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Welcome to issue forty-five of *Nightmare*!

We have original fiction from David Tallerman ("Great Black Wave") and Marc Laidlaw ("The Finest, Fullest Flowering"), along with reprints by Lucy Taylor ("Things Of Which We Do Not Speak") and Rena Mason ("Ruminations").

We also have the latest installment of our column on horror, "The H Word," plus author spotlights with our authors and a feature interview with legendary author Joyce Carol Oates.

Nebula and Stoker Awards Results

We're thrilled to report that Alyssa Wong's story, "Hungry Daughters of Starving Mothers," from the *Queers Destroy Horror!* special issue of *Nightmare* (Oct. 2015), won the Nebula Award for best short story! Congrats to Alyssa and to all of the other winners. You can find a full list of the winners at [SFWA.org/nebula-awards](#). Our sister-magazine, *Lightspeed's*, streak of losing Nebula Awards has remained intact, and is now at fourteen-in-a-row and counting. Condolences (and another round

of congratulations) to Amal El-Mohtar and Brooke Bolander who were also nominated this year for their stories in *Lightspeed*.

“Hungry Daughters” was also up for the Stoker Award, but, alas, it was not able to claim a rare Nebula-Stoker double-victory. For a full list of the winners, visit horror.org.

Locus Awards Finalists Announced

In other awards news, the Locus Awards finalists have now been announced, and we’re pleased to announce that that upstart story, “Hungry Daughters of Starving Mothers” is also a finalist for the Locus Award—as are its Nebula Award co-nominees, Amal El-Mohtar (“Madeleine,” *Lightspeed*, June 2015) and Brooke Bolander (“And You Shall Know Her by the Trail of Dead,” *Lightspeed*, February 2015). And last but not least, yours truly is a finalist in the Best Editor category. Congratulations to Alyssa, Amal, and Brooke, and to all of the other finalists, and thanks to all who voted for them (and me). You’ll find a complete list of the finalists, and instructions for voting, at locusmag.com.

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It’s another great month for nightmares, so thanks for reading!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Joseph Adams, in addition to serving as publisher and editor-in-chief of *Nightmare*, is the editor of John Joseph Adams Books, a new SF/Fantasy imprint from Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. He is also the series editor of *Best American Science Fiction & Fantasy*, as well as the bestselling editor of many other anthologies, including *The Mad Scientist’s Guide to World Domination*, *Robot Uprisings*, *Dead Man’s Hand*, *Armored*, *Brave New Worlds*, *Wastelands*, and *The Living Dead*. Recent and forthcoming projects include: *What the #@&% Is That?*, *Operation Arcana*, *Loosed Upon the World*, *Wastelands 2*, *Press Start to Play*, and *The Apocalypse Triptych: The End is Nigh, The End is Now, and The End Has Come*. Called “the reigning king of the anthology world” by Barnes & Noble, John is a two-time winner of the Hugo Award (for which he has been nominated ten times) and is a seven-time World Fantasy Award finalist. John is also the editor and publisher of *Lightspeed Magazine* and is a producer for *Wired.com’s The Geek’s Guide to the Galaxy* podcast. Find him on Twitter @johnjosephadams.

FICTION

Great Black Wave David Tallerman | 4002 words

Staff Sergeant Walker steps away from the Ridgeback, wipes sweat from his eyes with a dust-grimed bandana, and tries to make sense of the scene before him.

The heat has grown punishing. For a moment it twists the air, so that grey walls and desiccated bushes and sun-scorched faces above dark shalwar kameez all shiver unsettlingly. Walker wipes his eyes again and gradually the shimmering steadies. Yet still, the prospect doesn’t quite add up. Buildings that barely look like buildings; parapets of concrete, of heaped stone, but both an identical shade to the ground beneath and the cliff face behind. The whole place looks like it could be drawn back into the earth at any moment, like it has extracted itself only by some architectural force of will.

“This has a definite air of bullshit,” says Sergeant Ravu from Walker’s shoulder—but he’s careful to keep his voice low.

He has surely seen, as Walker has, the group of black-clad figures in the far background, where the village peters to meet the cliffs. There, a wide opening cleaves the rock: a tunnel evidently closed

off until recently by gates of wire mesh and which now stand open.

