

Toothache

By Aurelie Jones

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Panel one: The mall has all but shut down, many of the owners already pulled the doors shut. It is dark except for the twinkles of stars in the distance through the glass dome.

Panel two: Windows locked, and security cages are pulled across the windows. One owner turns on an electronic force field that bathes the front of his shop.

Owner: Worth every penny.

Panel three: The force field reflects a bright blue neon light.

Panel four: The light within Sweet Tooth still dwindled, Candy flits about her shop as usual, so late at night.

Panel five: A latch sticks up from the ground, it snags Candy's foot.

Panel six: Candy falls flat on her face.

Candy: OW! WHYYYY

Panel seven: She sits up and puts her hand to her nose, blood drips from her face.

Candy: Ew... blood... I'll never get this out of my apron.

Panel eight: Candy notices a latch. She grasps the latch and pulls it open.

Panel nine: View from the hole up at Candy as she peers into the dark abyss.

Candy: What kind of creepy... odd ... place is this...?

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Panel one: Candy looks around her storage room, she grasps a flashlight on one of the many boxes.

Candy: Didn't even know we had flashlights... must be Sarah's or something.

Panel two: Candy shines the flashlight into the hole, which reveals a ladder. Candy looks around once more.

Candy: I probably... shouldn't go down there...

Panel three: Candy finally descends into the dark cellar. Metal filing cabinets line the room, floor to ceiling.

Panel four: Candy wanders around the room, with a look of shock on her face.

Candy: How long... this must have been down here... the entire time...

Panel five: Candy stops in front of one of the cabinets, she pulls it open and shines the light inside.

Panel six: Close-up of the contents of the cabinet, manila folder with a coat of dust.

Panel seven: Candy sticks the butt of the flashlight beneath her chin, and she grabs a folder.

Panel eight: With the light trained on the folder, Candy flips it open.

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SPLASH

View from the corner of the room, which shows all the cabinets, about 8 feet tall in total and 2 feet across, in the dark room as well as Candy. Candy has a pair of soft pale pink pants on accompanied by a tight T-shirt with a cupcake on it. In addition to that she has on a white apron that has stains of blues and pinks. Candy's expression changes from curiosity to fear and shame as she reads.

Candy: No... no ... how could they photograph this??

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Panel one: Candy grips the folder and scrambles out of the dark cellar.

Panel two: Candy kicks the door to the cellar shut with a BANG.

1/SFX: BANG

Panel three: Candy walks out of her storage room and into the kitchen she leaves a trail of flour behind her.

Panel four: Candy makes a face of disgust.

Candy: What sort of sicko does this...

Panel five: Candy CLICKS on the burner.

1/SFX: BURNER CLICKS

Inset panel: The burner is lit.

Panel six: Candy holds the file to the open flame.

Panel seven: The corner of the file catches the flame.

Candy: I can't just... put it back.

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Panel one: The fire licks and dances across the pages, turning it black.

Panel two: The flame gets large once it burns across a photograph of Candy.

Panel three: Close of the photograph shows Candy at home, taken from outside her home.

Panel four: The fire catches onto a towel beside the stove. The flames grow.

Candy: Crap! Where's that damn fire extinguisher?!

Panel five: Candy stumbles back to the storage room.

Panel six: Candy shoves boxes aside to reveal a small fire extinguisher.

Panel seven: outside Candy's shop, Sarah patrols the empty shops. CRASH

Candy: Oh no!!

Panel eight: Candy shrugs off her hand and leads her to the storage room.

Sarah: What the...

Panel nine: Sarah yanks open the door to Candy's shop.

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Panel one: Sarah runs into the kitchen to find Candy on the floor.

Panel two: The fire extinguisher spinning in the far-right corner.

Panel three: The fire has spread to the ceiling of the kitchen.

Sarah: Candy! Get up!!

Panel four: Flames lick up the cabinet, jumping from one to another until the entire room was ablaze.

Panel five: Candy crawls on her hands and knees out of the hot kitchen.

Panel six: Sarah grabs the fire extinguisher.

Inset panel: Flames grow

Panel seven: Sarah aims the spraying extinguisher at the flames.

Panel eight: Sarah tosses the empty extinguisher down and runs out of the kitchen.

Sarah: What kind of fire is this!?

Candy: I don't know!

Sarah: How did this even happen?

Candy: I really... couldn't tell you... Sarah.

Panel nine: Sarah leads Candy to the door.

Panel ten: Sarah raises her walkie to her mouth to call in reinforcements.

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Panel one: Farney shows up with a couple of impromptu firemen.

Farney: I'm here to save you Candy!

