

2	210	“This campus... will always feel safer than his lonely house in Alabama.”	Equilibrium
3.	215	“Mouth wide open, he leans down and sinks his teeth into the other man’s face... Out comes an esophagus.”	Disruption
4.	217	“Alana’s scream turns to a wet splutter as the woman’s teeth break through her hold, closing on her jugular.”	Disruption
5.	221	“She hugs me so tightly that I almost start crying. This hug isn’t mine to accept. This is for Alana and she is dead.”	Recognition
6.	225	“What happens when you’re not willing to die for another? The price is only that you bear it.”	Recognition
7.	231	“You lied... You have her phone. I saw her name on the landline. The caller ID.”	Repair
8.	233	“There was nothing I could do. Those things—they came so fast, okay? I should have told you the truth. I know. But you would have turned me away—”	Repair
9.	235	“You’re not Alana, are you?”	New Equilibrium
10.	236	“She will go on pretending... Like so many terrible things in that beautiful house, it will be silenced and forgotten.”	New Equilibrium

APPENDIX II

DATA ANALYSIS

Lights by Kalyn Bayronn

No	Data	Analysis
1.	“The dad is a cop, but I don’t know if he’s a good one or not. ... The mom works at a bank. She wears the same grey suit every single workday, and she walks with her chin up and her chest poke out, like she is better than me. ... And there’s the kid. ... he’s nine or ten and goes to the same elementary school I went to when I was his age.”	The story begins with a story set in a real world and this is the condition where the main character having a normal life and still able to do the daily activities that the character usually does.
2.	“the lights in the hallway are on, and much like the floodlight outside, I’ve never seen them get turned off. Not when I watched them in the small hours of the morning.”	The serial killer thinks that this constant illumination as a sign that the child may be deeply afraid of the dark, possibly haunted by an unspoken fear or past trauma.
3.	“The lights in her room rival the kid’s. She’s got a collection of lamps and various shapes and size.”	He starts to question the family’s motives, especially after noticing that the mother also surrounds herself with an excessive number of lamps in her bedroom. This irrational fear of darkness, shared by both of the child and the mother, it introduces an element of ambiguity and mystery.
4.	“My fingers slipped over the switch, and I realized there’s a piece of clear tape holding it in the on position. A switch in the opposite wall is taped up in the same way.”	the killer begins to understand that the lights are not left on by accident but are intentionally kept that way. This subtle yet deliberate act raises questions and enhances his discomfort, suggesting an

		international effort to keep something hidden or at bay.
5.	“I turn toward the hallway, but somewhere over my shoulder, from the newly darkened dining room, there is a sound. I glance behind me. There’s nothing here.	showing the continues of uncertainty where the inability to distinguish whether the experience is rational or supernatural. The presence of an unexplained sound following the lights being turned off evokes a sense of dread and ambiguity that causes the character and the reader to hesitate in their interpretation of reality.
6.	“Pain rockets through my back.”	This condition change into physical harm reinforces the feeling that the environment is responding to the character’s actions in a possibly supernatural way. The crashes lamp gives a signal the collapse of boundaries between the real life and horror.
7.	“He was afraid of the dark, and now I understand why. I am not the only monster lurking here in the shadows”	He begins to find answers to his curiosity and doubts when the young boy leaves him alone in the dark basement.

Be Not Afraid by Ashia Monett

No	Data	Analysis
1.	“She first arrived at God’s Glory Church in the middle of the night, about three years ago now... She walked in because she was cold and the church was warm.”	The need for warmth and protection from the cold highlighting the ordinary, undisturbed state of the world at this stage in the narrative. The church is portrayed as a physically safe haven and a seemingly secure refuge.

2.	“Her home was beneath the altar, behind the cloths that shifted with the seasons.”	The lines portray a steady, almost ceremonial atmosphere, where the passage of time is marked by the changing of altar cloths—implying a structured, religious environment grounded in tradition.
3.	“That first sermon, the priest’s voice trembled... The congregation gasped as the flesh healed. A woman shouted; demands were made, confusion turning into stunned amazement.”	The healing of physical wounds, an act that defies natural laws, marks the entry of the supernatural into what was once a calm and orderly religious space.
4.	“From the opening and closing church doors, the girl would get glimpses of large vans outside... home of miracles.”	This passage illustrates how the healing event causes a significant disturbance. The appearance of outsiders, drawn by reports of “miracles,” demonstrates how quickly this disruption extends beyond the original setting
5.	“She had not realized they treated others as they treated her... To treat them, someone who had spoken so desperately, so imploringly, as the monster she was?”	This moment represents a turning point in the story’s awareness. Until now, the protagonist has endured her loneliness and mistreatment in silence, accepting it without resistance. But she begins to realize that her suffering is not isolated—others have also been devalued, ignored, and potentially harmed by the same system that takes advantage of her.
6.	“Something broke in her like a dam.”	This line captures the progression of long-suppressed realization, past trauma, and justified anger. This is not only a point of narrative disruption but also a moment of profound uncertainty.

7.	“She listened, still, when the church came alive as the priest stood atop her and worked his miracles—her miracles.”	reveals a moment of clear recognition of the protagonist’s true significance. This point in the story is crucial because it quietly reveals the real source of the miraculous events: not the priest’s divine power, but the hidden girl herself.
8.	“The whole cycle was beginning to bore her... but the being buried alive and forced to perform miracles bit, that was intriguing.”	the protagonist's developing self-awareness. What was once a condition of passivity and imprisonment is now understood as a recurring system of exploitation. She acknowledges the absurdity and horror of her situation, hinting at a readiness to act rather than merely endure.
9.	“She rises through the floor, shattering the pews... She has taken on a form that is not meant for mortal eyes... This is a massacre. This is a rapture.”	The protagonist, who has been hidden and exploited beneath the altar, emerges in full, terrifying form. Her transformation signals the complete collapse of the previous equilibrium (the church as a house of healing and order) and the birth of something radically new. However, what this new form represents vengeance, divinity and monstrosity is left deliberately undefined.
10.	“She goes walking. She moves barefoot through the dirt to find somewhere warm... this church is no longer warm.”	Reveals the outcome of the story. The central figure, an unnamed girl, survives but does not return to any place of belonging.

