

February 2020 contest nominations

January 2020 Winners!

I made an unholy deal to save my wife from cancer, but it didn't go as planned

Pancreatic cancer. That's what it's called, the thing that's slowly killing my wife. It doesn't sound so horrifying, does it? Pancreatic? It's the cancer part that's bad, obviously. It's the cancer part that's slowly eating away at my wife, my one true love, relentlessly devouring every part of her, until there's just a withering, wheezing stranger left, her tormented gaze begging for it to be over; every fiber of her being aching for death.

I'd tried everything up to that point. And I mean *everything*. You'd be amazed, and appalled, at the sheer quantity of bullshit snake oil miracle remedy shit you'll find if you just go looking for them. All the healers, shamans, witch doctors and loathsome charlatans preying on the weak and desperate. But conventional medicine had failed me. Failed my wife. And I couldn't find it in me to give up, no matter how much she begged me to.

At first glance the Nameless Street seemed like just another hoax. A nonsensical ritual pasta designed to amass internet points. But the more I looked into it, the more I came to believe that there had to be some merits to it. Too many identical claims, too many similar experiences, too many vivid descriptions. Coming up empty on all other leads, I decided there'd be no harm in giving it a shot.

The Nameless Street was as simple in its complexity as it was complex in its simplicity. At the end of an unnamed street, look for an abandoned house with a locked basement door. Find a way to get into the basement without breaking the lock. In the room beyond you'll find two chairs facing each other. Make sure to lock the door again. Place sixty-six candles in a wide circle around the room. At the center, place one sixth of a candle. When night is at its darkest, light all the candles. Sit down in the chair with the back turned to the door, and count loudly to sixty-six and one sixth. If you get it all right, the Devil himself will appear, granting you a single wish in exchange for your soul.

Finding the Nameless Street wasn't easy, but at the same time it wasn't that hard either. I just stumbled upon it, I guess. I went searching every evening after my visit at the hospital. That's the only thing that kept me going. Seeing her wasting away; another fragment of her dying every day. Body, mind, soul, soon there'd be nothing left but memories. I paced the streets tirelessly for weeks, making sure to cover as much ground as I possibly could. Then, one night, it was just there.

The doctors gave her a month, maybe less. We'd been together since high school. 10 years. Got married as soon as we legally could, sharing dreams of children, a house, a dog, a station wagon. A normal, boring, wonderful life. We were going to grow old together. Die together, locked in an unbreakable embrace, exhaling our last breath at the exact same moment. But now she was leaving. Fading. And I felt helpless and lost and alone. I needed this. I needed it to be real.

It was just like I'd imagined it. A harrowing house at the end of the street, all the windows smashed in, front door missing, exterior greying and faded. A faint smell of urine lingered inside, and the walls were all covered in tasteless graffiti. I didn't care to inspect the house itself. I was there for one thing. I descended the ramshackle stairs leading down to a surprisingly sturdy looking wooden door, and gave the handle a try.

Locked.

This was the place.

When I wasn't at the hospital, Stan was. I didn't even have to convince him. I just wanted *someone* to be there by her side at all times, and I think he understood that. My brother got along well with my wife, and it seemed like the right thing to do. When I arrived after work, Stan would be there, and we'd talk for a bit. It affected him too. Devoured him like it devoured me. He looked older than any younger brother should. I had to fix this, or we'd all just fade to nothingness.

I returned the next evening with candles and tools. I had no idea how to pick a lock, but luckily some guy on YouTube did, and after about thirty minutes of finagling and cursing, I heard a soft click, followed by the door sliding open.

The basement was just how I'd imagined it too. Cramped and damp and dark, two chairs placed at the exact center of it. Once I'd made sure the door was locked, I started placing the candles in a wide circle, saving the one sixth of a candle for last.

I sat down on the chair with the back turned to the door, and waited. *When the night is at its darkest*. How can you tell? Isn't night just a lack of light? When the sun is down, isn't it just down? I felt stupid, ignorant, like I'd fooled myself into believing something that'd never work. How could it work? It was utterly ridiculous. But still, I couldn't give up now. I had to try. I owed my wife that much.

