Jakquan Jackson
Duluth, GA 30096
(678)-760-5118
Zenjjackson@gmail.com

About 2,900 Words

Active member, AWC

The Toilet Troll

BY Zen J. Jackson

Yoki saw a hand in the toilet a month ago. That was the day he decided to never use the bathroom again. Of course, he *had* to use it. It was only natural. In return, he kept away from the toilet altogether, disturbed by its menacing atmosphere. It was loud and rung a long hiss from within the looming shadow filling the room. It sounded like a tea kettle blowing steam agitatedly waiting for someone to tend to it. At night, he'd cover his head with a pillow to block the noise, but the pillow never stopped the sound, it only pushed it further away.

Yoki prayed for another way around the bathroom, but this was impossible. His bedroom was on one side of the hall, the staircase was

on the other, and the eerie toilet he passed every day and night rested in the middle. He hesitated to get to the other side as if some-*thing* would snatch him mid-stride. This made him feel crazy. So, to confirm he wasn't, one morning he took a skittish peek into the deep blackness filling the slightly open doorway. He listened. He heard the hiss, that was expected, but what he heard next wasn't.

"Yoki…" the unpleasant cry of a whisper hurled the boy down the stairs right into a seat as if he'd been shot out of a circus cannon.

Without a *good morning*, "Yoki?" said his puzzled mother.

"Yes?"

"Have you been taking rolls of toilet tissue from the bathroom? " She asked.

"No." Yoki fixed his naturally crooked glasses before giving his oatmeal a stir.

"Hm," pondered mother.

He wasn't lying. In fact, Yoki might have been the only eleven-year-old who never told a lie to any of his parents. If she had asked, *"Yoki, did you take all the tissue from the grocery bag off the kitchen table, and keep the rest while leaving one just outside the bathroom door?"* then he would have undoubtedly answered yes.

Later that afternoon, Yoki could hear his father's arrival from the car's breaks squealing to a halt from the kitchen window. When he came in, without a *good afternoon*, he went straight to his son.

"Yoki?" he said.

"Yes?"

“Are you taking the toilet tissue from the bathroom and leaving it in the backyard?”

“No.”

Yoki wasn’t lying. If he’d been asked, “ *Yoki, have you been taking tissue from your bedroom into the backyard?”* he would have undoubtedly answered yes.

His father turned to his wife with a look of insanity. “I found six rolls outside. Six wet rolls!”

“Lucky you. I haven’t found any,” she replied bitterly.

“Look…” said Father to his wife. He pointed to the back door while leading the way. Yoki Calmly waited for them to share whatever discoveries they’d found.

“One, two, three, four, five, six…” said father observing the backyard. “…And more, over there!”

Father stepped outside to get another count. Five minutes later, he returned in fury. Mother tried to soothe him as he hollered, “Is this a sick joke?”

“Maybe it was a dog, o-or a raccoon…” persuaded mother, but father's mind was already made up.

Yoki could tell by the way his father limped and pinched his eye in pain something went wrong. Worst of all, his work suite was covered in dirt. He undressed outside the doorway and threw his clothes in the garbage, still clenching their noses as they entered. Mother gently walked him in holding his arm. Yoki could now smell the problem. What he thought was dirt, wasn’t.

“Yoki…” said his father.

His thoughts were scrambled but his face showed self-control.

" In my precious back yard is a pile-a-no. Not just a pile, landmines of poo!" he struck a look of blame toward his son, expecting a confession. "Yoki, have you been using the bathroom?"

"Yes."

Father rested his eyelids for a half a second, relaxing before he re-asked the question, "Yoki…Are you using the bathroom in the *house*? In the *toilet* like the rest of us?"

"No."

In a sour tone, father asked, "You mean to tell me the poo I fell in is yours?"

"Yes."

"This is Ridiculous Yoki! You're almost Thirteen years old. You're almost a teenager, that's too old for all this nonsense. I told you many times before, there is no such thing as a Toilet Troll!"

Yoki lowered his head in shame.

"Listen closely, Yoki. You're going to use the bathroom like a civil human being, not outside like an animal," said Father.

"No! I cant. What if it pulls me in?" Yoki's words raced from his mouth. A half-smile opened onto his father's face as he knelt to Yoki's level. Yoki pinched his nose as he did.

"Yoki, you're going to be all right. Your mom and I use the bathroom all the time and have never been pulled into any toilet. Trust me. Save your worries for a burglar or an accident, not something silly and made up."

" I saw it before. I know I did." Yoki shook his head as the hand haunted his mind.

His father stood up. " Moving forward you will use the toilet and keep yourself clean. Starting today, no laptop, no video games or television until you stop this madness. Is that clear?"

Yoki tried to nod but his body went stiff.

"Is. That. Clear?