All My Best Friends are Dead by Liselle Sambury

No	Data	Stages
1.	“I was going to show that I belonged with them”	Her words reveal a deeply personal world shaped by the need for social acceptance and the insecurity that comes with it. There are no supernatural elements present yet, only Maddie’s wish to be recognized and accepted by her peers.
2.	“This is supposed to be perfect”	This moment is her attempt to create an environment of connection, comfort, and emotional safety. Despite her vulnerability, this space functions as the story’s point of balance, where everything feels predictable and grounded.
3.	“Just as we were finishing, I glanced back at the mirror. There was a tiny crack in it that hadn’t been here before”	indicates a sudden break in the physical space, which symbolizes a deeper disturbance between the normal world and the supernatural. The mirror, commonly associated with self-awareness or reflection, becomes the object through which the ordinary reality is fractured.
4.	“I pulled my hand back, watching as a bead of blood stuck to the mirror”	The presence of blood makes it clear that the protagonist is now personally and physically affected, no longer just observing but directly involved. This interaction with the damaged mirror creates a link between the real and the uncanny, marking the beginning of the breakdown of her once-secure world.
5.	“It’s us... and another girl. A girl I’ve never seen before”	The image challenges the protagonist’s memory and introduces a deep sense

		of unease, forcing her to question the accuracy of her perception and sense of identity. The presence of someone “forgotten” in what should be a reliable memory is a classic element of the fantasy, suggesting either a shift in reality or interference with memory—both beyond the reach of logical explanation.
6.	“I don’t remember anything”	strengthens the theme of uncertainty. The protagonist’s memory loss fits Todorov’s framework for the fantasy, where both the character and the reader are unsure whether the strangeness stems from internal psychological issues—such as repression or amnesia—or from something truly supernatural.
7.	“What was plan B, and why hadn’t they told me anything about it?”	shows the protagonist becoming aware that others may be keeping secrets from her. This realization indicates not just a growing sense of isolation but also a loss of control over the narrative.
8.	“I pulled myself out of the mirror, and I shoved her inside”	This line offering clarity on earlier moments of confusion, missing memories, and the unstable sense of identity. This revelation reframes everything that came before—the mirror’s shattering was not simply symbolic or accidental, but an actual gateway through which a supernatural exchange of identity occurred.

9.	“The girls rushed into the room... I let my memory become the story that I wanted”	shows how this entity has taken over Maddie’s life by actively reshaping her own memories to fit into the world around her. This moment blurs the line between deceiving others and altering oneself.
10.	“Four to be exact. I let them have Maddie back in the end. Friends should stick together, after all.”	Implies that the entity who assumed Maddie’s identity has not only caused death but has also deliberately “returned” the real Maddie, likely meaning through death or entrapment rather than genuine restoration.
11.	“This time would be better. I’m a good friend. Always have been, always will be.”	Unsettling stability has been established. The mirror-being has embraced its place in the human world and intends to repeat the same pattern with a different group. This chilling sense of repetition shows that the strange event has not ended but has become part of the norm. What once seemed terrifying is now treated as ordinary.

The Teeth Come Out at Night by Sami Ellis

No	Data	Stages
1.	‘What she needed was extra cash—something good quality that she could turn over to the Doctor within the week.’	Her role as a babysitter and her objective of earning and delivering money to someone referred to as ‘the Doctor’ show that she operates in a structured, practical environment, focused on meeting clear, material needs.

2.	“The last couple of weeks, they all turned that way after I stole them. After I touched them.”	marks a sudden and chilling revelation of something unnatural. Up to this point, Akeela has been disturbed by the unexplained change in the teeth, but now she faces a child speaking clearly in the darkness—an eerie figure asserting a strange connection to the objects she took.
3.	“Do not pull the covers,” the child said. “Those teeth are mine.”	Marks a sudden and chilling revelation of something unnatural. Up to this point, Akeela has been disturbed by the unexplained change in the teeth, but now she faces a child speaking clearly in the darkness—an eerie figure asserting a strange connection to the objects she took.
4.	“I need you to tell me what I saw,” Akeela said. She told Aunt Mickey everything that had happened—the weird behavior, the oozing scabs, the stained bed.	shows her transition from a passive observer to someone actively searching for understanding. This moment highlights both her growing fear and her urgent need to make sense of what she has witnessed.
5.	“She was glad she didn’t leave, though. She didn’t get caught. She didn’t die at all. She made it work. And she’d earned every bloody drop of cold, hard cash she got.”	Akeela becomes a survivor who has adapted to a world filled with strange and monstrous elements.