I started lighting the candles. I figured it wouldn't get any darker, and couldn't very well spend all night in that creepy abandoned shithole. Better to just get it over with. It took a good five minutes to get all the candles in the circle lit, and I swallowed deeply before lighting the final one. It didn't feel any different, but I sat down regardless, and started counting loudly to sixty-six and a sixth seconds.

"One, two, three, four." My voice rang hollow and insincere. I glanced around anxiously while counting, but save for the dancing shadows cast by the flickering candles, there was nothing.

"Thirty-three, thirty-four, thirty-fi-

"Don't you find this hysterically ridiculous?" a cheery voice queried from behind me.

I suppose I wasn't really expecting anything to happen. Not really. Thus the sudden realisation that someone was there, behind me, caused me to tumble off the chair in shock, and I spent quite some time desperately struggling to get back up.

"I mean, you must have stopped at sixty-six *and a sixth* and gone *Wow, this is some next level absurd as shit nonsense*, right?"

He was not what I expected. At all. He was young, maybe in his mid-twenties, long blonde hair, dressed in jeans and a white hoodie. He smiled widely, emerald eyes sparkling vividly as they scanned the room.

"All you had to do was ask," he mimicked holding a phone up to his ear. "No need for this unnecessarily elaborate..." He paused, waggling his right index finger around theatrically. "I want to say ritual?"

"Wh...Who are you?" I stammered incoherently.

"Such a useless question," he chuckled. "Names have no meaning here."

"Are you..." I staggered back into the wall. "Are you the Devil?"

"Look, buddy," he grinned widely, "It really isn't important. What *is* important, however, is what I can do for you."

He wandered around the room nonchalantly, eyes darting back and forth between the flickering candles and me. He was tall and slim, yet unnaturally imposing, like he could squish me like a bug at any moment if he felt like it. I kept backing into the wall senselessly like a frightened animal.

"Let's sit, shall we?" he beckoned for me to join him as he sat down. "We have much to discuss."

"Jesus Christ," I mumbled. Was this really happening? Nothing about it felt right. It felt unholy. Blasphemous. My back scraped against the cold protruding bricks of the wall, like the pain somehow grounded me to reality. "Jesus fucking Christ," I added.

"Look, you can call me anything you'd like if it makes you feel better," his piercing eyes dug into mine. "It really doesn't matter what fantasy you subscribe to. In the end they're all nothing but lies, and just like names they only hold meaning to owners and believers. And let's just say I'm neither. Now, please just sit, James. You're making this whole satanic deal thingy very awkward for the both of us."

"How do you know my name?" I mumbled, still subconsciously backing into the unmoving wall.

He threw his head back and laughed heartily. "So you came here ready to summon the literal Devil, but you're surprised he somehow knows your name? James, James, you're really out of your depth here, you know that right?" He motioned towards the vacant chair. "Sit, James. Sit, and we'll discuss what I can do for Nora."

The mention of her name brought me back from whatever delirious state I was in. I suppose I immediately stopped caring whether it was real or not. The end justifies the means, isn't that what they say? Even if I was hallucinating, even if this was some insanely convoluted hoax, I had to give it a shot. I'd never forgive myself if I didn't at least *try*. I hesitantly stumbled to the chair, and sat down facing the man.

"How do you know her name?" I asked. "How can you possibly know any of this."

"We've been through this, James. I know all I need to know, and that's just how it is. For instance I know that Nora, sweet, sweet darling Nora, is slowly dying from cancer. I say slowly, but that's really not the case anymore, is it? I'd give her maybe a few days, a week at most. Better start making some arrangements. Choose a nice coffin, find a decent plot, organize the service. These things take time, you know. Wouldn't want to half-ass her funeral now, would you?"

I felt a sudden rush of anger. Anger and resentment and sadness and despair. I wanted nothing more than to just punch his infuriatingly carefree face in, but something deep down inside me told me that would be a horrible idea. Instead I just broke down crying. Heavy, convulsive sobs.

"There, there, James my boy. It isn't over yet," he smiled. "What if I told you I could take it all out of her. The cancer. Just reach into that frail, broken body, and rummage around in there until it's all gone. Wouldn't that be something?"

