the object. Long, straight ginger hair, stunning sapphire blue eyes - it was Victoria. She was wearing her wedding gown.

Was John dreaming? He didn’t care to find out. He ran down the stairs and out the door, not even bothering to put on his shoes. There she was, standing fifty feet from his grasp. John ran towards her with tears in his eyes and open arms. He got within an arm’s reach of her, and then she vanished. Frantically looking for his beloved, he noticed a sound that began to emanate from all around him. It was the sound of a train roaring down its tracks, growing louder and louder. How strange. There weren’t any train tracks for miles around. Yet it was like a train was right in front of him.

Just then, Victoria appeared again in the distance. She seemed to want John to follow her. He took off toward her, calling out her name. It seemed pointless though. He ran as hard as he could, but Victoria never got closer. Suddenly the sounds of the train from nowhere became an animated object. A train running over earth was right in front of Victoria's glowing body. Now it seemed John was getting somewhere. She began to get closer the more he ran this time. When he got to within ten feet of Victoria and the moving train, she disappeared. John dropped at the spot where she once had been and watched the train speed into the darkness with a blast of its whistle, vanishing with no evidence of ever being there.

The next morning, John woke up in the middle of the field with a grasshopper on his elbow. Remembering what had happened, he got up and looked around for his path back to his house. It turned out that he had run at least a mile from the handle of his back door. John entered his house and crawled into bed for a rest to make up for the time he had spent out in the field.

The same occurrence happened for another three nights with the same results. Not knowing what to think of it, John went to his father's house to tell him what had happened. The priest was there when John arrived.

"Whatever you do, you must not get on that train," Father Stanley warned with a stern look in his eyes.

"Forgive me, Father. I don't understand what you mean."

"That being you have been following is a banshee. An evil spirit of a departed female that has never lived long with their loved ones and exists to take those loved ones with them to the afterlife. If you get on the train, it will be just as much a sin as self-murder." With that, John lost it. He left the building and drove back to his own house.

Later that night, John sat in the field, waiting for his beloved Victoria. Then she appeared along with the train. Something was different this time. The train began to stop, and Victoria's smile went away. She looked at John and shook her head as if to tell John not to follow. This change in heart came as a shock to John, and he followed her onto the stairs on the side of the train car. Looking in the window, he could see Victoria sitting on a seat looking very upset. At that moment, she began to change. She was decomposing at a rapid rate right in front of John. Her skin turned to muscle and then to bone. Her hair fell out and the wedding dress that she wore turned brown, and then she fell to dust.

Frightened by the sight of her disassembled body, John fell off the stairs and struggled to his feet. Looking back at the window, Victoria looked down at him. She was back to normal, smiling. She didn't want him to die for her. She wanted him to live on. It was her time to pass. The train began to move away. John smiled and waved goodbye to his Victoria with tears rolling down his face. As the train vanished with one final whistle, Victoria's voice called out to John.

"Don't wait for me."

The Soul Thief Part 1

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Falling, that was all I could remember. The sheer coldness I felt inside was like nothing I had experienced before. I look up to see a shadow holding a box and an orb with my name engraved on it. The shadow placed the orb inside the box, and the shadows around me consumed me...

I awoke with a start that startled the man beside me. "You're awake finally!" The man said, handing me a drink of water.

I took it reluctantly; I took a sip without taking my eyes off of him. I placed the cup down and looked around; I was in a tent with dust and sand rolling in under it. "You got a name, stranger?" he asked.

"I don't know, I can't remember," I replied. The man stood up and grabbed a necklace and a set of ripped clothes from the table.

"My friend and I found you out in the desert wearing these clothes and this necklace; the writing on the necklace is like nothing I've ever seen," he said.

I took it from him and I recognized the writing, but I wasn't sure how. It read "Dace." I quickly put the necklace on. "Who are you?" I asked.

"My name's Guido, nice to meet you. As for the where, in case you're wondering, you're in the Aganon desert in the kingdom of Eremos," Guido replied.

The name meant nothing to me, but I did remember something. The word "Soul box."

Another man came into the tent, a person with much more girth to him than Guido. He seemed to be in a good mood. He carried with him a satchel. When he put it down, he turned to me and smiled. "Well, look who's finally up. Why do I always miss when the person finally wakes up? How do you feel?" he asked, washing his hands in a bowl.

"Like I was just hit by a mallet," I joked.

"Well my name's Teagan; welcome to our little paradise." He smiled at me and then he asked, "So, you figure out his name yet?" Guido looked over at me, and I showed them the necklace.

"It says Dace, so I guess I'm Dace. Nice to meet you, Teagan and Guido, but I must be going," I responded.

"Whoa, you're not going anywhere! You just woke up, and you're in no state to move right now." Guido stopped me from getting up. "You get some rest now."

