

Willoh Tyler – Writing Samples

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Item Descriptions: SECT-MACHINA (2023)

A Cockroach's Shell

A shell off the back of a cockroach who was presumably ripped apart. Entrails of its previous owner still cling to the roof of the exoskeleton, embodying the history of a living thing which this shell was once part of. Now, the shell serves only as its grave.

A Cybernetic Hornet's Stinger

A genuine TUNGSTEN Corp. cybernetic hornet stinger. Its chrome and yellow tint gleam from its tip, but at the other end: the paint shows wear and becomes ultimately obfuscated by the flakes of insect exoskeleton. The stinger was probably forcibly removed from its original owner.

A Bag full of Bloody Loops (Currency)

A cloth bag, hastily hand-stitched, stained by dark splotches. At its neck is a corded wire that is not fully tied, leaving the bag partially open. The loops within shine under a light not with a metallic gleam, but with the sparkle of blood's uneven wetness.

Newspaper Clipping

A newspaper clipping. A picture sits prominently at the head of the paper, depicting a small bug with an X across its face. The headline and following text reads: The Dreg Problem is Worsening! These insectoids are not our brethren, they feast upon us by acting on their cannibalistic desires, slaying innocents from our civilized bug society. And their numbers are only growing!

Broken Phone

It's a communication device, a phone, that flips over itself. Heralded at the time as a fine invention that compacts the space of previously larger devices. Its hinge has given way and the phone now exists in two pieces, making it more pocketable than ever.

A Hacker's USB Drive

An old universal-serial-bus drive, or as it is more commonly known, a USB stick. This one has probably been seen used as a veteran hacking tool, delivering payloads of trojan-horseflies, viruses, and spyware across corporate infrastructures. It is the bane of any well-paid security agent.

A Ripped Open Spray Can

Hey! It's one of Mona's old spray cans! Now ripped apart by some bored bug looking to entertain themselves by making scrap. It features two Moth Eyes, Mona's signature, painted prominently on the frame of the can. It has served its purpose, if a little early to fall to the wayside, but now serves as a memento of the past.

Dialogue + Game Mechanics: THE ELECTION (Unpublished)

INT. EDITOR-IN-CHIEF'S PRIVATE OFFICE

It is Week Five of the Election.

The player character (YOU) is leading the chief of the hall monitors, RONALD MILLER (MILLER), into your private office, which is always used for your most important interviews. It used to be the teacher's office of the printing club. Miller Miller requested an interview with you, and this represents a huge chance to publish the voice of someone who is ordinarily very quiet, despite the power he wields.

Your notebook:

DIRT: You have reports from your investigative journalists that Miller was chastised in a private conversation with LeClair, his 'boss,' as it were.

INFO: People's support for the hall monitors is at an all-time low.

MILLER

(Closing the door behind him.)
This isn't really an interview.

YOU

Oh.
(Both disappointed and confused.)
Okay?

MILLER

This is an ask - an ask for a favor.
You're printing a lot of stories that
paint our monitors in a bad light.
You're smart. You know that we are
the thin line between chaos and order.
We **are** safety. If you take us away...
shit happens, that's what I'm trying to get
through to you.

The player can choose what to say based on INFO, DIRT, or relevant responses. The player's options are going to be based on what they have done so far: what they have gathered and whether they have already published information or kept it to themselves to use in a moment just like this.

YOU

(Asking a relevant question.)
What happens?

MILLER

Shit. Happens. Fire and flames.
You wouldn't understand what position
I'm in. I have to protect this island
from becoming an isle of shit and flies.
I'm willing to do what it takes.
Your paper and ink can stoke those flames,
but you can also put them out.
(He grins.)
You get me?

When relevant, the player will get to choose between options on how to respond.

YOU

(Playing dumb.)
I think..?

MILLER

(He groans,
convinced you're not as smart as he thought)
Stop printing stories that obviously
make us look bad. Okay? It's a favor.
We can return those favors.

YOU

(Asking about the favor.)
What sort of favor?

MILLER

(His grin widens.)
If you stop printing negative stories,
my guys *won't* mess with your guys
in the halls. How's that sound?

YOU

(Calling him out.)
Are you threatening my journalists,
Miller?

MILLER

Think about it. Make a wise decision,
editor-in-chief. And if our little talk
gets published, I'll make sure you're spending
the rest of this election in the hole.

YOU

(Choosing to ask about 'the hole.')

Wait, what's the hole?

MILLER

(He's surprised you asked,
the surprise breaks his threatening demeanor.
Revealing that he's the same age as you, just
another abandoned student.)
It's- an expression I saw somewhere- I think it
means the holding area. Or, maybe it means
something else. I- I don't know.
(Frustrated that his demeanor broke.)
Just- do the right thing or
you're gonna get locked
into our holding room,
I'll make sure of it! We're done here.
You don't want me to come back.