Candy: Ah Farney! Thank god.

Panel two: Candy paces back and forth in front of her shop, leaving a trail of flour behind her.

Panel three: The men run into the back with an enormous hose.

Panel four: Farney and the others step out of the shop.

Farney: Candy, we managed to contain the fire to the kitchen. But it won't be usable for a while.

Panel five: Candy's eyes fill with tears.

Candy: Oh...

Farney: But maybe we could talk about how this happened?

Panel seven: Farney puts an arm around Candy's shoulders.

Panel eight: Sarah glowers as they walk off towards the station.

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Panel one: Farney guides Candy to a chair.

Farney: Now, lets just discuss what happened.

Candy: I already... told you Farney, I was getting something from the storage room. When I came back to the kitchen, it was on fire.

Panel two: Farney sits down in a chair across from Candy.

Farney: Kitchens don't just... catch fire Candy.

Panel three: Candy leans back in her seat and folds her arms.

Inlet panel: Candy's eyes fill with tears.

Panel four: Farney places his hand on the table, outstretched to Candy.

Farney: You can tell me what happened.

Panel five: Candy stands up, she resumes her pace movement.

Panel six: Sarah opens the door to the room.

Sarah: If that is all that happened then why do you have blood on your apron?

Panel seven: Candy sits down in her seat.

Candy: I fell, can't you see the dried blood on my face?

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Panel one: Sarah grimaces, Farney shakes his head.

Sarah: Okay fine, but still, this is all very fishy!

Farney: Sarah could I have a moment?

Panel two: Sarah leaves the room with a SLAM.

Panel three: Candy flinches, she turns to Farney.

Candy: It was an accident... you know I love my shop.

Farney: Of course, you do.

Candy: But... there was this secret room. Beneath my storage room. It is full of cabinets, filled with files.

Panel four: Candy rests her face in her hands.

Candy: I found a file on me, a private, embarrassing file, with photos of me.... And I just had to burn it!...

Panel five: Candy stands up, her chair topples to the floor.

Candy: It... it got out of hand, it was entirely an accident.

Farney: Okay, this is making a little more sense. Can you tell me what was in the file?

Candy: No!... its private... and it is gone forever.

Farney: Okay, can you at least tell me how to get into this secret room you found?

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Panel one: Candy, Farney, and Sarah return to Candy's shop.

Candy: My poor kitchen...

Farney: We can fix it Candy, don't worry.

Candy: I know... um its over here...

Panel two: Candy leads Sarah and Farney to her storage room.

Farney: I'll open it.

Panel three: Farney yanks open the door and shines a flashlight around.

Farney: I'll climb down first, then you Sarah.

Panel four: Farney shimmies down the latter, flashlight points down.

Sarah: You stay here.

Candy: No problem with that...

Panel five: Sarah descends into the dark room.

Farney: Wow, she wasn't kidding huh?

Sarah: I guess not, but we should probably take all of this out of here. As evidence.

Farney: We don't even know the contents yet.

Candy: Everything okay?

Farney: Yea!

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Panel one: Sarah shrugs, she opens a drawer.

Sarah: Here, we should wear these just in case.

Panel two: Sarah hands Farney a pair of latex gloves, after she puts on a pair herself.

Panel three: Farney laughs but puts them on.

Sarah: Don't want to get everything covered in fingerprints.

Farney: Of course, not ha-ha.

Panel four: Sarah covers the left side of the room.

Inlet panel: Candy hovers by the entrance.

Panel five: Farney covers the right.

Sarah: Every cabinet is just full of folders.

Panel six: Farney and Sarah climb out of the cellar.

Panel seven: The three of them walk out of the shop.

Farney: It'll take a little time, but we will have your kitchen fixed up.

Candy: What about that weird room?

Sarah: We'll begin cleaning it out tomorrow, then we will investigate.

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Panel one: Four weeks later, Candy twirls in her pristine kitchen.

Panel two: Sarah and Farney watch Candy with smiles on their faces.

Sarah: Amazing what a nice kitchen can do for you.

Farney: Oh of course it beats everything.

Candy: I had to throw out my apron though, couldn't get the blood out.

Farney: Just so strange how everything in that room disappeared the very next morning.

Sarah: Well, I'm not going to give up the search just because there aren't any clues.

Panel three: Farney pats Sarah on the back.

Farney: Lets just enjoy the fact that we have this shop back in working order!

Panel four: Candy hugs Farney and Sarah tight.

Panel five: Farney blushes, and Sarah grimaces from the hug.

Panel six: Close-up of the backdoor to Candy's shop. A black gloved hand places a manila envelope against the door.