I stared at him blankly, tears running down my face. "Co...Could you do that?" I murmured. "Could you really do that?"

"I could," he leaned back, hands behind his head. "But you know, I'd have to put it somewhere else. Natural order, balance, and all that jazz. But I'll do you a solid, since I kinda like you James."

"Wh...What do you mean?"

"See, what I do with it, the cancer, is entirely up to me. I mean, I could just stuff it in you. And normally I would, you know. I'm a stickler for irony. You know how it goes: you can't live without the love of your life, so you make an unholy deal with some diabolical entity to save her, only to die days later. *Hil-arious*. But since you've grown on me like a tumour, I'll do you one better. What do you say we stick the big C into your worst enemy instead?"

My worst enemy? Did I even have enemies? I mean, I didn't really like my boss. And my neighbor was incredibly annoying, and truth be told I could really do without the *you're-not-good-enough-for-my-daughter* attitude from my mother-in-law too. But an enemy? I suppose my co-worker, Eric, was the closest thing I had to an enemy. He was demeaning and malicious, always going out of his way to make me look bad. The more I thought about it, the more I realised just how much I hated him.

"Yes," I said. "Do it. There's this guy, Eric, at my jo-"

"Oh, I'm sorry," he interrupted. "I think you misunderstood me. I don't need to know who you *think* your worst enemy is. No, James, my guy, I *know* who your worst enemy is. I just need a 'yes' and the old handshake to confirm our arrangement, that's all."

"How do I know you can do it?" I suddenly felt a sobering doubt rising. This was all too good to be true. Too fucking crazy to be real. "How do I know I can trust you?"

"I'm glad you asked," he chuckled. "It's smart, you know, to question these things. Sure, I manifested in this locked basement out of thin air, and know more about you and your wife than any random stranger possibly could, but I get it; you need proof."

He stood up from the chair and leaned in close to me. I instinctively sank into my seat, desperately trying to avoid his piercing gaze.

"Now, I would love to say that this wasn't going to hurt," his eyes gleamed eerily in the darkness. "But I'd be lying. And truth is everything, isn't it? That's why you're here. For the truth. You might not know it yet, granted. But you will. And who knows, you might even come to thank me one day."

"What are you tal-"

With inhuman speed he stuck both his hands into my chest. I know it's impossible. Of course I know it's impossible. But the pain was real. And the blood was too. Insufferable pain, like every nerve ending in my body was set on fire. Fountains of blood showered us both, and I felt the sudden presence of an impenetrable darkness.

"Don't cross over just yet, Jamesy boy," he laughed. "We're only just getting started."

I could feel him touching me from the inside, fingers digging into tissue and muscle and organs, every little prod bringing insurmountable waves of torment, somehow spreading to every pain receptor at once. I couldn't breathe, so I couldn't scream, but I imagine every synapse in my body lighting up simultaneously to form a hysterical howl.

"Ah," he licked his lips. "There we go. Just the suckers we were looking for. They can be a handful, let me tell you, and all this blood makes it hard too, you know. Takes practice."

With a forceful yank he pulled his hands back, leaving behind a gaping hole in my chest. *I should be dead*, I thought as I stared into the mangled depths of my own body. I was convulsing uncontrollably in spasming seizures, but I still managed to get a long, good look at what he was proudly holding in his blood dripping hands.

"Recognize them?" he laughed. "They're called *lungs*. Primarily used for breathing I've been told. Ugly suckers though, don't you think? Most of the stuff you find on the inside doesn't look as good on the outside. I guess there's some meaning to it, you know. Aesthetics and such."

He waved them around playfully, blood squirting everywhere. Every muscle in my body was spasming violently now, and I felt my mind starting to slip, overwhelmed by the unimaginable pain. *I'm going to die*, I thought. *This is it. This is where they'll find me.* But just as the alluring darkness was about to overcome me, I was brought back by his cheery voice.

"So does that do it?" he asked, his mouth now inches from my ear. "Are you convinced? Do we have an agreement?"

I tried my best to nod, but I'm not sure you could easily discern the voluntary movements from the involuntary anymore. Blood was flowing in thick streams from the gaping wound on my chest, pouring into an impossibly deep pond on the cold concrete below. Suddenly he grabbed my hand, and shook it vigorously.