YOU

(choosing to use a piece of DIRT)
Hey, if you do come back...
will LeClair be escorting you?

Miller turns around. A confused expression marks his face
with a pointed and raised brow.

YOU (CONT'D)

I know that LeClair had a *private*
chat with you the other day.
It didn't look like she was too happy
with how you've been running things.
So, if you come back,
is LeClair going to have to
sit in on our *interview*?
To make sure you're
doing your job *properly*?

Miller spits on your office's carpeted floor. He shoves the door aside, taking his leave. You leave your office as well, but Miller has already left the journalism room. You're standing in the main room, all of your journalists are looking to you for an explanation of what just happened. They all know you, and you them: you can't lie to them.

YOU

(To your colleagues, whose
collective wellbeing is
becoming more dependent
on your actions)
It didn't go well.

JOURNALIST 1

(Chuckling nervously)
Yeah, no shit.

YOU

(Choosing to tell them what happened)
He tried to threaten us.
Miller said he'd use his "guys"
to rough us up unless
we stopped publishing the truth about him.

The room is scared, but some more angry than afraid.

YOU

(Choosing to explain how you used DIRT)
Then, I told him he's already
on thin ice with LeClair.

JOURNALIST 3

I bet he didn't like that...

JOURNALIST 2

Ah, so if he tries to *actually* push us around, we flag LeClair and he'd lose his oh-so-coveted position as world's biggest asshole.

JOURNALIST 1

No, he'd still be the world's biggest asshole. But! He'd lose the power to enforce his bullshit rules.

JOURNALIST 3

But... That's only if we maintain a good relationship with LeClair. If she hates us, she won't care what he does to us.

The room is filled with puzzled glances.

Even though you've used dirt against him to slow down his threats, the whole exchange has changed the weight of relationships at play.

Dialogue: SECT-MACHINA (2023)

Badlands Interactable *BadlandsBug* → *BB*

BB: Y'know, this place wasn't always so bad...

Mona: It didn't always stink like this?

BB: That'd be the Dung Beetles' work yer smellin'

Mona: Their... work?

BB: The badlands is where they dump the crap of the crap.

Mona: ...Oh.

BB: Y'huh. Where there's crap, there's waste. Where there's waste, there's acid...

Mona: Acid?

BB: Mhm. Pools of bright gross green. They'll kill ya.

Mona: ...Thanks for the warning.

Vendor Interactable (Afford)

Vendor: You're gonna love it, I guarantee it!

Mona: Sure. Thanks.

Construction Passerby 2 *ant warning about the crane*

WarningAnt: You better not be thinking of jumping from this crane to the scaffolding next door!

Collectible Convo *CollectibleBug* → *CB*

CB: Mm, hm, mhm...

Mona: What's up?

CB: Ohhh just looking at this treasure I found. (the bug glares at you) It's mine. You can't have it.

Mona: I don't want it.

CB: Ohhh but you do! There's so much story in every little treasure you find. They're so shiny, too. They're precious things. Mm mhm. My precious...

Mona: Where can I find them?

CB: Ohhh they're all over these outskirts. Thieves usually toss stuff out of the wallets they pocket. And thieves usually don't rifle through their things in the open...

Mona: Right...

CB: Mmmhm. They leave these little treasures in nooks and crannies. You'll hafta look for 'em there. Start a collection maybe mmmhm.

Mona: Good to know.

[Giving the Map]

CB: Ohhh before you go. Wanna know what's really good to know?

Mona: What?

CB: Your surroundings. Get a map why don'tcha. Otherwise you'll be lost. And lost bugs have a way of not living too long 'round here.

Mona: A map? Where can I find one?

CB: Ohhh hmmm, I have one. Here.

Mona: Don't you need it?

CB: I'm no stranger to the dark, kiddo. You'll need it more than me.

Sci-Fi Writing Sample: MANIFEST OF THE ROSE-ELEVEN (Unpublished)

STELLA / the ship's extraterrestrial zoologist

When you saw that animal on whichever planet it was,
you were at first, excited, this was your chance to put your studies to use.
But when it crawled towards us like it did, you took a step back.
It crawled as though rendered with impossibility,
it could not approach us like the kind four-legged creatures
God deemed right for us to tame and befriend. And exploit.

This thing slumped and slithered, monster like.
Its hands, could we call them hands?
were pulling at the ground
that it might fall into the sky above if it did not cling so tightly.
It was so loud as it approached us,
growing louder with each footfall,
thumping eight times a second.

You looked into its eyes, you called them eyes,
and said
you saw Evil's face take shape.
You said:
"It does not want us here.
We need to leave.
We need to leave right now."

AVERY / the ship's captain
You ignored Stella's suggestions
and decided for us new orders called "defensive measures,"
where you withdrew from your holster the Silver Hand of God
and you took aim at this creature steadily encroaching
Us would-be colonizers.