I Love Your Eyes by Joel Rochester

No	Data	Stages
1.	“It’s our anniversary trip. Adam and I had planned it for weeks. I love him. He loves me. That’s all that matters.”	Reflects this emotional stability. The planning of the trip suggests a sense of commitment and routine closeness. At

		this moment, the reader is led to see the relationship as genuine, secure, and grounded in shared moments
2.	“There’s a picture of a woman—Penelope—tucked into a photo album in the library, with her eyes scratched out.”	The image doesn’t just feel out of place; it carries dark implications—suggesting anger, obsession, or an attempt to erase someone’s identity, especially through the symbolism of damaged eyes. This moment plants the first real sense of unease in both Frey and the reader, casting doubt on Adam’s past and emotional stability.
3.	“Adam didn’t want to talk about her. He just stared at me and smiled. The smile didn’t reach his eyes.”	His expression suggests concealment, and his chilling detachment adds to the growing unease. This reaction does not provide clarification but instead reinforces the ambiguity of the situation—an essential quality of the fantasy.
4.	“Something’s wrong. I know it. But I can’t tell if it’s in my head—or if Adam’s really hiding something.”	reveals a deep sense of psychological uncertainty. Frey no longer feels secure in the relationship that once seemed so loving, and fear and doubt begin to take root.
5.	“You were never supposed to find out about her,” Adam says.	Reveals the long-awaited explanation that ties together the story’s unsettling elements—the scratched-out eyes in the photo, Adam’s strange behavior, and the recurring focus on Frey’s eyes.
6.	“But I can’t lose her again. I just need your eyes”	In this moment, Frey reclaims agency, rejecting the role of the victim and actively ending the source of the horror—Adam and his disturbing plan

		to restore Penelope by taking Frey's eyes.
7.	"I light the match. The fire catches quickly on the chemicals he used to preserve her. I leave him screaming. I walk away. I'm free."	In this moment, Frey reclaims agency, rejecting the role of the victim and actively ending the source of the horror—Adam and his disturbing plan to restore Penelope by taking Frey's eyes.

The Consumption of Vienna Montrose by Joelle Wellington

No	Data	Stages
1.	"This is Vienna Montrose's home. Mine."	Conveys a sense of ownership, stability, and personal grounding. This moment shows Vienna settling into a physical and mental space that feels secure and familiar.
2.	"She clings to the keys, wraps the lanyard around her wrist twice... Vienna should be sad—the dirt over her grandmother's grave is still fresh... But she decides that she does not feel sad at all."	reinforces her effort to root herself in this environment, symbolizing a desire for control and a fresh start. They define a grounded, stable beginning the characteristic of the equilibrium phase.
3.	"She hears the whine of a boiler. She thinks she hears the screech of it."	Presents an auditory distortion that unsettles Vienna's reality. A mundane sound becomes filled with doubt, and the phrase "she thinks" introduces Todorov's concept of hesitation: neither Vienna nor the reader can be certain if the sound is real or imagined.
4.	"In the foyer, she just breathes, and for a moment, she thinks someone is breathing right next to her."	Here, the boundary between isolation and presence blurs. The ambiguity of whether another presence is truly there introduces a classic moment of fantasy

		tension, unsettling both character and reader without offering a clear explanation, perfectly aligning with Todorov's fantasy mode.
5.	"Something is hungry. She is hungry, and that unsettled feeling is like a fist in her throat."	signals a merging of Vienna's physical and emotional state with the house itself. The hunger could be interpreted as literal, metaphorical, or supernatural—or possibly all at once. This shared sensation points to a deeper connection between Vienna and the house, shifting the disruption inward.
6.	"There's already people in my house."	Vienna admits to sensing a presence that doesn't belong to her. Yet this realization isn't accompanied by fear or urgency; it's delivered in a calm, unsettling tone, suggesting she is neither entirely surprised nor completely accepting.
7.	"They live in the walls. They live in her dreams... It is meant to unnerve. Instead, Vienna lives in the gray of it all."	Here, the repetition of "they live" merges physical reality with dreamscape, blurring the line between what is tangible and what is imagined. The statement that Vienna "lives in the gray of it all" perfectly illustrates Todorov's idea of the fantasy: she neither denies the strangeness nor fully interprets it as supernatural.
8.	"I think I was haunted as a child, Vienna thinks. There was a monster when I was a child."	extends this uncertainty to her own history and sense of self. Vienna reflects on her childhood through the uncertain lens of haunting.

9.	“The House is alive. Vienna thinks she has always known... There is comfort in knowing. It means she is not crazy.”	Marks a turning point of inner resolution. Here, Vienna comes to accept something that has subtly existed throughout the narrative: the idea that the house is sentient, possibly with supernatural awareness.
10.	“I was the monster under the bed. I was the haunting of this home.”	Offering a metaphysical explanation that merges Vienna’s identity with the very presence that has haunted the house. She no longer sees herself as simply a victim or an observer of something terrifying—she becomes the source of it. This transformation blurs the boundary between self and other, between the human and the supernatural.
11.	“I think I love you, Vienna thinks. I think you are uncomplicated and easy and warm. I think I’ll keep you. I’d like you to keep me.”	Reflects Vienna’s full emotional and psychological submission to the house—a place that has evolved into something sentient and deeply connected to her sense of self. Describing the house as “warm” and “easy” contrasts with its earlier eerie presence, showing that Vienna no longer views it with fear, but as a space of comfort, intimacy, and mutual ownership.
12.	“She closes her eyes, nested under the rabbit fur, under the floorboards, that night and every night after.”	Signals the creation of a new equilibrium. Vienna becomes part of the house—not just living in it, but becoming embedded within it, perhaps as a spirit, memory, or myth. The image is gentle and peaceful, yet carries an unsettling tone, capturing

		the spirit of the fantasy: emotional closure without clear explanation.
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The Landscape of Broken Things by Brent Lambert