"Good lad," he laughed heartily. "It's a deal then. I'll yank the nasty tumours from sweet darling Nora, and pack your worst enemy full of the stuff. Really can't wait for this one, James, sounds like an absolute riot!"

The darkness was closing in, and I felt some manner of peace as a thick blanket of heavy tiredness enveloped every part of my being.

"I'll be on my merry way then," he said. "People to meet and eat, you know how it goes."

I could hear him walking towards the door. Heavy steps, echoing through the room. Too heavy for his lithe frame. Everything was turning black now, and I suppose I was mere seconds away from passing out and on when his voice brought me back once more.

"Oh, right, I forgot," he chuckled. "You probably need these."

Mind-numbing pain shot through my body as he pushed his hands into the wound again, brutally rummaging around in there for what felt like ages. Then, with a sudden yank, he was out again.

anger and fury and resentment, consuming every fragment of my existence from thereon out.

She moved out the same day. Packed her shit and went to live with my brother. I sat in the darkness of my trashed living room for days, fueled and fed by nothing but bubbling detestation and loathing and hatred. I wanted to burn him alive. Nail him to the wall. Dig out his eyes with a rusty knife. He was already dead to me, but I wanted him dead to the world too.

My worst enemy.

And then, like clockwork, he got diagnosed with cancer. Pancreatic. Such a beautiful word. Rolls right off the tip of your tongue. *Pancreatic*. Instant and terminal. My brother died days after they first caught it. It spread faster than anything they'd ever seen, they told me. A reverse miracle of sorts. I cried no tears at the funeral. I don't think I'll ever cry again.

Nora couldn't deal with his death. Her sudden recovery followed by the hope of a new life with a new love, smothered instantly by cruel, hideous irony. She hung herself in Stan's garage a week later. I tried to cry at her funeral, I really did, but it was all empty. Hollow and void. A soulless husk. There was this moment, after they'd lowered her coffin, a brief second of serene silence. No birds, no grieving masses, no wind. Just a perfect moment of tranquility. I could hear him clearly then, in the back of my mind. A cheery chuckle, a hearty laugh.

I have a feeling we'll talk again real soon.

Just like the uncontrollable growth of abnormal cells, the amassing sum of my sins spread to cover every aspect of my existence. There is no miracle, reverse or otherwise, waiting for me at the end of the line. There is no light at the end of the tunnel. There is no end to the tunnel. There is no end.

As I stare into the fathomless depths of my empty void soul, I can only nod and agree.

[Real soon.](<https://www.reddit.com/r/Obscuratio/>)

I Was Legally Dead for Four Minutes. There is No Heaven. There is No Hell. We Are Hunted for Eternity by Monsters.

I was fifteen the first time I tried to kill myself. It was your typical teenage angst story: I was bullied, made to feel like I didn't belong, and finally decided that I really didn't. I went home that night and hung myself using a belt and the stair bannister. Luckily, I was a stupid kid and was pretty noisy about the whole affair. My father found me and cut the belt before I ran out of oxygen.

The second time I tried I was twenty-two. In the middle of my junior year of college and losing my shit daily due to stress and anxiety. I finally cracked under the pressure and this time decided I would try the pill route. I took about triple the normal dose of my anxiety medication and washed it down with a bit of whiskey. My roommate found me an hour later, unresponsive. He called EMS and started performing CPR right away, doing chest compressions in an attempt to get my heart beating again. He was about to give up when the ambulance arrived. A moment after he stopped compressions my heart suddenly started beating again. This was followed by me bolting upright and vomiting in his lap. Not the best way to thank someone for saving your life.

My third attempt fizzled out pretty quick. I decided that I wanted something quick, relatively painless, and something that I couldn't easily be brought back from this time. So, I grabbed the nice toaster my aunt had gotten me when I moved into my apartment and took a bath. I was twenty five, and still not smart enough to research things or plan accordingly. I dropped the toaster in a full bathtub and it immediately shorted the breaker, leaving me sitting in an almost overflowing bath with a ruined toaster and more feelings of failure.