I laid back down and Guido and Teagan moved to the exit of the tent. "Thank you," I said as they left.

"No problem," Guido replied. With that I drifted off to sleep.

I saw a temple in the sands shrouded in darkness... but illuminated by the light. The hallways were dark and covered in sand and dust. Then, there it was... the box I kept remembering, the soul box. But what did it mean! WHAT DID IT MEAN! The mystery of the box would drive me insane if I didn't figure it out. Then I saw it - the cloud of shadows heading towards me. I tried to run, but I was rooted to the spot, completely immobile...

I awoke from my slumber and looked around. *Just a dream*, I thought to myself. I got up and saw that it was night-time; Guido and Teagan were asleep on the floor beside the bed that I was in. I got up and washed my face in the bowl in the corner of the tent, and as I looked into the mirror I saw the box on the altar where I had seen it before. I gathered supplies from the tent and was careful not to wake Guido and Teagan, and then I noticed the sword on the table beside the exit of the tent. On the blade I saw the same wording as on the necklace; this was "my" sword. I picked it up and felt the weight of it, and memories returned and I dropped the sword. My hands were shaking and I left the sword there; I exited the tent and set out into the desert.

The trek felt like it went on forever, and the turban and towel I had on over my face and head didn't help against the harsh weather of the desert. I had no idea where I was going, but somehow I did. I fell down a hill and face-planted into the sand. I popped my head out and spat out some sand. *Well, that was embarrassing; good thing nobody saw that.* I looked around and then I saw it, clear as day - it was the temple from my dreams. I stumbled through the sand, and sure enough the light that illuminated it started to fade and soon darkness enveloped me. *This is insane; why am I even here?* I pressed forward and found a torch. *Good, I'll need this.* I grabbed the torch and journeyed further inside the temple. The hallways were long and dark, and the sand was getting in my shoes; it was also hotter in these hallways than it was outside. Then I heard laughter come from down the halls. "Who's there!" I yelled. The laughter grew louder and louder. I ran down the hallway; my breathing increased. I came to a large hall, and then the floor in front of me gave way and revealed a pit of spikes. The laughter stopped, and the shadow from my dream appeared.

"Now, is that any way to greet an old friend?" the shadow asked. "Coming in without knocking, not even letting me know you are here?"

The shadow spoke as though a thousand beings were all speaking at once. A door closed behind me and I was locked in. "You have come for the soul box, and then you will be buried down here, for I am one of the seven reapers!" he yelled triumphantly.

"Is that meant to impress me?" I asked. Then, without thinking, I jumped for one of the walls and started running along the wall. When I started to fall, I jumped to the adjacent wall. This went on until I reached the other side. The shadow appeared there and laughed.

"You think you have won? You are severely mistaken; this is but a taste of what lies in store for you!" With that, the shadow disappeared.

What am I doing? This is completely insane. Despite my reluctance I pressed on and entered another hallway. This one was a well-lit one, and there was the entrance to the next section on the other side. Equipment lay on the floor along the tunnel, and then the wall behind started to move towards me, so I started moving forwards. Then I broke into a sprint as the door at the other side started to close. *I'm not gonna make it!* I grabbed a discarded round metal shield and chucked it into the gap in the door, and it got stuck there. Taking my opportunity, I rolled under the door. The door cracked the shield in two, and it slammed with a *Thud!*

I moved forwards, not trusting anything in the temple any more. I came into a large room that contained three walkways with three statues on each one: one red, one yellow, and the other blue. There was an inscription on the wall. It read, "To the most worthy goes the crown, to the beggar goes the food, and to the soldier goes the sword." This confused me until I noticed the pile of supplies on the ground: a sword, a bag of fruit, and a crown. There was no indication which statue was which, so I had to guess. I placed the bag of fruit in front of the yellow, the sword in front of the red, and the crown in front of the blue... the statues came to life and picked up their respective items and then they spoke in unison: "You who'eth solved the first riddle will now solve another. Which statue will lead you to your destination? Two will lie and one will tell the truth, but the truth could also be told through a lie." *This riddle is very strange; which statue should I choose?*

"And if I choose wrong?" I asked.

"Then the darkness will consume you!" they replied. "The path of the beggar, royalty or the soldier," they stated. "You may only choose one." I thought this over for a minute or so, and then asked, "Which path is the right path?" I hoped that this would solve it, because two of them had lied and one told the truth... so the one being truthful will show me the way. The beggar pointed to the soldier, the king pointed to the beggar, and the soldier pointed to the king. *That didn't work.* "Which one of you is being truthful?"

"I am!" the king yelled.

"No, it is I!" the beggar yelled.

"No, 'tis I that am being truthful!" the soldier yelled.