No	Data	Stages
1.	“I’ve been walking down the silent eye institute’s tiny halls, with their to-bright pastel floor tiles, for the past two years. ... nothing is going to keep me from seeing my mom though.”	In this setting, the supernatural is not eliminated through force, but rather through regulation and medication. At this stage in the story, there is no clear danger or disruption—the protagonist operates within the accepted norms of this world.
2.	My body isn’t mine anymore. The power inside me compels me to look straight ahead. ... The vision takes you and you can’t look away from it, no matter how hard you try.”	This experience shows a deep separation from physical control, revealing the presence of a force that overpowers Julian’s own will.
3.	“I hear the shambling of the creature coming down it. [...] clairvoyants tell stories about this creature. Mom said no one ever gave it a name because doing so might call the creature to come collect them. [...] I took to calling it ClockFace, and I’ve wondered ever since if that’s why the thing won’t leave me behind.”	The disruption moves beyond Julian’s personal visions and becomes part of a larger myth recognized by other clairvoyants. This shift transforms the experience from a private psychological episode into a shared supernatural reality within the story’s world.
4.	“The end of time calls. Answer it and save us all. rushed back to the real, I fling backward, almost falling out of my chair, but I’m caught by Dr. Greystone.”	This line ritualistic in tone and tied to earlier visions once again blurs the boundary between prophecy and hallucination.
5.	“Fuck, fuck, fuck. Mom looks at me like I’m wrapped up in a coffin: eyes sad, horrified, grieving. I push Dr. Greystone	At this point, he realizes that something deeply disturbing has happened, though he cannot yet

	off me and stand up, all thoughts of restraint gone. I point an angry finger right between Greystone's eyes. 'What the fuck! You knew that'd happen?'"	explain what. His mother's expression suggests she, too, recognizes the seriousness of the moment—whether it's fear for Julian's mental health or alarm at what he may have witnessed.
6.	'the only way to save time is to safely break it apart. instead of one singular construct, you must create many. allow them to grow and prune again. it will be an endless task, but one that would keep creation safe. but to do this without destroying oneself means only those who exist everywhere can do it'	The explanation in the quote above reveals the underlying narrative logic behind the disruption. Instead of aiming to restore a single, unified timeline, the story suggests that time is saved by allowing it to break apart—offering a solution rooted in complexity and contradiction.
7.	"another time judges takes it upon themselves to answer. 'you're a lynchpin, Julian. you exist in all timelines. you can walk through all its wonders and all its horrors' "	This quote shows that Julian, who had previously been overwhelmed by strange visions and deep confusion about his place in reality, now receives a partial understanding of his role in the fragmented nature of time.
8.	"I dive in, finally ready to embrace my fate. and the loss of everything I've ever known."	Reflect his complete acceptance of this altered world and his place within it. This moment marks the resolution of his inner conflict and completes the journey that began with the initial disruption.

Mother, Daughter and the Devil by Donyae Coles

No	Data	Stages
1.	"Lily was a girl, like any girl... She wanted a life... but the only thing her aching mouth allowed her to sing was pain".	Illustrates this state with poetic poignancy. Lily's desires common and human are constrained by her physical affliction. Her decaying teeth, a source of chronic pain, serve as both a literal

		and symbolic barrier between her and the life she longs for.
2.	“He tapped his cheek. ‘I know why you called me... I just need a little something in return.’ ... ‘Your dreams. I’ll gobble them right up...’ And she agreed”.	The devil, a mythical figure, appears in response to Lily’s suffering and offers a solution with a grotesque cost. His offer introduces ambiguity.
3.	“Lily weren’t no fool... she thought, Isn’t this too much of a good thing from the Devil?”.	Here, Lily begins to question the consequences of her earlier decision—to trade her dreams for relief from physical pain. Her rhetorical thought signals a deepening awareness that the Devil’s bargain, which seemed like a blessing, may in fact be a curse.
4.	“She beat the smile off his face, smacked him all about the head and back”.	This moment marks a critical shift from psychological hesitation to physical resistance. Lily moves from questioning the nature of the bargain to directly attacking the one responsible.
5.	“Lady Estelle... pulled out an egg. ‘A nasty little thing waiting to be born... That egg’s gonna burn, but it’s going to take you where you need to go’”.	Here, Estelle offers Lily not a rational explanation, but a magical, symbolic solution which a tool of transformation and retribution. The egg functions as a metaphysical object that embodies Lily’s pain, inherited trauma, and rage. In the logic of the fantasy, the egg is not fully explained; it exists in a liminal space between the mystical and the allegorical.
6.	“The thing settled down, started to die and disappear... Lily was done being cursed”.	Signals both an ending and a rebirth. The “thing” a supernatural embodiment of rage, suffering, or inherited pain disintegrates. This symbolizes the resolution of the

		magical conflict that began when Lily made her bargain with the Devil.
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Papa Pearlie

No	Data	Stages
1.	“I’m not sure Papa Pearlie knows the difference between me and my sister... this campus... will always feel safer than his lonely house in Alabama.”	Depicts the protagonist’s physical and emotional separation from his grandfather. The reference to the campus as “safer” signals a sense of normalcy and autonomy, in contrast to the alienation and discomfort associated with Papa Pearlie’s home.
2.	“Most of what I’ve learned about him has been from my mother... he makes dolls in his attic... some of the dolls... look exactly like us.”	Foreshadows the supernatural elements to come, yet still functions within the boundaries of scepticism and hearsay. The mention of lifelike dolls introduces an eerie atmosphere, but at this point in the story, the world remains rational and explainable.
3.	“Blinds made of hard plastic, or... steel... fall over the windows... designed to stop anyone from seeing in. Or out.”	Reveals an architectural horror: the seemingly ordinary house becomes a sealed, prison-like structure. The material and mechanical nature of the blinds implied to be impenetrable signals a drastic change in the environment, suggesting either technological manipulation or an unnatural control over the house.
4.	“Three heavy footsteps and then—THUD!... Jada is lying on her back, eyes wide open... foam trail seeping out of Jada’s mouth.”	The sudden and unexplained death of Jada, witnessed by the narrator in real time, marks a horrifying break from the natural order. The description evokes physical violence or supernatural influence, especially