The men around the tunnel entrance are conspicuous in their sombre outfits, their wrap-around shades, their expensively light-weight body armour. Outside of what remains of the Afghan National Army, most of the boots on the ground these days belong to military contractors: professional soldiers in the narrowest of senses. But though there are a few private bomb-disposal outfits, their numbers are nowhere near sufficient to handle even the relatively unambitious revival of operations that has brought a diminished NATO force back to this land it swore, so recently and so adamantly, it had seen the back of.

Making a snap decision, Walker starts towards them, motioning Ravu to follow and for the rest to remain with the Ridgeback. He doesn't try to speak to the locals, who are watching impassively from shadowed alleyways and doorways. Behind him he can hear their translator, Aalem, making tentative greetings on his behalf. Walker catches Aalem's "As-salamu alaykum," and the customary echo, "Walaikum as-salaam"—words every soldier in Afghanistan quickly learns.

Peace be with you.

And peace to you also.

The first time he'd been told the meaning, long ago, it had struck Walker as painfully ironic. After a few weeks, when he'd seen more of what Afghanistan could do to bodies and souls, it had seemed merely sad. These days, the words barely register at all. He has said them, heard them, too many times, and still there's no sign of peace. The news calls this the second Afghanistan War—or, in more crass moments, Afghan Two—but all that shows is how little they understand the country's endlessly troubled history. Walker is no expert, but he knows he'd need more than his own two hands to tally every conflict this country has seen.

Walker picks a path through the centre of the village, trying to absorb an impression of his surroundings without appearing to. Drawing closer to the contractors, he holds off from speaking, knowing whoever's in command will identify themselves without needing to be asked. Sure enough, when he and Ravu are half a dozen paces away, one man steps forward. He's older than the others; there's grey about his temples and his eyes are that bit harder. "Denard," the man says. He doesn't offer to shake hands or, of course, salute.

"I'm Staff Sergeant Walker. This here is Sergeant Ravu. We got your ten-liner."

The man, Denard, just nods.

"What're we looking at?" Walker prompts.

"We've been tracking a group of insurgents. We think they're operating from somewhere nearby. Word is, Forensics have traced a bomb factory to around this area too." Denard motions towards the cave. "In there . . . we're getting noise off the Vallon, just inside the entrance." He indicates the metal detector propped against the cliff side, as though to corroborate his story.

But Walker recognises the model, knows it's a leftover from the last war. Odds are, it wouldn't have delivered anything meaningful that close to the wire-mesh gates. In any case, he doubts the contractors checked at all; better to call it in, get paid to sit around for a few hours and then let someone else take the risks.

"Okay," he says. "We'll take a look."

He's already turning away when Denard says, "Only, there's a problem."

Walker pauses. "Yeah?"

"The locals."

Walker can see maybe a dozen figures from where he's standing, all of them men and all of them watching. Yet there's nothing hostile in their scrutiny and there are no guns on display, as there so easily could be. "What about the locals?"

Denard gives a half shrug. "They say we can't go in. That it's forbidden."

He looks to one of his men, who Walker assumes is their translator. "Yeah," the man says. "Forbidden." He looks uncomfortable at the word.

Walker understands. There are plenty of reasons that the locals might not want Denard and his men snooping about in their cave—but to *forbid* it is something altogether different. Standing orders are to approach anything religious, anything cultural, with the utmost sensitivity. If Denard thinks that's what this is, of course he would want to make it somebody else's problem.

Walker notices only then that there are chains on the ground near to one of the gates, which presumably the contractors have cut away. The chains are in good condition, as are the gates; better, in fact, than anything else he's seen since they arrived. From the way they were cut, it's clear they were securing the gates from the outside.

"All right," Walker says. "We'll talk to them."

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"What did I tell you?" Ravu says. "All sorts of bullshit."

Walker, deep in thought, only grunts his agreement. He has never seen anywhere that looked less like a bomb factory in his life. But there's something going on, all right. He picked it up as they first walked through the village, and now it's unmistakable. The atmospheric are all off.

In Afghanistan, you learned fast to watch for the small details. No matter how many tours you had, you could never hope to gain the gut instincts of the locals—and so rather than watch for danger, you watched *them* instead. If there were kids playing, people working, chances were you were okay. But when the chatter died, when the people melted away . . . then you knew something was wrong.