Ready for the irony? The first time I actually died wasn't by my hand. I was crossing the street downtown, trying to get back to my car after working a much longer shift than I should have, and got hit by a fucking truck. This was eight months ago, and I was legally dead for four minutes. Thing is, it felt like years.

It wasn't how you hear it described in those inspirational stories, not any I had heard anyway. There was no tunnel, no light, no pearly gates. There was no indication of hell either, with fire and brimstone falling everywhere. No, the next thing I saw after getting hit by that truck was the crossroads I woke up at.

It was a four way intersection in the middle of a dilapidated town. Stoplights were hanging from each side, blinking yellow, and a thick fog filled the entire area. I could only see maybe a hundred feet in either direction. It took a few minutes to get my bearings and remember what happened. By the time I did I could hear footsteps pounding my way, growing louder by the second.

I turned to look up, just in time to have a man that looked a little younger than myself smack right into me, knocking us both off our feet and to the hard pavement below.

"Shit. Shit. Where did you come from?" He was shouting, panic rising in his voice. He scrambled back to his feet and started running again, going in the same direction. He stopped briefly and turned back, giving me a solemn look. "I would get going if I were you. They're on their way."

"Who?" I asked, still picking myself off the ground. He didn't stick around to answer, and disappeared into the fog seconds later.

I decided to just assume I was dreaming. There wasn't much to prove I wasn't, after all. I was hit by that truck, probably knocked out, and now I'm just stuck in this weird dream, maybe in a coma somewhere. Just have to wait around here until I wake up.

The footsteps approached again, pounding against the pavement in the same panicked rhythm as last time. They were running from something. He appeared from the fog yet again, coming to a complete stop right beside me this time and letting out a tirade of curses.

"Wrong way. Wrong fucking way!" He was looking in every direction, trying to size up where to go next. "Which direction did I run last time?"

"That one." I pointed to my left, the yellow light illuminating my outstretched arm in the fog. I noticed I was wearing the same jeans and hoodie that I had changed into before leaving work, except now there were tears in the fabric and dark smudges all over. My skin underneath the tears was scraped and burned, as if I had been dragged across asphalt.

The man tossed a rock over at the direction I pointed, landing it squarely in the center of the road. He turned back to me and shook his head.

"I told you to run." He said again. "You don't want to get ca-"

He was cut off by something lifting him into the air. As I looked I saw a tendril poking from the center of his chest, holding him above the ground.

"Fuck." He coughed out blood. The tendril began to grow, enveloping him as it did. "Run you dumbass. Avoid anywhere you see one of those rocks."

He was snatched backward into the fog, his scream the only thing left. I didn't ignore his warning this time. Even if this was a dream, I wasn't sticking around to see what that thing would do to me. I started running in the opposite direction he had come from, taking twists and turns every time a new intersection came up. I could feel something, *multiple somethings*, watching me from the rooftops and alleys of the buildings. There were things out there hunting. Maybe some were hiding.

I ran for what seemed like an eternity, not stopping until I hit a three way street with a giant building along one side. *Hazelton Elementary School* it read. I didn't care what it was, the door was open and I could see a light inside. I ran in and slammed the door behind me.

The hallway I entered into was dingy and dark, lights flickering like a cheap horror movie. Posters of events and art done by students lined the walls, PSAs about washing hands, saying no to drugs, and other typical campaigns were everywhere. It looked like a typical elementary school. Something was off though, something I couldn't place for the life of me.

I could hear children laughing down the hall. If there were kids here there had to be teachers. Maybe a teacher could point me to somewhere safe? My footsteps echoed in the empty hallway, making a terrifying song when mixed with the laughter. The door just ahead was open, with the voices pouring forth from it.

I stepped into a classroom full of children, all suddenly silent at their desks, facing the other side of the room where a blank chalkboard hung on the wall.

"Um. Excuse me?" I uttered. They all turned as one, looking directly at me. They had no eyes, just hollow pits, pure darkness. They began screaming as one, a high pitched shriek that seemed to be layered in multiple octaves, many not humanly possible.

I ran then. My screams mixed with theirs as I went, fleeing through the hallways trying to find any way out I could. Finally there came a broom closet on my left. I dove in, slamming the door behind me. I scrambled for a lock and put anything heavy I could find in front of the door, then settled back into a corner, hugging my knees close to my chest and choking back tears.