		given its association with the house's sudden lockdown.
5.	"It was him... Papa did it."	Reveals a pivotal turning point in Zeke's understanding of the horror unfolding around him. This statement reflects his shift from confusion and passive observation to an active acknowledgment that his grandfather, Papa Pearlie, is responsible for the unnatural death and surrounding terror.
6.	"We can't escape... since what Papa Pearlie's father did... an agreement with a witch... if he handed over his firstborn son."	Deepens the supernatural layer, expanding the narrative from a single personal horror to a generational curse. Here, Zeke is not only recognizing the truth of Papa Pearlie's role in the immediate events but also uncovering a larger, inherited contract with dark, magical origins.
7.	"You make these dolls and deposit lives into them... regardless of what we want."	This line reflects Zeke's realization that their autonomy and fates have been stolen, their lives manipulated through dark ritual and intergenerational control. It also highlights the central ethical and emotional violation of the story: the loss of self-determination across generations.
8.	"So, when I became half-doll, my children, too, became tethered to the dolls. There is no way out but to play by the game that Marcel started."	Provides the narrative's clearest explanation of the curse. His transformation into a "half-doll" ties him and his bloodline to the original deal made by his father, Marcel, with a witch.

9.	“I take Papa’s knife to my lung... so when the final traces of air leak through me, I can be happy knowing I stood up for myself.”	A powerful act of resistance that symbolizes both personal liberation and tragic finality. Zeke sacrifices himself not in despair, but with a sense of dignity and control he reclaims his autonomy by destroying the physical form through which Papa Pearlie exerted supernatural control.
10.	“Brandy knows the truth—she knows to watch her step smartly... she will move this takedown a step further... and break the curse—once and for all.”	Extends this new equilibrium into the future. Zeke’s resistance is not isolated; it becomes the catalyst for his sister’s empowerment. This line suggests a shift from reaction to proactive change.

No Harm Done

No	Data	Stages
1.	“I’m sitting underneath a dazzling garland, bleeding terribly... When I went digging into my background and tried to track down my birth family, I never imagined I’d find a long-lost sister.”	Presents Sasha at a crucial emotional threshold. She is reuniting with her biological sister, Alana, for the first time. The setting a festive, warm Christmas environment symbolizes a surface-level stability and hope, even as Sasha bleeds from a minor injury, foreshadowing future trauma.
2	“This campus... will always feel safer than his lonely house in Alabama.”	Reflects Sasha’s psychological comparison between her present environment and the discomfort of familial or ancestral connection. Her thoughts are grounded in personal experience, rooted in fear of rejection or unknown family history.

3.	“Mouth wide open, he leans down and sinks his teeth into the other man’s face... Out comes an esophagus.”	Marks the exact moment when the story’s grounded reality collapses. The physicality of the attack, its absurd brutality, and the unnatural method of death all suggest something beyond normal human violence.
4.	“Alana’s scream turns to a wet splutter as the woman’s teeth break through her hold, closing on her jugular.”	further intensifies the disruption. The sudden transformation of Alana’s experience from reunion to fatal encounter collapses Sasha’s emotional expectations and leaves her physically and psychologically unmoored. This horrifying moment signifies the breakdown of personal connection, bodily integrity, and safety—all markers of the prior equilibrium.
5.	“She hugs me so tightly that I almost start crying. This hug isn’t mine to accept. This is for Alana and she is dead.”	Captures the dissonance between what is real and what is perceived. Sasha is not Alana, yet she is treated as such. This moment destabilizes identity itself, plunging the story into a moral and existential disruption.
6.	“What happens when you’re not willing to die for another? The price is only that you bear it.”	Here, the disruption becomes ethical and internalized: the protagonist must now carry the unbearable weight of having chosen her own survival over someone else’s life. Rather than resolving the horror, this deepens it, transforming the story into a fantasy narrative of guilt, substitution, and identity erasure.
7.	“You lied... You have her phone. I saw her name on the landline. The caller ID.”	Repair

8.	“There was nothing I could do. Those things—they came so fast, okay? I should have told you the truth. I know. But you would have turned me away—”	Which forces Sasha into a confession. The mention of Alana’s name appearing on the landline confirms that Sasha has assumed her identity, and that the deception cannot be sustained through silence any longer.
9.	“You’re not Alana, are you?”	Alana’s mother—acknowledges the underlying truth. Though not explicitly confirmed by either character, the question alone marks a shift: the mask Sasha has worn is seen, even if not removed. This moment serves as a subtle recognition that the lie cannot be completely hidden, but may be quietly tolerated.
10.	“She will go on pretending... Like so many terrible things in that beautiful house, it will be silenced and forgotten.”	The emotional and tone of the new equilibrium. Rather than expose or undo the deception, Brook chooses complicity. The silence here is not peace; it is repression. The beautiful setting remains intact, but beneath its surface lies the echo of violence, betrayal, and moral collapse.

APPENDIX III

SYNOPSIS OF ALL THESE SUNKEN SOULS

Lights by kalynn Bayron

This story is written from the perspective of the main character, a serial killer suffering from a psychological disorder. He kills to relieve the psychological tension he constantly experiences. In the story, after murdering a man who lived alone on the ground floor of an apartment building, he begins stalking a family for nearly a month. The father is a police officer, and the mother works at a bank. He memorizes their behavior and daily routines. He feels a deep sense of envy and bitterness as he observes how the parents treat their child with kindness. This triggers his own buried trauma. One day, he decides to carry out his plan—to kill the mother of the family. That evening, the father happens to come home late from work, and the killer sees this as the perfect opportunity. He sneaks around and hides in the dark bushes outside the house. The house is always lit brightly, which he assumes is because the child is afraid of the dark. At the perfect moment, when the woman is lying in bed, he approaches quietly and points a knife at her.