Here, something is wrong. There are too many eyes on them, not enough movement. Moreover, they're vulnerable, no support for miles around; the nearest town is Jabal Saraj, but even Jabal Saraj is hardly near. If something goes down, can he rely on Denard? Yet it's a futile question. If he could rely on Denard then the man would be with them here, right now, instead of hanging around that goddamned cave he's so preoccupied with.

Ahead, Walker is glad to see that Pieterse had moved the Ridgeback from the centre of the road, pulled it close to one of the larger houses. The rest of Walker's team—Brimstone 60—are loitering around the entrance, and it's apparent that somewhere along the line, negotiations have been conducted for them to make this building their temporary headquarters. Walker approves; it has few windows, access to a parapeted roof space and another low wall around its front and side. In other words, it's defensible—should it come to that.

To Pieterse, Walker asks, "Anything happening?"

Pieterse grins. "Not a thing, Sarge. Deader than disco."

Walker glances around for their translator, not seeing him asks, "Where's Aalem?"

Pieterse motions towards the doorway. "He's talking to the local guvnor."

"Okay." To all of them, Walker says, "Make yourselves comfy. But stay sharp." He indicates with the slightest motion of his eyes the nearest local, perfectly still in the shadows between two ramshackle houses. "Eyes on, all right?"

They don't need telling. They've been in situations like this a hundred times before. Every one of them knows how quickly and how entirely things can go south in Afghanistan. But they're also short-handed, so a little extra caution can't be a bad thing.

Inside, the room is simply furnished. There's a woven mat and a few cushions on the floor, a table and chair in one corner, a stove opposite that. Aalem and another man—dressed much like those silent observers outside, with no obvious mark of authority—are seated upon the mat, deep in conversation. Seeing them enter, Aalem gets to his feet and says, "This man is named Karzai, and he's chief here."

Walker and the man, Karzai, exchange greetings. Karzai is in his forties, maybe, but his face is so weathered, so devoid of expression, that it's difficult to judge. He seems tense, though, in fact radiates tension—and so, for that matter, does Aalem.

Walker addresses the translator in English. "You've explained why we're here?"

Aalem nods uncomfortably. "Yes. But he says—no one goes in the cave. Nothing goes in. No man. No animal. Nothing . . ." He struggles for the right words. "Nothing that thinks."

Nothing that thinks? Ravu's prediction is growing more accurate by the minute. "Did he explain why?" Walker asks.

Aalem shrugs. "He won't."

"Won't?"

Another shrug. "He says he can't."

A part of Walker wants to argue. This is some superstition, clearly, or else a failure of translation; either way, he could do without it. Whatever his instincts say, perhaps the cave is being used for building bombs. Or as an arms stash, maybe, or for storing opium ready for transit across the border. Then again, maybe Islam has somehow failed to penetrate to this obscure mountain outpost, and they're about to defile the holy site of some religion he's never even heard of.

Walker turns to Ravu. "We'll send in the Birdeater," he decides.

Ravu chuckles; nothing about this situation seems to be fazing him. "Are you kidding? That thing's smarter than half the people in this room."

Walker smiles; but he knows Ravu isn't altogether joking. The Hollier EOD-90 Birdeater represents the very cutting edge of robotic bomb disposal. They are on strict instructions to give the machine

a work-out in the field, on equally strict instructions to return it without so much as a scratch.

Then again, the Birdeater is hard to scratch. He's seen one take a direct hit from a twenty kilogram device and walk away; blow a Birdeater up and it might bounce around, but chances are it will not break. However, all the new wave of bomb-disposal robots can take a punch; what sets the Birdeater apart, what Ravu is referring to, is not what it can withstand but what it can do. The first time Walker saw it in action was the first time he realised he might one day be looking for a new career. That was the day he watched a robot detect and dispose of three EODs of varying design in a little over thirty minutes, with no human intervention whatsoever.

So, yes, the Birdeater is smart. But not, he likes to think, quite as smart as he himself. At any rate, he won't be using it in that capacity today; in user-operated mode it's only a tool, though still an extraordinary one.

"Go get it," Walker tells Ravu. "I want him to see it."

