

ome

Every baby is born with only one nightmare.

There were many arguments over how to assign the nightmares to babies.

It was argued that the assignment should happen completely randomly, with all of the nightmares thrown into a barrel, then shaken until one fell out.

It was counter-argued that all available nightmares should be analysed and categorized. Themes and settings from the baby’s parents’ nightmares, and from the nightmares that appeared most frequently in their birthplace, would be counted and fed into an algorithm to select the correct nightmare for the baby.

Yet another argument was that each baby should choose their own nightmare: a selection would be presented to them over their first ten sleeps, and whichever nightmare made them cry the loudest would be theirs.

Regardless of method, the experts agreed that having one, and only one, was an improvement on the previous situation, wherein anyone could be subject to any nightmare.

OhNo was born with one nightmare to accompany them throughout their entire life.

Lying in the dirt, OhNo watched a leaf’s shadow complete a circle around it.

Someone walked by wearing a hat that said:
IF NOT ME
THEN WHO

They exclaimed into their phone, *The smell was so strong that I had to run away from it!*

A model of the solar system sat on OhNo’s bedroom floor.

It was made out of painted styrofoam balls, toothpicks, and bamboo skewers.

Sun — Mercury — Venus — Earth — Mars — Jupiter — Saturn — Uranus — Neptune — Pluto

The planets were arranged in concentric circles, the bamboo skewers and toothpicks holding them apart.

Half of a cardboard box, painted black, served as the background that the planets moved against, in order, nicely spaced.

Beside the sink, the rag dried into a stiff figure.

Mouse-scum-ghost, thought OhNo.
Scrunched up ghost of a mouse.