There was a clock up on the wall, but it was either broken or being affected by whatever this place was. All three hands were moving around the clock, varying speed as they went. I don't know how long I sat there, watching the hands spin and listening intently for whatever could be out there. I'm not sure when I fell asleep, but that's when I knew that what was happening wasn't just a dream. This was really happening. I fell into a dreamless sleep, sitting in the corner of a broom closet in some fucked up afterlife, waiting to be devoured by monsters that [lurked in the fog.](<https://thehorrorstore.home.blog>)

I'm a Retired Priest. Over the years I've heard hundreds of confessions. These next few I could not explain.

| [First Sin](https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/eu8bb3/im_a_retired_priest_over_the_years_i_ve_heard/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=ios_app&utm_name=iossmf) | [Second Sin](https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/f1a1wd/im_a_retired_priest_over_the_years_i_ve_heard/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=ios_app&utm_name=iossmf) | [Third Sin](https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/f4ryny/im_a_retired_priest_over_the_years_i_ve_heard/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=ios_app&utm_name=iossmf) | [Fourth Sin](https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/f89u0s/im_a_retired_priest_over_the_years_i_ve_heard/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=ios_app&utm_name=iossmf) | Fifth Sin |

A crisis of faith often is considered a sign of weakness for anyone who devoted their life to the church.

After all, how can you help others if you can not help yourself?

I think I would be lying if I said such situations haven't happened to me during my many years as a man of the cloth. But none perhaps as disturbing as the one surrounding the five sinners.

You can tell that they had an impact on me simply by that moniker, because unlike other cases; this is I have not been able to resolve. I worry I may not be able to actually while I am on this earth.

They didn't all come on the same day. I guess if they did I would have thought that was proof enough of a conspiracy and dismissed the entire thing. But as it turned out, the five sinners that all connected to one another were actually years apart from one another.

The first one was probably back in the 90s, and the only reason they were so interesting was because of how they were dressed. Like they had stepped out of another time entirely.

"Father, I'm sorry to be a bother. But something has been weighing on my mind," the man told me as he hurried into the church and caught my attention with his snazzy suit and tie. Like he had just escaped a mob from the 1930s.

"It's never a bother when you need to speak of what is troubling you," I told him.

To be honest it was actually a bother because I had spent the entire week trying to finish up papers on theology for a college course that I'd been doing part time. But I knew better than to turn away a troubled heart.

"I think I'm being followed. But not by any man actually. It's the devil, I think that he has plans for me. He wants to corrupt my heart and use it for some foul purpose," the man told me as he rubbed his hands together and tried to convince me that he was being stalked by Satan.

I'll admit I was tired, so I was somewhat methodical with my response. "The days of biblical judgment are long past us. God and the devil, they are battling each other for dominance now. Our job is to prove our faith to the one who gave his son for us. So the feelings you have are natural. The devil is attacking all of the faithful. I can guarantee you though that the strength you are showing today by being concerned of this is proof enough of your devotion to our lord and savior," I told him.

Thankfully he seemed relieved by this reasoning and went on his way, and I put him and his concerns out of my mind. As you may be aware from some of my other experiences that I have shared, I've had my fair share of wrestling with demons. I didn't think I was completely qualified to help others handle theirs just yet.

This is why it was interesting that a few months later a woman entered the chapel, speaking of a similar premonition she was experiencing.

"Like a feeling of darkness that is enveloping my very soul, Father. Do you think that the wicked one is coming for me?" she asked.

Not only were her concerns similar to the strange man from months back, her dress was too.

"May I ask you, my child. What is your vocation? Why are you dressed in such a manner?" I asked her.

She didn't seem to understand why I was even asking that. "Are you going to help me or not? Can you cleanse my spirit?"

I sighed and apologized, "You seem pure in faith. Righteous and full of strength for the lord. that alone could be why you think that Satan himself is attacking. But do you feel inclined to give in to temptation? Have you ever wavered from your devotion? Your prayers?"

She firmly declared the opposite and her conviction told me it was the truth so I sent her on her way with my blessing.