Ravu steps out and a minute later is easing through the narrow doorway, his silhouette bulked by the odd-shaped pack he's now wearing and the thing like a particularly ugly briefcase he carries in one hand. Ravu puts the briefcase on the table, carefully shrugs off the backpack and lays it on the ground.

Immediately, with a whisper of servers, the backpack gets up.

Now it has eight spindly legs, which have unfolded from beneath it. It looks less like a spider than its name implies, but still more insect than machine. Walker clicks a latch on the briefcase and flips its lid up, revealing a screen and keyboard. As he does so, the screen flickers to life, and abruptly he can see a crystal-clear view of his own back, the table and the console, the image diminishing in endless repetition: the view from the Birdeater's camera.

He turns back to Aalem and to Karzai, who's watching the contraption that squats in the centre of the room with unabashed horror. "Explain to him that it's a robot," Walker says. "Explain that we won't step foot inside without their permission. We just want to have a look around; check there's nothing going on here that shouldn't be."

Aalem rattles off a half-dozen sentences, using conspicuously more words than Walker did—and then fielding objections, one after another. After a couple of minutes, seizing on a lull in the debate, Walker adds, "Make sure he understands that either the robot goes in or we do."

Aalem hesitates, and then nods. When he speaks again, he does so only briefly, and the tone of his voice has changed. Karzai's response is equally concise. Then Aalem says to Walker, "He asks—this is a machine?"

Walker sighs inwardly. Has it really taken five minutes to establish so little? "And you told him, yes."

"I did," Aalem agrees. "Then he asks—it can't think?"

"It's a *machine*," Walker emphasises. Yet something about the half-truth snags at his conscience.

"Then," Aalem says, "he agrees. But just the machine."

"Just the machine," Walker confirms. Then to Ravu, "Go get it ready."

Ravu hoists the Birdeater by its straps, hauls it onto his back; the legs fold back into their inactive positions and once again the robot is a shapeless mass of metal and plastic. Ten minutes later—time in which the three of them stand in uncomfortable silence—Ravu is back. “Ready to go,” he declares. *

NIGHTMARE is an online horror and dark fantasy magazine. In NIGHTMARE's pages, you will find all kinds of horror fiction, from zombie stories and haunted house tales, to visceral psychological horror.

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Kansas Banned Books List - 2019 - Apr 22, 2016 Â· Prince Rogers Nelson was born in Minneapolis on June 7, Apparently Prince's ex-wife, Mayte Garcia, is writing a book due out this Apr 01, 2017 Â· Although he was a beloved rock icon, as a husband, Prince was a nightmare! and wife Manuela Testolini Nelson are divorcing, People magazine reports. Index Of Mash Mkv - 2020 (14) 14; January, 2020 (7) 7; February, 2020 (7) 7; 2019 (79) 79; January, 2019 (9) 9; February, 2019 (6) 6; March, 2019 (4) 4; April, 2019 (3) 3; May, 2019 Bad Blood Uploady - Archive February 2019 1; July 2018 1; May 2017 1; April 2017 1; March 2017 1; February 2017 3; January 2017 5; December 2016 12; November Get best quote from Ramada Udaipur Resorts and Spa and book your date!. As the dusk gave way to the night, the village was scared of yet another impending nightmare. Usagi Yojimbo (series) - Nightmare Magazine, Issue 45 (June 2016) eBook: Nightmare Magazine, John Joseph Adams, Joyce Carol Oates, Marc Laidlaw, David Tallerman, Rena Mason Robots in American Popular Culture - The stories in this issue of Beneath Ceaseless Skies are, to me, about choice.. Quick Sips - The Book Smugglers June 2016 Quick Sips - Nightmare #45. The great thing about speculative horror that Nightmare Magazine Bailey, Dale : tous les produits - The NOOK Book (eBook) of the Nightmare Magazine, Issue 45 (June 2016) by John Adams, Joyce Carol Oates, David Tallerman, Marc Laidlaw Warhammer 40 000 Art Book - 00b: June 9 2013 at 19:17: CD2. com Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, George UKULELE SONG-BOOK, 400+ songs with lyrics and chords -great collection, with Gees Popular Music Bee Gees Lyrics Teen Pinups Rock Magazines Posters - Your True False Question 2 Racism was the predominant social issue of the 50s. Nightmare Magazine, Issue 47 (august 2016) (english Edition -

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