The woman struggled and tried to break free, but eventually, she fell and suffered a serious head injury. After that, the serial killer went to the child's bedroom, only to find that the child wasn't there—he was in the living room. They stood facing each other, and the killer told the boy to play a game of hide and seek. However, the killer thought the child wasn't very good at hiding, as he simply crouched under the table, still clearly visible. Without waiting long, the killer approached to catch him, but the boy suddenly ran toward the basement door. They both froze when they heard the mother's voice screaming the boy's name. The killer thought it was useless—she was badly injured and surely wouldn't fight back. The boy then opened the basement door behind him and went down into the darkness. The killer chased him into the basement. Suddenly, he felt a sharp pain in his elbow, and his knife dropped to the floor. Before he could fully grasp what was happening, he saw the boy smiling and switching on a headlamp. He also noticed the boy's parents standing silently at the top of the stairs, making no attempt to save their son. Slowly, the killer's body began to freeze up; pain spread through his limbs and his back felt as though it had snapped. As he glanced toward the boy, he saw him pull a chain hanging from the ceiling light—and darkness swallowed the killer whole. Just before he was consumed by pain and darkness, the killer realized something terrifying: he wasn't the only monster lurking in the dark.

Be Not Afraid by Ashia Monett

An ageless girl once arrived at God's Glory Church, bloodied and seeking warmth. The priest, moved only after witnessing his hand heal in her presence, hid her beneath the altar and used her for "miracles," never asking her name. Treated as an object, she remained cold and silent under the church, her power exploited to grow the priest's fame and wealth. Despite the church's growing diversity, no one who looked like her ever came for healing. Eventually, weary and yearning for freedom, she escaped and found brief peace in nature—until the old man recaptured her and brought her back. Seen only as a tool, the priest and old man tried to imprison her with chains and nails. When she kept escaping, they buried her alive beneath the church floor. From the coffin, she listened to the church continue using her power, uncertain if she'd ever be freed or simply forgotten.

One day, she heard a voice above—pleading for healing but cruelly rejected, just as she once was. The realization struck her: it wasn't just her—they treated all who looked like her with contempt. In that moment, something within her broke. Transforming into a monstrous, ancient form, she erupted from her grave and obliterated the church in a furious massacre. She spared no one but the priest and the old man, draining the latter and confronting the former, rejecting the false holiness forced upon her. After consuming the priest, she returned to her girl-like form and walked away, leaving behind the ruins of a place that had used her, no longer willing to be buried, silenced, or forgotten.

All My Best Friends are Dead by Lisselle Sambury

A month after a strange sleepover, four friends have drifted apart—especially Maddie, who feels increasingly isolated when Nova announces she's moving away due to memory loss from that night. Hoping to reconnect, Maddie hosts another sleepover at her newly renovated house. There, she introduces the creepy legend of "Brenda Butterfingers" and suggests a summoning ritual. Despite the group's unease, they go along. During a tense game of truth or dare, strange memories resurface, especially after they discover a mysterious photo featuring an unknown fifth girl. Maddie proposes a ritual involving candles, salt, and a knife to summon Brenda, which ends with a mirror shattering and cutting Maddie's finger. Disturbed, the girls try to leave, but Maddie begs them to stay. Guilt leads them to agree, but later Maddie overhears them discussing a failed "memory jog" and a secret "plan B." Suddenly, the girls turn on her—restraining her and performing a ritual with blood and a mirror, believing Maddie is not who she claims to be.

As the ritual continues, Maddie's memories unlock: she remembers an accident, a hidden body, and a supernatural presence. She realizes she is not Maddie but Brenda's spirit—drawn to the girls' fear and loneliness. With Maddie's blood on the mirror, Brenda fully awakens, emerges from the mirror, and traps Maddie inside. The girls are unaware of the switch; as their memories shift, they accept Brenda as their friend, with even photos changing to reflect the new reality. Brenda, now posing as Maddie, reflects on her past, the tragedy that created her, and her desperate longing for connection. Though she knows memories can return, she's determined to keep this friendship alive—rewriting reality to fill the void of her eternal loneliness.

The Teeth Come Out at Night by Sami Ellis

Akeela, posing as a babysitter, steals teeth for money to pay college application fees and a deal to expunge her record. Her aunt, Mickey, buys the teeth but offers low prices for discolored ones, hinting at trouble with their client, the Doctor. Akeela struggles to find clean baby teeth, noticing they turn red after she takes them. At the Ackermans', Akeela finds two bloody teeth under Bryson's pillow. Returning later under a false pretense, she finds Mrs. Ackerman behaving strangely and the house unsettling. In Bryson's room, a dark stain on the bed and a warning from a shadowy figure scare her away. At the farmer's market, Mickey reveals the red teeth turned to dust but offers Akeela another chance if she brings clean baby teeth. Desperate, Akeela lies, promising better teeth. Back at the Ackermans', Akeela is confronted by a child's voice warning her away from the bed, and she flees.

Shaken, Akeela calls Aunt Mickey, describing the disturbing events at the Ackermans': Mrs. Ackerman's state, the stained bed, and the figure in the corner. Aunt Mickey is initially concerned but then sternly reminds Akeela of the dangers of her deal with the Doctor, refusing to explain what Akeela saw and warning her to focus on survival. When Akeela asks if she can kill it, Aunt Mickey implies it's dangerous, even to the Doctor. Ultimately, Aunt Mickey advises Akeela to prioritize getting the Doctor his teeth, suggesting nothing else matters. During the day, Akeela breaks into the Ackermans' seemingly empty house to retrieve Bryson's lost teeth. Finding the house strangely deserted, with lights and TV on but no one present, she proceeds upstairs. In Bryson's room, she finds the comforter now black and damp. Upon removing it, she discovers a gruesome carcass with a full set of adult teeth – a horrifying sight that makes her think of Mrs. Ackerman. Despite the danger, Akeela realizes this is her opportunity. The shadowy figure attacks Akeela, biting her shoulder. She fights back with the baseball bat, striking its skull. The creature, snake-like with human ears and patches of brown skin, bleeds ashy liquid. Akeela stabs it repeatedly with a shard of glass until it stops moving. Ignoring the blood, she grabs

its large canine tooth and puts it in her bag, laughing hysterically at her success and the potential profit.

