

AN EXCERPT FROM
DOWN THE DRAIN

BY DANIEL PYLE

The thing surged up, now partially visible over the edge of the tub. Its scales weren't uniform but jagged, like broken tiles. Hair poked out in tufts from between the cracks—a patch here, a patch there—and although there was no way he could be certain, Bruce thought the stuff looked more than just a little bit pubic. The eyes stared at him from the sides of the thing's head, snake like, but with those eerily human irises that reminded him so much of his own.

The creature opened a hole in its face that Bruce guessed you'd call a mouth. The opening had no lips, nor could he see gums or a tongue within the black maw, but the lines of broken tiles above and below the opening were most definitely teeth.

No. Fangs.

Whatever you wanted to call them, they were undoubtedly the gutting, filleting, bone-crunching, life-ending weapons of a carnivorous hunter. The creature snapped the teeth together,

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cocked its head; it opened its mouth again and let out a long, watery, whistling-kettle hiss.

Bruce scooted back, but there wasn't much room to move. He'd always considered the bathroom roomy; now it felt like a broom closet. When his back hit the vanity, he'd created maybe three feet of space between himself and the emerging thing.

The creature lifted a hand to the edge of the tub. Its fingers were bent but stiff. They appeared to be composed of segments of PVC pipe and jointed with L-bends of the same material. The ends of the digits came to points, as jagged as most of the rest of the beast. When they clacked against the tub, you could hear they were hollow. They didn't look like the most articulate body parts, but Bruce guessed they could do a lot of damage. *Enough* damage.

The monstrosity let out another of those steamy hisses and leapt at him...

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