STELLA
One sleeptime when we talked, I asked you, "does God ever get angry?"
You looked at me and almost laughed, "Sure he does, there's many cases of it."
But I was serious,
"But well and truly furious?
So angry He can't even think?
Is He capable of being so angry—
that He forgets how to love?"

STELLA
God's fury was louder than the thumping of that creature.
But not louder than the creature's ripping squeal rattling the glass of our helmets,
and then after, that thumping hastened.
An engine of horror tore through the ground towards us.

Fantasy Writing Sample: KNIGHT FROM THE MOG AND THEIR LITTLE BROG TOAD (2023)

DEEP WITHIN THE DARK

Frog-looking bog monster little lad sat on its hollow log common to the swampy land of the Mog. It burped a swirling purple spark that sat in the humid stench and hovered just long enough for an ankle to brush past it, setting off a rush of little stars and twirls up through the hairs of an uncautious fellow traipsing through the Mog. The frog-looking thing was swooped up into the arms of a young and gentle and caring knight, who placed it just so on their head for good luck. Not a moment was spared and the knight was off again, hopping from one giant lily pad to the next.

Lurking below the lily-pads, a mudfish thing stared up and wondered *When oh when will they fall? Small fellow, I beckon below.* The knight could not hear the thoughts of the mudfish thing, having mastered the art of ignoring a pestilent beast of the Mogwild. The knight, they figure, speaks to whom they wish and listens to whom they wish, not a hungry fish nor a leadering outposter on the boundaries of was-home will tell them what to think and do or yell their thoughts like their spew is worth the effort. Should they, oft they, listen to the word of the wise, the world would be smaller and more terrifying. They saw what they saw in the lake's surface tension, what they saw they did not recognize as their own, and so off they were to see other lakes and other skies unriden with beastlings and fly-things of the treetop Mog.

ON TOWARDS OUTWARDS

"You there," hollered the outposter leadering for the hour. *"Head back now, squirt of the South Tower."* The knight listened instead to the thought of rampaging ahead, but slow and steady they skipped across and when the outposter hopped down from the treeloft, the knight stood still.

“I know you well, little Anik of South Tower, you’re looking for trouble again.” The frog-looking little lad caught the outposter’s attention, *“What’s that with you, Anik? Little brogs bring chaotic magiks.”*

Anik, a knight of their own accord, wandered their eyes and noticed the outposter was alone. *“Off I am,”* Anik said. Grunts, the outposter did make, shaking their head and rolling up a spliff of fine smokable mogleaf, *“As much as it might be unwise for me to let you through, Anik, I have very little want to do—why—anything at all to stop you.”*

A snap and a spark and the spliff was lit, brand new. Gray clouds with little green accents tinted by the sky filtering through the canopy above, hovered in the stench before shuffling along. The outposter, newly calm and refreshed, blinked their pink eyes and bowed to the self-made knight. *“Be back soon,”* they said, and Anik went ahead.

CONSIDER AND PONDER

How many ahead? Wondered Anik the Knight, the night drawing the day, the Son’s bedtime at bay but nearing still. They could have been lucky, going the direction with the fewest outposters to luck and chance past. None of them truly, well and truly, cared if a little fellow like Anik wandered off and went dead, but a couple would surely report a southling venturing off on their own. *But I’m not alone,* thought Anik of their little brog toad, whose toes were slimy but often misunderstood.

The brog kept company to the oft lonely Anik, a knight whose new job it was to scour beyond the Mog’s darkwood. A self-proclaimed title, that “knight,” but the brog didn’t mind: now subject and squire to the former squirt of South Tower.

Anik consulted the map. An old parchment, a gift, from a wandering old wizard centuries ago. Centuries ago, the Mog was an item, a precious curiosity of the empire at large. And when wizards entered the stench they never returned smelling quite as good: for a corpse smelled wicked! This old parchment, preserved, had written tongue none understood, but all could recognize the scrawled drawing of the darkwood. Positionally, Anik was in a corner of the world, betwixt two others, and all the world was staged as a six-sided form. Atop the map adorned spikey starry shapes that formed a lopsided cross. They looked like the stars a brog toad burps. Anik, confused, didn't know what to make of the lines between the starry shapes. A constant direction and shape of form, what could Anik find to orient this map? In the map's center there's a great big jutting shape of two sides with a point at the joint, likely representing the long believed great mountain of the beyond, according to the wise older ones. They'd say it's a mountain that could be seen from every corner of the world. That you couldn't see it here of course, for the Mogtop canopy cradled us safely.

This map found itself in Anik's hands not too soon for their journey. It enabled a fascination, an itch, a reality-quaking shaking suspicion that there was so much more to the world than the Mog. More than the bog's murky waters. More than the growing night of the waning light browning the air.

More than the reflection Anik saw in the lake.