# No One Was Watching

*by* Todd Maupin

Amber quickly scanned the classroom around her. Then she rolled up her sleeve and glanced surreptitiously at her forearm. A.B.A.C.D.A.C.B.A.D.D.C.A.B.False.False.True… she transferred these responses to her exam. No one was watching.

The wallet was damp with dew and was sprawled, open and defenseless, in the grass between the sidewalk and the old Honda parked at the curb. Checking the driver's license, he confirmed that its address matched the house just behind him. He placed the wallet intact on the doormat and continued his morning walk. No one was watching.

It was Halloween. I am thirty-two years old. My next door neighbors believe in the honor system and left a bucket of candy on their porch. I did not believe in this system but I felt honored as I took it all. No one was watching.

The iPhone dinged a notification. Two minutes later, another ding. After forty minutes, the iPhone dinged yet again. With each C grade attempt to make its notifications known, the iPhone vibrated and slid around on the table. No one was watching.

The mafioso knew that this decision meant that his life was now over. He could not bring himself to kill a woman and her child. Alone on the rooftop in Palermo, he smiled grimly as he put away his gun. No one was watching.

The bread basket overturned, spilling its contents onto the floor in the bustling kitchen. Some of the dinner rolls did just that before the server could collect them all. She brushed them off, reloaded the basket, and headed to the dining room. No one was watching.

Available online at *«http://fictionaut.com/stories/todd-maupin/no-one-was-watching»*
Copyright © 2021 Todd Maupin. All rights reserved.

The piping hot steam hissed like a piper lacking melody or bewitched children to follow him. The water inside the pot was boiling. No one was watching.

Most people would tell you that the Bogeyman does not exist. But it does, even though it does not call itself that. Hiding under the little girl's bed that night, it was poised to grab her foot and pull her under. No one was watching.

Driving through the Tuscan countryside, Pavarotti bellowed out “O sole mio.” He sang Domingo's part, the part that he had always secretly coveted. No one was watching.

The woolen cashmere peacoat was stylish and perfect for the Boston winters, as well as for her husband. Nearing South Station, she passed a homeless man huddled, asleep next to his belongings. Beantown had not been kind to him. She draped the new coat over him and continued on to her train. No one was watching.

Mommy and Daddy will certainly be proud of me, Candace thought as she finished the laborious and surgical process of transferring the stickers on the Rubik's cube. Now the colors all matched on each of the six sides. No one was watching.

Seven inches of snow had fallen overnight. It was very early, quite frigid, and no one else had yet ventured outside. I cleared the snow from the sidewalks and all of my neighbors' vehicles. No one was watching.

There had been a mistake in the channel 2 programming lineup. Instead of a syndicated game show hosted by someone who may have once been famous, the channel broadcast a loop of Tom Select pitching reverse mortgages. It was 1:30 a.m. No one was watching.

In the forest, the tree fell. Loudly. It made a thundering crash. No one was around. No one was watching.

The internet bully had spent another day of his meaningless existence. The cowardly and cruel torment provided no lasting satisfaction. As he did every night, he cried himself to sleep. No one was watching.

The teenage boy climbed the trellis and entered his girlfriend's bedroom and then into her arms. Her trusting parents were already asleep. No one was watching.

The flood waters would not recede. A catfish swam above the overpass of what was once the busy highway. In 2064, this image was no longer jarring. Not a fish out of water. A sign nearby revealed the distance to Atlanta, but this could be Atlantis. No one was watching.

The SETI terminal roared to life with a wail, beeping an alert that it had located definitive proof of life in the remote, uncharted solar system. A sudden power outage immediately erased all records of the historic event. No one was watching.

Determined, the brittle and elderly woman slid out of her wheelchair to collect the litter scattered on the pavement next to the trash can. She crawled weakly on the ground, gathering the debris to dispose of it properly. As the dawn sunlight gained intensity, she struggled but succeeded to return to her seat and wheeled onward. No one was watching.

The clerk's back was turned as she collected the pack of Newports I had requested. We were alone in the store. I did not need a penny but I still abducted a Lincoln from the “take a penny, leave a penny” tray next to the cash register. No one was watching.

The planet was being destroyed by a series of conflicts, poor decisions and careless choices. Some looked to the heavens and asked for divine intervention. Far above them, above the clouds, above the planes, there was no alleged plane of higher existence. The pleas echoed into nothing. No one was watching.

It was 4am at the intersection of Friedrichstrasse and Georgenstrasse. There was absolutely no traffic. Karl defied Ampelmann and crossed anyway. No one was watching.

Timmy Peppertree rose to his feet, holding onto a chair and then proceeded to stumble and lurch to another chair before he fell to the floor. His parents were preparing dinner in the next room. Little Timmy had walked for the first time. No one was watching.

Mortal enemies. The inviting aroma of a pie cooling on the windowsill had triggered their acute olfactory senses. To the pie that had given them pause, they gave paws. On its hind legs, the dog stood like a ladder; the cat climbed up to retrieve the pie. They consumed voraciously the spoils of the tasty treasure that would never have a chance to spoil. The satiated duo napped together in the June sunshine. No one was watching.

“Dance like nobody's watching.” The poster's intention was motivational but adhesives holding it to the wall had surrendered. The detached poster fell to the floor in an empty room. No one was watching.

Gray were the sky and atmosphere in Baltimore on April 29. The city's charm had been dealt a mortal blow. The Orioles defeated the White Sox in an empty Camden Yards. No one was watching.

Curtains flapped in the breeze at the open window. The television was silent and dormant. No one was watching. Thank you for reading.

Copyright 2021 by Todd Maupin