

# The Evening...

The raindrops fell eerily that evening, the sound of the raindrops felt too synchronous, like a perfectly ticking metronome, incapable of being off by even the slightest of metrics, its flawlessness was unsettling, it felt uneasy. The clouds dominated over the inky black night sky; the light of the moon obscured by the hanging overcast; the stars blocked by the deep grey puffs of gaseous water. The time was roughly 23:30, Owen was exhausted from another substandard day, if everything was so substandard, why was the standard so high, questioned Owen. He realised standard meant good. The perfect pitter-patter continued through the night.

As he was on his way home, he suspected nothing out of the ordinary, after all, his day so far had been as mundane and unexciting as it gets, the usual mindless normality of brushing one's teeth in the mirror, with no goal in sight nor purpose in mind. The morning didn't feel any different to the others, nothing about the day felt any different. Owen's pace was steady, he had just gotten off his drearily, boringly typical bus on the way home. It felt strangely wobbly, a strange slight, however nothing to dwell on, thought Owen. Everything had been so, normal. The pavement felt uneven, but Owen put it aside, the labourers would fix it soon enough. Everything was right in front of his eyes, he saw everything, he noticed everything, but he was too caught up in the mundanity to care.

Owen turned left, the faded pavement lights lit up the endless roads, and their dim glare penetrated the inky black night sky. The harsh yellow seemed unwelcoming, almost warning those not to stand under its gaze for any longer than necessary. Everything seemed unwelcoming, the towering streetlights, and the rusty parked cars, scattered with filth inside, seemed unfriendly to visitors, and even the damp patches of moss, seemed inhospitable. Suddenly, something barely noticeable and deathly quiet cut through the booming cityscape volume.

A step. Although Owen was caught up in his routine, his awareness was still present. The noise echoed in his paranoia, his mind became a lodge for worrying thoughts, who could it be? Was he being followed? If so, why? His mind was whirring, he started caring about all the little anomalies, the pavement, the lights, the parked cars. The pressure in his mind continued to increase violently, the teapot should have blown over minutes ago, bringing to light all that should have stayed hidden, but the lid remained on. Owen had not yet moved in any other way than strictly natural. He had not yet turned, but finally, after the overly paranoid reasonings wrestling each other, one gave in. He turned around. No one. His heart skipped a beat, but he reassured himself. He was probably just tense, probably...

Later that evening. Owen arrived home, he turned on the lights, and the room lit up, but no one was to be seen. He was home safe, home alone. He yawned a sign of relief, putting his body weight into the plain Ikea sofa. Everything finally felt mediocre once more. After hours, of staring mindlessly into an empty void. The screen, consuming one's small happiness's, left no imprint on Owen's brain it had not changed him, but time had passed, just as he had hoped. The vegetative state consumed him, letting nothing escape its grasp. Just as the bright

blue light began to eat away at him once more, the door clicked, and the power went out. Someone was inside.