

Notes for “Courage in Darkness”

“**Ghost in the Machine**” (originally called “The Ultimate Escape,” written in the 1990s) started out as a much shorter story. The protagonist was a male student who witnessed a murder and got accused of it – he dropped one of his deliveries near the scene. He panicked and fled and was picked up by Professor Ward who promised him a safe haven in return for helping with his experiments on the recently deceased.

The primary difference is that the early draft was an exploration of the concept of astral projection. The Prof ultimately evaded justice (he was the murderer) by leaving his body and escaping into the astral realm, but was unable to ever return to his body.

“**The Lair of Muros**” (originally called “The Walls,” written in the 1990s) came from a dream in which some entity existed within the walls. The phrases in the story “Living in the walls” and the response “It *is* the walls” came directly from the dream. Also from the dream was the concept of throwing soup onto the wall and Ms. Plummer joining the Muros to paint her self-portrait while Dale flinches every time she touches the wall.

“**The Unreadable Story**” (originally written in the early 2000s) was inspired by reading the short stories of H.P. Lovecraft (the origin of Ernest Ludcutt). At first, I had toyed with the idea of literally having a ‘short story’ consisting of gibberish and leaving it at that. I soon rejected that idea, but used it to explore the idea of why such a story might have been published and what it ultimately meant. The story didn’t really work as originally written, and I later decided to incorporate it into the “AMOK” series as a memoir, which made for a better story structure than the original.

“**Fur Dale**” was inspired by a dream in the 1990s. In it, children found a ‘door’ into a valley inhabited by teddy bear-like creatures. That is literally all I can remember of it, only that there was something vaguely sinister behind it all. This is the first time I have ever written this story out, although it had been in the back of my mind as a potential story all that time.