

DLite Press

P.O. Box 1644
New York N.Y. 10150
<http://www.dlitepress.com>

The author does not guarantee and assumes no responsibility on the accuracy of any websites, links or other contacts contained in this book.

The Vacant City
and Other Unusual Tales

A Novelette

All rights reserved.
Copyright © 2011 by Rorry Nightrain East

DLite Press/ published by arrangement with the author

PRINTING HISTORY
DLite Press/ 2011

Cover design and digital illustration
By DLite Press

All right reserved.
No part of this book may be used or reproduced by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including scanning, photocopying, recording, taping or by any information storage retrieval system without the written permission of the publisher except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles and reviews. Please do not encourage piracy or plagiarization of copyrighted material in violation of the author's rights. Purchase only authorized editions.

ISBN: 978-0-9829774-8-4
Printed in the United States of America

Acknowledgments

With a plethora of true thanks to every reference librarian at W.N.M.U.'s J. Cloyd Miller Library -- for researching all of my pettifogging requests.

And to Dr. Felipe de Ortego y Gasca, Scholar in Residence
at Western New Mexico University, for helping the
handicapped to learn to fly.

*

**The Vacant City
and Other Unusual Tales**

A Novelette

by Rorry Nighthtrain East

Books & Screenplays by Rorry Nighthtrain East

PASSENGER OF MEANDERING DREAMS
THE NIGHT IS A PANTHER
IN THE GLIDING SUDDEN
AUGUST MESSENGER
TALES OF THE OVERSEAS HIGHWAY
Writers Guild America, West No. 831289
DENTS ON A FRESNO'S-CHILD
Writers Guild America, West No. 823322
EMBALMING ROOMS: FOR RENT
Writers Guild America, West No. 844470
SAGAS OF THE UNEARTHLY
Writers Guild America, West No. 854023
TWO SHIPS PASSING IN THE DESERT
THE VACANT CITY & OTHER UNUSUAL TALES

All of these stories are works of fiction. Names, characters and incidents are either used fictitiously, or are products of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to other events or persons living or dead is coincidental.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

The Vacant City
The Couch Potato Creature

Part One

Part Two

Part Three

The Wisdom of Rain

A Second Earth

Act 1

Act II

Act III

Epilogue

Barracuda Tale

The Vacant City continued

About the Author

THE VACANT CITY





THE VACANT CITY

Bronx Rain abruptly awoke in an empty city, San Francisco to be exact. It was a haunting sight, peering down from his sixth story window upon those streets of nothingness. The only movements were those of a few crumpled newspaper pieces blowing round in the wind on empty breezeways. It was just another eerie Sunday morning. Accordingly, Bronx thought that everyone was only sleeping in on a typical mundane weekend.

There are always certain months of the year when San Francisco has a haunting feel to it, and most people just ignore those spooky rolling-fog vibes that crawl the City streets like cold prowling strangers who don't care to even know you. It's called "the witchy nights of autumn in the City." Yet, Bronx was having those feelings during broad daylight. In fact, these startling vibes were so strong that Bronx ran down six flights of stairs and out the door to a frontage sidewalk just to look around. The street was totally absent of men, women, children, cats, dogs, and there weren't even airplanes in the sky. "Where is everybody? Is anybody here? Fire! Fire!" he yelled at the top of his lungs. Of course, there was no fire; he was simply hoping to attract someone's attention.

Bronx left his building on a worried speed-march to scour the town for people. He stood in the middle of a normally busy intersection and it was really beginning to scare him. "Anyone?!" he called out. "Please answer." As he turned round, he suddenly saw a lone woman standing in the middle of an abandoned side street about a block away. "Hello—Miss!" he called out to her, but she didn't answer. She only had a blank stare on her face. "Are you okay, Miss? What's your name?" He shook her shoulders.

"My name is Natasha," she mumbled the words as if in a daze. Her hair was as gold as the California hills. "What happened to the city--where is everyone??" Bronx asked with a sense of angst.

