

A Teaser Snippet from Create A World Clinic

By Holly Lisle

This is a bit of fiction that was supposed to have been a two-paragraph demo I was doing on WHY you build Dot world—but that exploded into a complete scene. And the start of a SECOND short story I want to write. □

Katie was walking along the path back to her dorm, kicking the gravel in her frustration, when something went “clink.”

Dusk was falling, and she was tired, but that had been a heavy clink—an expensive clink. She had a ton of trigonometry waiting on the third floor, and a miserable hockey practice behind her, and the idea of something interesting between those two grim bookends of time sounded good.

She walked to where she’d thought she heard the metal sound, and crouched, and looked around. It was too dark to see clearly, but she had a little flashlight on her keychain. She pulled it out, flicked it over the gravel, and something sparkled red at her.

Red. And gold. She picked it up. It was a ring, and looked as expensive as it had sounded. It was big and heavy enough to be a large man’s class ring, but first, it was sized to fit a woman’s finger, and second, it had nothing to do with higher education. The red stone formed the single, centered, enormous eye in an incredibly detailed face distorted by pain and rage. She stared at that face, shining her flashlight over what was undeniably beautiful craftsmanship twisted to a hideous end.

When she looked at the eye, it seemed to look back at her. To make promises. She felt vengeance, she felt rage, she felt

death and towering stacks of corpses and, and at the same time felt, racing beneath her skin, the hunger to bring pain and ruin, along with a triumphant thread of mad jubilation, berserk and bloody glee. With a single disgusted overhand movement, she flung the ring across the green and walked away.

In the history of the ring, she was the first person who'd touched it who hadn't put it on.

The next person who touched it would.

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