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Phoebe, Meet Squid

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Phoebe, Meet Squid

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Phoebe Ranch awoke one morning to discover that a giant squid had replaced her house. It isn't very often that squid might replace things such as a house, but when these natural wonders occur, one must be ready to face the plethora of rubberneckerers, which might be soon to follow."

Cover Page Footnote

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Phoebe, Meet Squid

flash fiction by
Maria Loudis

Phoebe Ranch awoke one morning to discover that a giant squid had replaced her house. It isn't very often that squid might replace things such as a house, but when these natural wonders occur, one must be ready to face the plethora of rubberneckerers, which might be soon to follow.

There was nothing particularly special about her humble abode between the others commingling on the block. In fact, besides the peeling purplish hue, which once might've been considered a paint job, you probably wouldn't even recognize it as a habitated residence.

Luckily, Phoebe was always prepared for such strange occurrences and buried a few of her things next to the yellow shed in the back, which thankfully remained unsquided.

Glasses? Check. Underwear? Check. Microwaveable popcorn? Check. Socks? Check. A signed copy of the instant classic *Fight Club*? Check. And finally, the semiautomatic, broad range, fully loaded harpoon in the collectible cheetah print, complete with net and gold fringe rope (available from the Environmental Protection Agency Website, green seal approved).

On the off chance something else was lurking in the background, Phoebe brushed off her pajama bottoms and tiptoed out of reach of the giant squid. Maneuvering among rosebushes and manicured lawns, with her cheetah print harpoon in hand, being sure to avoid stepping on the flowers.

It was a cloudy day, so luckily there wasn't a glare coming off the wetted and rubbery epidermis of the mollusk, and she was able to take a predator's stance. She hid between a garbage can and a mailbox, throwing a newspaper onto the squid to test its reflexes.

"Plap," the newspaper landed, and the mollusk remained unstirred.

Phoebe, Meet Squid (cont.)

flash fiction by
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Phoebe shrugged and decided blandly, to attempt her feat again. This time she tossed a box. Nothing. Then an umbrella. Nothing. An old typewriter, a dog, and finally the very garbage can she was using for protection. Phoebe felt sad and abhorred. In one day she failed to wake up in her own bed, and awaken the colossal critter seemingly occupying the space her house should.

Failure? Think again. What Phoebe hadn't realized was that the giant squid's tentacles were flopping 30 feet above her head, and as she walked in the opposite direction, the tentacles began to descend.

Luckily the tentacles were breaking the sound barrier, making a whooshing noise above the unsuspecting girl, and even more fortunate was it, that Phoebe happened to be trigger happy. She aimed the cheetah print harpoon without hesitation and shishkabobbed the squid. The tentacles retracted in agony, accompanied by an oddly girlish whine emitting from the creature.

She netted the appendages down, and climbed to the highest point of the squid. Standing for a moment, Polka dot PJs blowing in the breeze, and mangled hair halting at her ears, she heaved a sigh and reflected on how badass her life was.

"You took my house," said the harpooner.

"You ate my kin," replied the squid, squinting and wheezing in agony.

"Shouldn't you be in water?" asked Phoebe.

"Shouldn't you be dead?" asked the squid.

And so it was. When Phoebe turned around, a site of carnage and flames met her. Each house morphed to ash, and their surrounding yards reduced to cinders. Atomic shrapnel was what replaced the neighborhood entrance, and a gaping hole at the mouth of the street. When Phoebe finally realized where she was, she caught a glimpse of the very glasses she was wearing, which were demolished on the ground.

The squid was gone, and so was she.