

Revenge of the Bronsters

by Stephen Ward

The roar of the tractor and crash of the fallen oak were still echoing over the Fayetteville State campus when something stirred in the hollow trunk of the tree. Small eyes glowered, tiny nostrils flared. The creature scurried for safety in the myriad of underground tunnels which ran in every direction from the spot that had been the huge oak's base. The rattled Bronster, its eyes smarting from the sudden infusion of light, sneezed and shook splinters from its body. Its mouth agape

with horror, the little creature watched as the tractor crawled away, disappearing behind a mound of freshly heaved dirt. Then, chattering through clenched jaws, the little monster turned and disappeared into one of the tunnels.

For centuries, the Bronsters had lived in peace. When the university had been built above their homes, they had been content to co-exist. They roamed their tunnels, using the big oak tree as their lone exit to the outside world; a world they

only visited on nights so dark there was not enough light to hurt their sensitive eyes. In fact, they had come to appreciate the learning facilities of the school. Many of the young Bronsters had been carried into the Butler Building office of Dr. Valenti during the dead of night to be introduced to the reading of the great classics.

But tragedy had struck on the occasion that they had boldly ventured into Room 325 and attempted to view the monitors. The Bronsters nearest the screen had been blinded

by the brightness of the screen.

As the frightened Bronster, about the size of a Coke can, hurried through the tunnel, an idea was being formulated in its peanut-sized brain. A few minutes later, the large assembly room of the Bronster family was filled in answer to an urgent thump - thump-thumping.

Two girls were busily unloading their car in the parking lot of Hood Hall when a rustling sound in the nearby shrubbery

caught their attention.

"What was that?" one girl asked.

The leaves were still.

"A cat, maybe?"

They returned to their task, unaware of the clumps of leaves and branches that moved across the lawn toward the dorm.

Moments later, the girls were finished and went inside the dorm. They were not alone. A stream of small visitors, almost invisible in the darkness, scurried down the stairs into the basement.

The lights went out.

Girls screamed.

One of the coeds stood in front of the washer where she had been gathering her clothes and came eyeball to eyeball with something in the bundle.

The girl and the Bronster screamed in unison. Dropping the bundle, she kicked it and the invader into the dryer and slammed the door shut.

The result was chaotic.

The girl kept screaming. And the drum of the dryer spun like a wheel on a hamster cage.

A drunk little Bronster flopped out of the opening dryer door. He staggered across the floor.

Still screaming, the girl turned to run. Her flight was stopped in mid-stride when she saw the movement on the stairs.

Creatures! Hundreds of little monsters were flowing up the steps. She couldn't make out an individual shape, just a mass of moving ugly. The grunts and groans coming from the horde added to her feeling of impending disaster. The gnashing teeth and unintelligible rasping were too much to allow someone of right mind and self-preservation to linger. Her innate curiosity was drowned in a pool of fear.

She did two things: she raised the intensity of her scream and made a new door out of the window.

The Bronsters were too quick, though. Several Bronsters pounced on the girl as she sailed into the air. Bronsters clung to the braids of her hair.

Bronsters. Bronsters everywhere.

By this time, the girls of Hood Hall were all into screaming, trying to outdo each other's intensity and creativity. The little Bronsters were egging them on, joining the eerie chorus. The cries were so loud that Professor Whaley leapt from his bed and sprained his wrist trying to turn the light on. In

another nearby home, the commotion made Dr. Anthony toss and turn and use ungrammatical English in his sleep. Dr. McDonald thought he was in the *Heart of Darkness*, and cried, "My ivory! Save my ivory!"

The arrival of security guards helped settle the chaos. The guards tried to make sense of the scene. They could find little with the flashlights. The girls were too incoherent to be of help. Cries of "Turn on the lights!" and "Monsters! Monsters!" made no sense to the men.

Finally, one of the security guards found the circuit breaker in the basement and hit the power switch, flooding the dorm with...

light...

and silence.

Coeds were caught in every position conceivable. Some were standing with their hands clutching their hair. Others were holding objects such as brooms in defensive poses. Still others, perhaps the more prudent, were hiding under beds. All had a look of disbelief on their faces.

The security guards listened. Looked. Scratched their heads in bewilderment. And left.

The Bronsters gathered in their tunnels behind the Butler Building. Without the oak which had served so many of their needs, including entrance, exit, gathering place, food, shelter and comfort, they were at a loss. The meeting was called to order. Plans were made for the next attack.

Morning. The talk of campus was the Hood Hall incident. Even the girls who had been victimized weren't sure what they had seen. Beside the clothes washer was a hint, scrawled in a pile of spilled detergent:

BRONSTER WAS HERE!

However, no one was sure if it was for real or if one of the coeds was pulling a prank.

There were two strange occurrences that morning. First, Mrs. Chavis found strange little teeth marks on a piece of birthday cake left on her desk. Mice?

And something had gnawed several papers by Dr. Friedman's books she had placed in a cardboard box in her office.

But this was only the beginning.



The Flesh and Soul Motel

by Stephen T. Ward

In this heart of darkness below the marble marquee in this single room, my soul is boarding a prisoner in this icy chamber forever! Pounding, slamming, screaming soul, with the universe around me, I cannot escape, but lie in this rotting core with the worms approaching. Must I die? Will I survive, a soul digested and squeezed through the intestines of worms?

Slamming my soul against the cardiac muscle, I discover I can make the cold blood pump through my desert highways. Dead

but alive,

I claw at the lining of my casket til the cold blood bleeds from my fingertips.

Pounding and pounding, Dead Body, lift these Frankenstein hands and tear this heart from its boney shrine. Mouth, rip the sutures from your lips and puncture this heart with your gold-robed teeth. FFFRRREEEEEEEE. YESSSSS! My soul is free until it crashes into the bronze casket. AGAIN! Again, I am confined. Must a thousand years pass before the rust devours the bronze and sets me free?

Oh, how I cry tears of embalming fluid. The only song to sing is the music of growing hair and nails.

Oh, how I cry, with the stars and worlds revolving around me and waiting for me to explore.

At night, I hear the moans of my brothers. My only comfort is knowing, I am not alone.

And I wonder if it was the Devil who invented the casket.

Poetry Corner

The Creator

by Arnell Anderson

The sky fades, the sun sets
Life turns to night.
The sun rises,
Life turns to morning.

Lush green forest in the Spring.
Dense brown forest in the Fall.

Splat! Splat! I hear the rain
Snowflakes, cold winters
Heat waves, hot summers
High tides and low tides
Beautiful dogwoods blooming
He watches over the earth
God is almighty.

Autumn

by Arnell Anderson

A cool breeze
Blue jays singing
Trees shedding
Squirrels nestled in trees
Orange, yellow pumpkins
Children gathering
harvests
Before the frost.