

The Workshop

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A short story meant for horror, but was too short.

<https://www.storiesspace.com/stories/flash-fiction/the-workshop.aspx>

The all-consuming flames wash over me and start a fire in my core. Although I burn, so does the air about. The blistering heat of the forge peels away the grimy layer of metal, but as I fold it, a new layer forms. The hammer strikes. Sparks fly. Hair ignites. All but a little hair remains. Pumping the air to stoke the flames, the singed flesh against skull and bone. Another piece makes its way into the heart of the forge. Hammer, bend, ignite. I have to keep working, to keep forging. More axles, more wheels. More rails, more trains. Still a better life than being stuck outside in the cold. I've seen what's out there though. In the screens, there is more. The bells jingle closer, those cursed bells. I've waited ever since those screens. My hand tightens about the axle. I hear someone else scream. Shocked, the axle slips out of my hand. It clatters to the ground. The bells stop. Everyone stops. I only hear my heartbeat. The bells begin to jingle again. Closer to me though. Louder. More frequent. A shadow looms overhead. I hear an inhale of breath. It gets harder to breathe. Difficult. Suffocating. The last thing I hear before I'm taken to the infirmary is Ho, Ho, Ho. Then... Nothing.