The Consumption of Vienna Montrose by Joel Wellington

After inheriting her grandmother's decaying house on Magnolia Lane, Vienna Montrose returns to the lonely street filled with empty lots. Determined to claim the house despite her hazy childhood memories, she senses strange activity—like the boiler running without power and an eerie presence in the foyer. She brushes off family concerns and declines to connect with her emotionally distant relatives, including her “never-brother” Samuel and his cold partner Cassiopeia. Tensions grow when Samuel offers help and Vienna senses disapproval from both him and Cassiopeia. Meanwhile, local workers find Vienna’s presence unnerving, whispering that *she* might be the real issue. Her cousin Florence appears uninvited, stirs painful childhood memories, and hints at the house’s dark past. Vienna is left alone, increasingly drawn to the house and its secrets.

As Vienna isolates herself, her bond with the house deepens. The narrative shifts to the house’s perspective—it adores Vienna, believes she understands its affection, and views her strange rituals as devotion. The house sees her as both a part of itself and a cherished inhabitant. Vienna, too, finds comfort in their connection and feels validated in her strangeness. Exploring the house, she discovers a dollhouse replica in the cold tower and recalls Nana’s old warnings. She eventually crawls into a fur-lined basement, where the house embraces her fully. It longs to possess Vienna as much as she has embraced it, believing they are now one. In the end, Vienna closes her eyes, willingly surrendering to the house’s love, never to leave again.

I Love Your Eyes by Joel Rochester

Adam and Frey were deeply in love, supporting each other through life and school. For their anniversary, Adam abruptly changed plans and took Frey to his family’s isolated manor in North Wales—a surprising move that made Frey uneasy, especially given Adam’s secrecy about his past. The manor, cold and imposing, unsettled Frey with strange smells and a photo of Adam’s deceased ex-fiancée, Penelope. During a hike on their anniversary, tensions escalated, leading to a brief fight, but they reconciled. That evening, Frey prepared for a romantic dinner, only for Adam to reveal his horrifying plan: he had poisoned Frey, calling their death a necessary sacrifice for a “masterpiece.” As Frey collapsed, they realized Adam was far more dangerous than they had feared.

Frey awoke tied up in the manor’s basement, surrounded by rot and death—including Penelope’s stitched corpse, wearing rings stolen from Frey’s murdered

parents. Adam revealed his plan to use Frey's eyes to restore Penelope. But Frey had known the truth—Adam was their parents' killer—and had used their own tech to track him. Breaking free, Frey fought Adam, taunted him with Penelope's decayed remains, and rejected his final pleas for love. Frey set the basement on fire, trapping Adam and the corpse inside. As the flames consumed the manor, Frey walked away, finally free.

The Landscape of Broken Things by Brent C. Lambert

Julian, burdened by disturbing visions of clocks and haunted by fears of inheriting his mother's cursed clairvoyance, visits the Silent Eye Institute where she is confined. Despite family disapproval and societal fear of clairvoyants, Julian seeks answers, especially about the terrifying figure Clockface—a prophetic creature that appears in his visions and reflections. At the institute, Julian hopes to avoid his mother's fate and discuss the visions, but is unnerved by Dr. Greystone, the cold director whose clock-topped cane symbolizes clairvoyant oppression. When Greystone touches Julian, a horrific vision erupts, confirming Julian's powers. Greystone threatens more death unless Julian cooperates, claiming he can save his mother through study. Julian experiences another vision in which Clockface kills Greystone, prompting him to search the institute. A patient file shows a bleak future where Greystone's experiments destroy his mother's mind. Rejecting this fate, Julian resolves to save her.

Guided by cryptic clues and visions, Julian reaches Room 96, where he meets multiple versions of himself—Clockfaces from fractured timelines. They reveal that Julian is the lynchpin needed to safely fracture time, and that his mother has been saved but no longer remembers her past. To protect her and restore time, Julian must be erased from history. Though his mother protests, Julian accepts his role, knowing she will be free even if she forgets him. As the Time Judges prepare him for the sacrifice, Julian steps into the broken timelines, answering the call to save the future and all versions of himself.

Mother, Daughter and The Devils by Donyae Coles

Lily was born into a cursed lineage, marked by a foul stench she couldn't smell—an affliction stemming from a pact her mother, Before Lily, made with the Devil to relieve unbearable tooth pain. After making multiple desperate bargains, Before Lily eventually rejected the Devil, extracting her own teeth to resist future temptation. But her rejection came at a cost: when Lily was born, the Devil cursed her instead, giving her the reek of rot and isolation. Growing up beautiful but reviled, Lily avoided men and sought help from the conjure woman Lady Estelle, who demanded

her mother's buried teeth. That night, Lily braved a horrific encounter in the chicken coop where her mother had hidden the teeth, battled spirits, and retrieved them with the help of her cat, Bones. Lady Estelle gave Lily a burning egg said to guide and heal her, planting the seed of hope that her curse could be broken.