Admittedly though, I didn't truly consider this I'd be such a bizarre occurrence until the third person came in. This one expanded on the general concern of the other two. Not only was he convinced that the devil was after him, but he felt that Lucifer was forcing him to do something vile.

"There are people in my life that have wronged me. I've never wished ill upon them until now. I've never thought that I was better than anyone else. My accomplishments are enough to be satisfied by," he admitted.

"But you think that these dark thoughts will eventually manifest themselves?" I guessed.

In later years, such a display of anger and emotion might have prompted me to take swift action against the sinner. To prevent the loss of further bloodshed. But as it stands, I only offered him prayers and had promise before me that he would remain a disciple of the Christ.

Still though his concerns and their similar connections to the other confessions of influence from the spirit realm had me wondering. Could the search I was making to find my family's killer be drawing evil upon the congregation I was serving?

I decided to find out for sure by contacting an older member of the diocese that had taught me. Well versed in scripture and perhaps a mentor and father figure, I felt confident in going to him and sharing my concerns.

Although I do not intend to reveal his true identity here, for the sake of avoiding confusion in this text I will call him Father March.

I arranged to have lunch with him that following Monday, the day before our annual revival; and explained to him my concerns in the best way I could.

"It feels like more than mere coincidence to see that three different people are offering up the same confession in such a short period of time," I told him.

March listened intently, his brow furrowed at certain parts where I explained that I felt the devil might be targeting me but thankfully he didn't ask for an explanation.

"Clearly there is a reason that you want to investigate. So what is stopping you? Reach out to these people. Find the connection that others have not," he told me.

And so I did... or at least tried. I soon found that to be impossible because all three of these people have apparently vanished.

I think this was actually the reason I installed the security cameras in the chapel. To keep an eye on anyone suspicious who might be connected to them. For some reason when my search came up dry, I was sure that foul play was involved.

I told March the same, worried for my congregation's safety.

This time he zeroed in on my obsession with finding the person who killed my mother and father. My Angel of Death.

"It may be time to stop the search for answers. Others are being harmed by your desire for revenge. It is no longer a divine assignment when the people you mean to save are caught in the crosshairs," he told me. I didn't expect him to understand, but the fact that he was confirming my fears told me something else entirely. Somehow or another these five people had to be connected to my family, to the reason they were killed. And someone was covering that up.

A week later a fourth individual came with the same confessional. They were frantic and crying, desperate for help.

"Why is this happening to me?" they asked.

I felt almost obligated to spout my theory.

"I want to show you something," I said taking the man from the confessional booth to my private chambers.

Although I didn't have actual photographs of the other three I had employed a sketch artist to provide me details regarding the people that had scammed me over the years.

"Do you know anyone that matches these descriptions?" I asked.

They studied it and shook their heads, offering up an equally bizarre answer.

"Never been a history buff. But they look like they are from the prohibition," the man said as he adjusted his own strangely colored suit.

This time however I didn't simply accept his answer. I asked him to keep in touch, and kept tabs on him.

Much to my chagrin, or perhaps astonishment; he was later found dead.

I had to go identify the body, trying my best to piece together how this all fit together.

March was there with me, insisting that with so much death and destruction on this path. Perhaps I would need to go on alone.

"There is *something* here. I've kept a log of every confession I ever took. Trying to tie them back to that fateful night. Perhaps the killer is worried I'm close to the truth? But how do these people connect to me?" I told March.

"Either way, you have a choice to make. There are good people in your congregation that need you more than these criminals. More than you may ever realize! Perhaps that is what these tests are telling you! To focus on what really matters rather than something that may lead nowhere," he insisted.

I wanted to follow his advice. I prayed to God so many nights. Asking him to take the cup from me.

But then the fifth one came to me. Literally knocking on my door while I attempted medication and meditation.

Somehow I knew simply by the dress that this was another confessor connected to the four I could not solve. And as his anxious eyes turned toward me I knew for certain.

"What is it? What has happened?" I asked.

"Father March, I think he may be dying. He had you in his emergency contacts. I think... I think I killed him."