Finally, he broke his silence, " Yes," he said to the floor. He stood there in ponder and didn't move until he was the only one left in the room.

***

Yoki laid awake that night with a blankless stare at his bedroom ceiling. a steady drip from the bathroom faucet kept him up. As his mind traveled, he sifted through ideas. *Diapers. If I get diapers no will know*. The idea felt perfect for only a few seconds. He soon realized he'd have to buy them, and all it would take is one dirty diaper to make matters worse with his parents.

The dripping continued. He refused to put on his pajamas and get comfortable. Comfort would certainly send him to the bathroom the quickest. All he had to do was loosen his entire body to use the toilet with ease but tonight, to avoid everything all together, he stayed away from drinks and ate as little as possible, avoiding the bathroom at any cost. He stiffened his body until all felt clenched,

then before he knew it, his eyelids felt two pounds heavier and closed all on their own.

To his surprise, Yoki shot awake believing he slept for the rest of the night but when he looked at the clock, only ten minutes had passed. He couldn't remember the dream he had, except that it felt all too real to be one. Sweat covered him and his heart thumped his chest as if he'd swam a marathon while his bladder ached at its limit. Without a choice, an urgent dance led him into the depths of the hall, stopping just outside the bathroom. The doorway had a small opening as usual. It was the household sign meaning: available for use. With a pause, he considered locking the door from the inside and shutting it, ending all of his problems for good. It seemed to be the best idea at that moment but he was certain his father wouldn't agree. The dripping paced like a ticking clock, and the more it dripped, the more Yoki ached. With little force, he pushed the door open to avoid any creaking. Shining a spotless white, the toilet waited for him.

Yoki stuck only his hand into the room instinctively searching for the light switch. A warm glow flickered before exposing the room in its entirety. He looked around. A memory returned to him of time when he ran into the hall covered in soap suds after hearing his name bubbling from the toilet. He gulped a nervous swallow. The dripping broke the silence one drop after another. It pinched his last nerve. He whipped over to fasten the knob but just as he did, it stopped all on its own. Yoki refused to rattle himself with worry. *Faucets can do that sometimes, right?*

He fought the pain for as long as he could. He extended his arm towards the toilet lid with his feet planted by the entrance. His fingertips struggled to open it till finally, the crevis of his nail slowly raised the cover. Just as it opened, screeching hiss slung him back into the hall and into his parent's room where Yoki shook his father with all his terror in mind.

“I heard it. The toilet troll! It’s here! I tried to use the bathroom, but -- It’s going to eat me alive!” Yoki’s words couldn’t keep up with his tongue. He spoke so fast, his father could barely understand him.

“I have to be at work in a few hours, Yoki,” his father spoke with his eyes fastened.

“It’s the toilet troll!”

Father kicked himself out of bed swinging his feet onto the surface. “C’mon, we’re going to settle this once and for all,” he said leading the way.

***

“You see…” said Yoki's father pointing inside the tank of the toilet. “When the toilet ‘hisses,’ that means the flapper isn’t closed all the way. If the water can’t fill to the top then...” He pointed to a black piece of plastic squirting a thin stream of water. “--Look, this is what’s hissing. It won't stop until the bowl is full. He jiggled the handle and pointed to a little chain tugging the flapper

till it fixed itself onto an opening. “Remember, Jiggle the handle after you use it,” he finished.

The water slowly filled the tank while the cover was placed back on top. The ceramic grinding reminded Yoki of an ancient tomb when being closed. Yoki was now looking into the eyes of his father. He knelt to his son's level as he did each time he had an important message for him.

“Listen, this is the last time, okay. You’ll get through this. When it’s all over, you’ll look back at this and see how silly this all was. It’ll be a story for your children,” he said with a smile. “You can do this. Use the bathroom, flush, wash your hands, then go tuck yourself in.”

Yoki gave a soft nod. He believed his father’s words this time around and the hug he received from him made even more convincing. The father stood up and dragged himself to bed with his last words of the night, “Don’t wake me up again about this toilet stuff…” He mumbled as he disappeared down the hall. Yoki didn’t feel the need to respond.

It’s been a while since the boy felt this comfortable in the bathroom. He stood before the toilet and took a calming deep breath. He lowered his shorts and closed his eyes. As he did, the toilet hissed a long screech. Yoki immediately pulled his pants up and decided to run but then the water began bubbling, and somehow it froze him right where he stood. He tried to move but it was useless. It was if he’d been hypnotized.

A finger, then a hand, then a wrist crept slowly from the shadow covering the small hole in the toilet. It was unnatural. Layers of its

skin floated towards the surface while still attached to the limb. It moved like a snake bending upward as if it didn’t have joints. It rose from the water where the loose flesh settled back onto cratered patches.