That didn't work. So if two tell a lie, but one is telling the truth but in doing so is telling a lie, how do I tell which one of them is... they're all lying! I turned around and ran out of the room, hoping my guess was right...

I ran into a room instead of the hallway that I would have run into. *Good, I made the right choice. Thank you, blind luck.* I smiled to myself and stepped further into the room. There were three ponds there and a jug of water and the three statues stood behind the ponds, but now they were different. There was a warlord in the red, a diplomat in the blue, and a noble in the yellow. "Another riddle we pose to you: which one of us is more deserved of this water? The last in the land, theoretically." The statues asked this as one.

The blue spoke first. "I require the water to negotiate peace with barbarians; our land is not faring well."

Then the red spoke. "I require the water for my soldiers. Without it, they cannot defend my kingdom."

Then the yellow spoke. "I require the water for my village. Without it, we will all die from dehydration."

"We have spoken!" the statues stated in deep voices.

So the red is out of the question; he is a warlord, so he craves warfare. Which leaves the blue and yellow. The blue needs it for peace... but the yellow needs it for his people. But maybe I don't have to pick just one. I picked up the jug and poured half into yellow's pond and half into blue's. The statues nodded at each other and raised their hands and cried aloud: "This one is worthy of the soul box!" They disappeared, and a passageway opened behind where they were. I entered it and came out into a sort of chapel, but there were no windows or any light. Then there it was... as clear as day, resting atop the altar at the other side of the chapel - the soul box...

I ran for it, but the shadow appeared. "NOOOOOOOOOO!" it yelled. "The soul box is mine, MINE!!!" The floor fell apart, and it revealed a chasm of never-ending darkness. "Stare into the heart of the void. The guardians will not take away what is rightfully MINE!!!" The shadow screamed and saws appeared and started travelling up and down the walls. I ran to the edge of the wall; I began my wall run, but slipped as my head nearly cascaded with a saw, and I fell. I thought it was all over, but then I hit something solid... a small piece of the flooring, but it was glowing blue.

"You have the guardians' blessing; we shall protect you," a voice said in my head. *Great, now I'm going crazy. Can this day get any worse?* A pendulum swung at my head and I narrowly avoided it. "Sigh." *I guess so.* I timed my wall run to avoid the saws and the swinging pendulums. I ran the wall, fell

down, and hit another blue piece of the flooring, but the last piece behind me disappeared. *Great - only one-use flooring.* I dodged another pendulum, but the flooring started to fade, so I started up my wall run again. The walls started to come closer together, so I started jumping back and forth. *I'm gonna make IT!* Then the wall started to fall out in front of me, so I reached the edge and I jumped for it. I flew through the air, and as I was about to reach the altar, I started falling and my face impacted the edge... I started sliding off the edge, clutching for anything to hold myself steady while I was trying to recover from the blow to my face. I was about to fall when my feet hit something... I looked down and saw an outcropping of the broken flooring. *Phew, that was too close.* I hoisted myself up and shook my head clear. I then made my way up the altar and found the soul box. It was like a miniature treasure chest, but it was purple, and instead of a key slot, there was a picture of an eye. I slowly moved towards it and wrapped my hands around the handles on the side. I lifted it; it felt a lot heavier than it should be. The memories flooded back to me... there were seven of these in seven kingdoms, the seven kingdoms of Ontoram. Then the room started to shake, the chapel began to fall apart, and the shadow reappeared and zoomed towards me.

"You shall not leave!" it screamed. A portal opened behind me.

"Go now." I looked at the portal and hesitated. "NOW!" it yelled again. *It's my only option.* I ran into the portal.

I was dumped head first into the sand again... except this time people were there. I popped my head out and saw Teagan and Guido laughing at my misfortune. "Ah, Dace my friend... looks like you had some fun... what is that?!?" he asked, backing up.

"It's a soul box, one of seven; I know what I have to do," I said.

"He is the one!" Guido yelled, kneeling before me, as did Teagan.

"Rise, what is this *one*?" I asked.

"You are; you have a soul box... you are destined to claim them all and release the souls of all those that have had their souls wrongfully taken away," Guido replied while getting back up.

"This is my quest, to go to the six remaining kingdoms and find the rest of the soul boxes. But I cannot do it alone. You two will accompany me on this quest," I stated.

"Then where are we off to first?" Guido asked.

"We shall go to the jungle kingdom of Zounkla," I stated.

And with that we packed up the tent, gathered our supplies, and grabbed the camels, and we were off by nightfall; our journey had begun... This is the origin of the soul thief; this is the beginning of a legend.

To be continued...

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A Few Words

It has been practically nine months of planning and work but finally we have released our first issue of Novelleta Magazine! We just wanted to thank the staff here at Novelleta for their hard work, especially our staff supervisors, without you two hearing us out we would never have found time to work on this. We look forward to our future contributors!