"I, I d-don't kn-know," she mumbled. And her eyes were as blue as the afternoon sky.

"How long have you been roaming the streets?" he coaxed her.

"Hours and hours," she cried. Then she looked up at Bronx and hugged him tightly, as a child might hug a teddy bear for a sense of security.

"Natasha -- have you seen any other person besides me on these streets?"

"No. No one else..." She caterwauled with a great volume.

"Okay, let's go downtown," he said.

"But...I've already been there," she said as tears streamed down her face. "This town is so empty, it's spooky, man."

"Hey wait, do you hear that music playing?" Bronx barked. He grabbed Natasha's hand and they ran off toward the sound. But it was only a foreboding music store that stood as empty as all of San Francisco. Janice Joplin's voice was repeatedly singing "trrrrhigh-high... just a little bit harder..." from an electronic black box, but no one was to be found in the music store. "What the hell is going on here?" Bronx flared as he broke the music box with a paperweight from a nearby desk.

"Come on, let's go," he said, as he again took her hand and they rushed out of the store and up a steep street to an empty Upstart Crow bookstore. When they arrived at the bookstore Bronx asked Natasha to run across the street to scavenge some food at a sandwich shop. He stayed behind to check a few silent telephones, and he found some books to read.

"Here's your sandwich," Natasha said. Bronx Rain's dark disheveled hair and warm smile were a *noir* poetry to her.

"That was quick." He suddenly felt as though he'd known her from another lifetime.

"Yeah," she sighed, "I don't like to be alone."

"Do you like books?" Bronx asked.

"Not lately," she retorted.

"Why not?" he grilled her. "Don't you realize that your brain needs exercise just like your body does?"

"Okay," she said, "I'll go read Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, already."

"Damn it!" Bronx barked at himself, "It's the decline of readers--I tell you. Oh baby, and here's my book: *The Decline of Readers* by Bronx Rain, man, that thing probably sold five copies in ten years."

"You seem so unhappy," Natasha bleeped at him.

"I'm sorry Natasha," he retorted. "Um, thanks for the sandwich. It's just the decline of readers that's bothering me. Maybe I'll wake up and find that this empty city is all just a bad dream."

"Uh...hey, don't you remember *me*, Bronx Rain?" she smiled.

"Wait-a-minute! Natasha West? Why, you used to be my publisher."

"Yes, I just remembered that myself. How do I get out of this sweet dream?"

"This is not a dream Natasha. This is a nightmare."

"I think it's kind of fun," she laughed.

"Then how do we get out of this crazy vacant city?" he asked.

"Oh, you're just worried about the decline of readers," she said.

"How did you know that?"

"I know all about your noble feelings, Bronx."

"You do?"

"Yes, and I also know that you think of all your books as an extended family, no, in fact--you think of each book that you've written as your very own child."

"I guess you know a lot about me, Natasha."

"Well, I hope we'll have as many book-children as Abraham and Sarah did, and that's about as many as the stars in the sky and more. . ."

"But, will there ever be new readers Natasha?"

"Do children need and receive care from their friends and their families?" she asked.

"Of course they do--that's only natural." he responded.

"Then, look outside Bronx Rain."

"There are people walking up the street!" he shouted with joy. A group of brainy looking people, all wearing glasses, then ambled through the front door and into the bookstore.

"Bronx Rain? Natasha West? What are you two doing in here?"

"Oh, we . . . uh, must have fallen asleep," Bronx apologized to the storeowner.

"Well...that's okay. No harm done." the bookstore owner said. "It's probably safer for you two to have been locked inside my store anyway."

Natasha asked, "Why would it be safer inside here?"

The owner responded that, "The entire town is vacant, because everyone is burning books over on Alcatraz Island."

**If you enjoyed this sample, continue reading. Buy Now at
<http://www.dlitedpress.com>**