Yoki’s arms felt like they were bounded by an anaconda, yet he managed to force his hand onto a plunger placed between the sink and the toilet. Sweat trickled down the side of his forehead. It took every ounce of strength to retrieve his weapon of choice, and every once to lift it up. Finally, he shoved it into the toilet. A splash smacked against Yoki's face. Bulbs of the toilet water cover his glasses. Still, he could see the wooden handle rattling around madly as if he caught a mythical fish. He fell back tripping over his own feet. Pressed against the floor, his eyes trailed along with the wooden handle. He felt victorious. He felt it was the end of the Toilet Troll just as the plunger suddenly stood still. *It’s over, I-I did it.*

Yoki didn’t realize how heavy he was breathing until he could hear the air passing in and out of his mouth. He looked around for a ledge to help himself up. By the time he figured the sink would be best, the plunger was sucked into the toilet and disappeared before him. His face widened. Fear made him clumsier than ever before. He shivered and shook trying to get onto his feet but the wet floor caused him to slip over and over again. It wasn’t until the plunger shot up into the ceiling and never came back down, Yoki felt he truly needed to run for his life. By then, it was too late. With its sewage hand and abnormally long arm, it stretched from the toilet fastening

around Yoki’s ankle with an unshakable grip. The hand was thin, but it was strong. It dragged Yoki like prey caught in the wild. He could hear his name being called, hissing from the toilet, *“Yoki.”*

With a free foot, Yoki held off the creature’s pull by forcing it against the rim of the toilet. It only lasted as long as his strength would allow. He began to cry. The kind of cry where he felt so helpless and weak, that his voice cracked and disappeared past his lips. The pool of water resting in the bowl first meet his toes, then greeted his knee, spreading goose flesh amongst his entire body. It was cold. His barefoot was disappearing into the toilet pipe into the unseen along with the Troll's hand. Slowly, Yoki continued to submerge. His body formed into the size of the pipe as if his bones turned to liquid. His entire leg seemed missing while the other stretched to the opposite side, pointing straight out of the toilet. His body never bent such a way before, he became a contortionist and despite how grotesque it appeared, the pain was nonexistent.

Water filled his ears then cover his face. With another tug, his nose was the last to sink. Bubbles gurgled from his mouth distorting his view of the ceiling. His glasses floated to the top. It grew darker and darker until darkness was all he could see. A Thousand questions flooded his thoughts and raced his heart till he couldn’t care anymore. He stopped fighting. He stopped resisting, and as he did the pulling of his body grew easier for the creature. His body formed with the twisting pipes, slipping through like a wet worm. As his body shifted through effortlessly, he gave up full control of his body, including the grip he held on his full, aching bladder. In doing so, a

warm stream of liquid poured from his lower half. The relief was so grand, Yoki nearly fell asleep. Warmth fell from his body and soaked his ankle where the monstrous held. A sizzling popped and crackled. Smoke tried to crawl through open space but there weren't any. As a shrieking scream let off a long howl of pain, the pressure around Yoki's ankle dissolved. The smoke forced him up like an inflating balloon, shooting him out of the toilet and onto the floor. Cries of pain still continued until it finally died out into soft silence. When Yoki rose from his feet, he flicked the switch controlling the fan. As all the smoke cleared, a nervous giggle slipped through his thin lips.

***

"…And that was the very last time I allowed that Toilet Troll to ever touch me," said Yoki holding a fist out in a clinch. His back hunched in a rather comfortable leather chair molded to his comfort. Two children, a boy and a girl around the age of five sat on his lap with ears and eyes wide open.

"So did you ever get out of trouble, grandad? Did you get your games back?" asked the little boy.

"Of course I did."

"Will you ever see the troll again?" asked the little girl.

" I--," Yoki was cut off by a voice from the doorway.

"Dad, are you telling scary stories again?" said a thin woman poking her gentle face into the room.

"you mean tales of courage!"

“Haven’t heard that before,” she replied, nudging the two children out of the room with a smile. “Come downstairs. It’s time to sing your Happy Birthday to your grandpa.”

“Can I blow them out?” the boy begged,

“Can *I* blow them out?” competed the girl.

“of course,” said Yoki, “You both can. I’ll meet everyone downstairs, I have to use the bathroom and washup.”

“Don’t let the Toilet Troll get you,” said the little girl.

“Don’t you worry, little one,” replied Yoki as waddled down the old hallway he knew all too well.

Yoki opened the lid to the toilet and stared into it. “ Come out you old bugger,” A hand slowly crept up the hole just as he expected. “ There you are.” A smirk stretched his face as he could hear his name hissing from the toilet.

“Yoki.” Just as the hand broke the surface of the water, Yoki relaxed and smiled as the sizzling rang like music to his ears.