

## A Fire (Alarm?) Victim

by: Peter Zonary

He was only twenty-one with his whole life before him. He was just starting his last year in university when his last breath was turned into a gasp for air that wasn't there. It was only three months into the year.

He had lived in the same building for four years; well, almost four years. He never finished the last one.

His first couple of years were great ones. He made many new friends and they all had some good times together. His friends still remember those times, some better than others. One of them said, "It's hard to believe. We used to get our kicks doing it and now he's gone because of it. I guess he just grew accustomed to hearing it going off. We all did".

In his third year he became more and more busy with school work. The good times lessened, but there was still time for fun. He met a girl and within a couple of months they knew they were in love. In fact, they even spoke of marriage, not right away, but after they both finished school. He was thinking of going for his Masters, or maybe even try for law school. His marks improved greatly in the second half of his third year and he became increasingly interested in his work.

That summer he got a job as an assistant in a law firm. The people he worked with were shocked by the news, "It really is saddening. He was just a kid. He showed such promise and enthusiasm while he was here. He had a great future ahead of him".

He worked hard that summer, putting his money away for his future, and his future with her.

His parents were very proud of him. His mother couldn't speak, but his father spoke, "My only son is gone, and why? Because he didn't pay attention to

the fire alarm. My only child is dead because he ignored a warning that could have saved his life. He just fell back asleep sure that the alarm would be turned off at any time. I know that that is what happened, he used to tell me about how people were always pulling the alarm and so people just ignored it.....Why didn't he leave the building? Why didn't he leave with everybody else? He was my only child, and now he's gone...!" That was all he could say as they lowered his son's body into the dark, cold ground.

His friends wiped away their tears and said they were sorry as they placed the flowers around his grave. Sorry, because they felt the part that they played in his death. Wasn't it them who used to run up and down the halls with him, pulling the fire alarm just for kicks? Wasn't it them who helped build up his insensitivity to the alarm?

In his third year he gave up the practice of pulling the alarm because he was busy with school work and his girlfriend, and maybe he was even starting to grow-up and realize how childish and dangerous it was. Of course, that didn't stop his friends and other people from doing it. He just ignored it.

In fact, he ignored it that night; his last night. He had just finished his last midterm. He was really tired. His friends wanted him to go out and party. He said he was too tired (he hadn't slept in two nights and was exhausted) and promised them that he would go out the following night. He broke his promise.

He went to bed about ten o'clock and was just falling asleep

when it happened. The fire alarm was pulled. He just laughed and thought, "Someone's having a good time tonight." He laid his head on his pillow and fell asleep.

He had never before went without sleep for such a long time and he was going to catch up on what he lost. He didn't know it would be permanent.

The fire had started in the apartment down the hall from him. A woman had left a lit cigarette hanging over the table edge while she went to answer the phone. It was her sister. They hadn't talked since August. The cigarette fell and caught the drapes on it's way to the floor. When the woman noticed that her drapes were on fire she panicked and ran out of her apartment. The fire spread rapidly across her apartment and through the door she had left open.

Another tenant noticed the smoke and pulled the fire alarm. He then left the building. Most of the tenants stayed put until they smelled the smoke, some had to wake their roommates who were sleeping through the excitement.

His roommates had gone out for the night. His neighbours didn't know that he was in his apartment. They all left the building.

When the fire department arrived the fire had spread down the hall and past his apartment door. They would have been there sooner, but they were answering a false alarm across town.

It took a long while to extinguish the flames, but only a few minutes to extinguish his life. They found him lying on the floor by the hall door. The smoke must have woken him when it was too late. His lungs were already full of the poisonous gas when he tried to make his way to the door blocked by fire. He died grasping for the door knob and gasping for a breath.

A young man, dead, at 21.

## Nightmare

by Wendell Blackett.

There are always times when I can't see the light shining in the dark;

Only one alibi is needed for a real dream to come to life.

If a nightmare will find you tonight,

Then just come away from your strife,

You know the moments are endless when the goal is in your sight.

A day turns into a week where one moment keeps rolling.

No heart is waiting in the distance for a pounding of a drum.

If your nightmare doesn't mend itself and go out of sight,

You would see that the world will always be glum.

Yet I think there is hope for some guiding light.

Once I saw a young lady feeling down and blue.

All that was left were slowly fading memories.

Her nightmare had left her in a desperate plight.

Still some hope was left as long as here is chemistry.

It will come only when you are willing to take he flight.

One last dream in a world that seems to pass,

A real meaning can come for you and me,

Soon the nightmare will leave after the night.

You will no longer feel the need to turn and flee,

Then it will be my turn to seek a brand new sight.

## The Story of the Never Found Love

by Wendell Blackett

Once upon a time there was a young man and a young girl.

They both were very lonely in their strange little worlds.

Neither of them ever came to find each other,

Even though they were really both in love with one another.

It is strange to tell this sad tale of woe.

How this Juliet never knew she could have her Romeo.

How could this happen when they both secretly cared?

It was due to the fact they never took the chance anytime or anywhere.

One day he was going to tell her, he felt brave and alive,

But the words were entangled in his throat as he tried.

She could not read the mind of the man;

This left both feeling sad, looking for a plan.

He kept thinking, "What is the use she doesn't know me?"

She kept saying, "My love will simply never be."

Her mind kept racing as she thought of his smile,

His eyes held the picture of her face all the while

The two never did find the words to say how much they felt in love.

Never could they reason out the rooted troubles of the dove.

If there is one lesson to be learned from this sad story of woe.

It is that in matters of the heart sometimes it is best to let the feelings show.