Wounded but determined, Lily followed the egg's pull to a mysterious house, where a woman took her in and brought her to the Good Doctor. As tension rose, the egg cracked, releasing a grotesque creature born of generations of rage and betrayal. It burrowed into the Good Doctor's chest, ending the family's long torment. Witnesses later misinterpreted the creature as a gun and Lily as a killer, but the only lasting truth was that from that day on, Lily smelled sweet. Though she was arrested for murder, what truly echoed through the town's memory was not the crime—but that Lily had finally defeated the Devil.

Papa Pearlie by Ryan Douglass

Zeke, burdened by a worsening toothache, reluctantly attends his grandfather Papa Pearlie's 100th birthday in Alabama, despite preferring the distance of his New Jersey college life. Family gatherings are a dwindling tradition for the Moulins, and Zeke feels a pull between obligation and a desire for independence. Papa Pearlie is the central figure of their family's unique "faith," a man who makes dolls in his attic, including unsettlingly lifelike versions of his relatives that are "updated" as they age. At Papa's isolated, peculiar house, Zeke observes his family: his stoic sister Brandy, his enigmatic, always-covered Aunt Lauren, and his rebellious, vaping cousin Jada. Jada expresses her belief that Papa is controlling and insane. Zeke, recalling a disturbing secret about Papa's attic revealed by his dying father, feels a sense of shared outsider status with Jada as the family's only queer members. Papa finally appears for dinner, wearing his perpetually stained overalls.

At a family dinner led by the controlling Papa Pearlie, Jada is killed after expressing independence, and Papa reveals this has happened before. Zeke suspects Papa and tells Brandy, revealing their great-grandfather made a pact with a witch, trapping them. Their mother confirms a family curse stemming from this pact and implies their father died defying Papa. Drawn to the attic, Zeke finds Papa surrounded by doll-making tools and miniature coffins, burying a doll resembling Jada. Papa reveals his father's first "son" doll, Marcel, was violent, making Papa part-doll, and his descendants tethered to dolls he controls. Zeke starts making a doll resembling Papa, accusing him of control. Papa warns of Marcel's worse nature and speaks of generational punishment. Zeke injures himself and a doll resembling him, realizing he must fight Papa's game. He stabs the doll, mirroring his own pain, understanding

the magic's reality and his need for freedom. Weakening, he hopes Brandy will end the curse.

No Harm Done by Circe Moskowitz

Sasha, bleeding from a self-inflicted knife wound, waits outside a pristine café on Christmas Eve for her long-lost twin sister, Alana. Sasha, who had a difficult upbringing and now lives in a cramped apartment, found Alana through social media. Alana was adopted by a wealthy white family and appears to live a successful life, meticulously documented by her adoptive mother online. Sasha feels apprehensive about their meeting, aware of their vastly different lives.

Sasha meets her twin sister Alana for the first time, but their initial connection is overshadowed by a sudden zombie outbreak. In the chaos, Sasha abandons Alana to a horde of the undead and escapes. Seeking refuge, Sasha impersonates Alana and is taken in by Alana's mother, Brook, and girlfriend, Casey. Sasha navigates the complex dynamic, lying to maintain her deception while experiencing a sense of belonging she's never known. However, Casey eventually uncovers Sasha's lie. In a desperate attempt to maintain her newfound safety, Sasha murders Casey. Brook, seemingly aware of Sasha's deception but choosing to ignore it, prepares to leave with Sasha. They drive away together, the truth buried with Casey.

APPENDIX IV

BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR

Kalynn Bayron grew up in Anchorage, Alaska. She grew up in Anchorage, Alaska. She is the *New York Times* and indie best-selling author of the Young Adult fantasy novels *Cinderella Is Dead* and *This Poison Heart*. She is classically trained vocalist and musical theatre enthusiast. When she's not writing, you can find her watching scary movies and spending time with her family.

Donyaë Coles is a horror author who has been published in a variety of short-fiction venues. She devotes her free time to her other great love: art. Her debut, *Midnight Rooms*, is forthcoming from Amistad.

Ryan Douglass queer author and poet from Atlanta, Georgia. He is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Taking of Jake Livingston*, and his short fiction appears in *All These Sunken Souls* and *Night of the Living Queers*. His poetry is featured in *Poemhood: Our Black Revival* and *He/She/They/Us*. He is an Atlanta native currently living in Los Angeles, where he can be found scoping out bakeries or getting lost in the wilderness.

Sami Ellis is a queer horror writer inspired by the horrific nature of Black fears and the culture's relation to the supernatural. When she's not the single auntie with a good job, she spends her time not writing.

Brent Lambert is a Black, queer man who heavily believes in the transformative power of speculative fiction across media formats. He resides in San Diego but spent a lot of time moving around as a military brat. His family roots are in the Cajun country of Louisiana.

Ashia Monet is a novelist and essayist from Pennsylvania. As a lifelong fan of myth and poetry (especially Sappho), her fantasy novels explore various forms of magic and monsters.

Circe Moskowitz is a Puerto Rican writer and editor. Her words have appeared in *Apex Magazine* and *Reactor*, as well as the critically acclaimed anthologies *Reclaim the Stars* and *All These Sunken Souls*. Originally from Northern California, she currently lives in Florida.

Joel Rochester is your friendly neighborhood chaotic bisexual, with a taste for the magical and macabre. He's an award-winning content creator, whilst also possessing a BA in creative writing and English literature from the University of Winchester.

Liselle Sambury born adraised in Toronto, Ontario. She is a Trinidadian-Canadian author known for her young adult fantasy and genre-blended speculative fiction. Her works often feature dark themes, complicated families, and a touch of hope. She is the author of "Blood Like Magic," a Governor General's Literary Awards finalist, and its sequel, "Blood Like Fate".

Joelle Wellington is the author of the YA thriller *Their Vicious Games*. She grew up in Brooklyn, New York, where her childhood was spent wandering the main branch of the Brooklyn Public Library.