

Börkur Sigurbjörnsson

Don't You Worry About A
Thing
flash fiction



Urban Volcano

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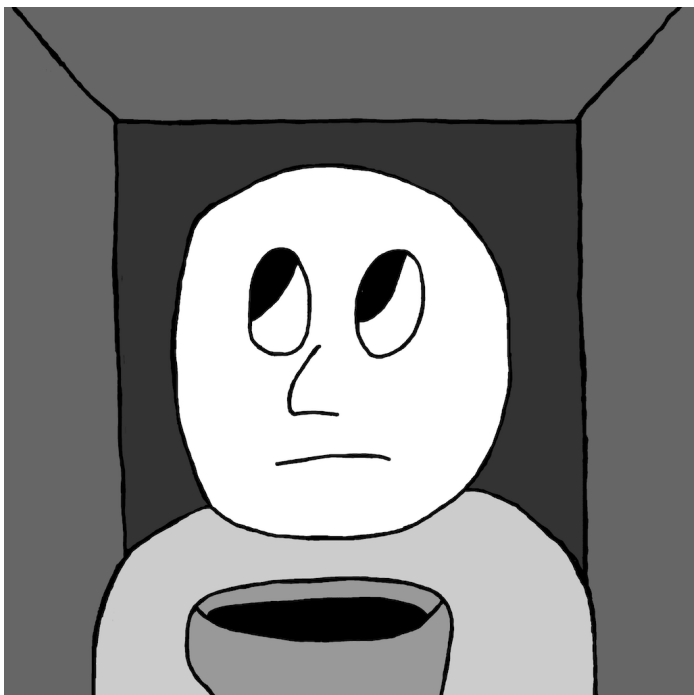
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DON'T YOU WORRY ABOUT A THING

A chill ran down Jaime's spine as he sat at the kitchen table sipping his morning coffee before heading off to work. Through the window facing the back-garden, the pitch-black Arctic mid-winter darkness flowed into the small interior space and threatened to suffocate the ambient glow from the extractor fan above the cooktop. Jamie looked up from his coffee, to his left and to his right. Of course there was no one there. There never was.

Jamie listened to the footsteps in the hallway and felt someone breathing down the collar of his sweater. He turned around

to face nothing but the static shadows that seemed to be permanently fixed to the place. Jaime shook his head—it was probably just the sound of the wind and the eternal darkness that was getting into his head.

It had been a month since Jaime moved to Iceland and rented a basement apartment in the center of Reykjavík. At first, he had been quite happy with the place. Albeit small, the flat was homely and decorated with care to make the tenant feel comfortable. However, as time went by the coziness had faded and Jaime started to get the funny feeling he was not the sole occupant of the space. He didn't believe in ghosts or other supernatural beings, but he couldn't shake off the sensation that there was some unexplained presence in the apartment. He had wanted to bring the issue up with the landlord who lived on the floor above him but was afraid she would think he was crazy. Maybe he was. Perhaps he was losing his mind while struggling to adapt to this novel, cold and dark part of the world.

Jaime finished his coffee in one large gulp, put on his coat, eased his feet into the boots, wrapped a scarf around his neck, put a knit cap on his head, threaded his fingers into the mittens, grabbed the keys and ran out into the cold February morning, almost knocking his landlord over in the process. She had been shoveling snow in the driveway.

“Good morning,” the landlord greeted, smiling with her entire face, drawing attention to the red frost-bitten cheeks. “How are you? Everything ok in the apartment?”

“Morning... Yes... Everything is fine. The place is nice and quiet. And the bed... Very comfortable. I’m really happy.”

“Good to hear. You just let me know if there is anything you don’t like.”

Jaime hesitated for a moment, staring down at his snow covered boots.

“Well... There’s just one little thing...,” he stuttered at last.

“Tell me,” the landlord insisted, leaning forward and resting her weight on the large snow-shovel.

“Well... I know it must sound silly... I mean... It must be my imagination... I mean... It cannot be true... The thing is... I just have this funny feeling that I’m not alone in the apartment.”

“Oh, yeah, that,” the landlord replied, the smile fading from her face and her glance drifting toward the entrance to the basement flat. “I had a clairvoyant pay a visit to the basement a few years ago. She told me there was a family of four living there. The family had previously lived in a shed where my house is now. However, the shed had burned down together with its inhabitants shortly before the current neighborhood was built.”

Jaime felt his muscles tighten, his mouth go dry and a knot starting to form in his stomach. He wasn’t sure if he should feel happy or sad about having his implausible suspicion confirmed.

“But, don’t you worry about a thing,” the landlord continued, the smile returning to her face. “Apparently, they are all good souls.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Börkur is an avid storyteller with a keen eye for quirky characters, funny dialogs and vivid scenario descriptions. Much of his writing falls within the genre of realistic fiction and his stories are more often than not based on real events in the author's life. Although the tales contain grains of truth, they are melded with fiction, making the reader curious to know the line between reality and fantasy.

Books

Among Other Things, flash fiction (2024)

Talk To Strangers, short stories (2019)

Flash 52, flash fiction (2017)

999 Abroad, short stories (2012)

Links

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