I dropped everything and followed them to the chapel. My friend my mentor was lying in a pool of blood blubbering an ancient tongue. Seeing him there. Hardly able to move as paramedics tirelessly tried to save him, left me numb. I had failed to listen to his warning that others would be hurt by my selfishness.

After the fifth one was taken away by the police, I stole a moment of their time to ask them exactly how they felt the devil compelled them to do this crime.

"I wish I could explain it, Father. All I know for sure is I was supposed to give you a message as well," he told me.

"From Lucifer himself? Well this I need to hear," I said crossing my arms and listening to the crazed man.

"It isn't over," he said with a quirky smile and then he was taken away by the authorities.

I've kept that warning in my mind for years now, cautiously waiting for the other shoe to drop. As i've gotten closer to the truth I have seen others harmed as well. But it doesn't matter. I'm ready for the supernatural battle to go down.

I know it will be soon, because even as I shared this I had a sixth person arrive in my chapel with their own confession.

"I need to do something wrong, Father. I think if I don't, the devil will hurt others," she said. This was only a week or so ago, telling me that my efforts to make the people who had taken March from me pay would pay off.

So of course I gave this messenger only one response.

"Tell your devil, that I'm ready to face him."

This crisis of my faith was about to become a rite of passage.

[330](https://www.reddit.com/r/KyleHarrisonwrites/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=ios_app)

You don't want to speak to the manager.

Like most people, I had my first job in my teens. I wanted a little extra pocket money for buying stuff for myself, hanging out with friends, and all other sorts of things, much like any other teenager. It was a very typical scenario for a very typical kid.

Well... for the most part anyway.

I applied for a bunch of different places, but out of all the ones I got job offers from, I settled on a convenience store just down the road from my family's apartment building. Not the most interesting choice, I know, but it's not like a teenager looking for minimum wage work has plentiful options. The simple fact that it was within easy walking distance from my home was more than enough reason for me to choose it over the others.

It was a pretty standard sort of place, with all the usual trappings of a run-of-the-mill convenience store. I think it used to be a 7-Eleven, since I found a couple of their old signs in the back of the storeroom, but by the time I was working there it was privately owned and went by the name of Rick's. Or it may have been Nick's, or something else generic like that. I can honestly never remember.

I'd shopped there a few times myself, since the place was so close and all, and I hadn't noticed any sort of major red flags. The particular part of the city it was located in was relatively low traffic and safe, and the employees seemed happy enough. There were only ever one or maybe two people manning the store at one time, and it seemed like they were generally left to their own devices. Overall it seemed like a normal and relatively pleasant place to work.

And it was. Except for one little, very abnormal detail.

It didn't come up until the end of my training, which was pretty standard fare as far as part-time, minimum wage work goes. I met a guy in store in his early 20s by the name of Mike, who I'd previously spoken with at length over the phone. While another employee was taking care of customers, he showed me around the place, got me acquainted with all the machines and procedures, went over all the rules and such I would need to follow, and helped me with all the legal stuff and paperwork I needed to fill out as a new employee. As I said, pretty standard stuff.

After all that though, Mike had one final thing he said he needed talk about with me. You see, I'd simply assumed this whole time that Mike was the manager, assistant manager, or something like that. However, that wasn't quite the case. Mike was simply the most senior employee at the time, and though he was trusted to handle training new employees and other such things occasionally, outside of that he was just another worker. The manager/owner of the place was a man by the name of Mr. Downey.

Mike led me to a room at the back of the building which appeared to be something of an office of sorts. I say it was an office, but the only thing that distinguished the room as such was a small metal desk that was pushed up against the one of the walls. On top of the desk was a two-way radio sitting in its charging dock and nothing else. Other than that, the room was completely barren, the only other feature of note being a set of stairs that went up to the second floor.

Mike went on to explain that Mr. Downey lived on the second floor of the establishment. Though he handled all the necessary responsibilities of owning and managing a business, he hated to be disturbed and never came downstairs during business hours or any other time anyone other than him was in the

building. The radio was there if you needed to talk to him, but it was for emergencies only. Mr. Downey apparently wouldn't even bother to respond if you tried to contact him for any other reason.

Obviously, I was a bit weirded out by this, but Mike reassured me that, though it was a bit strange, it was never really much of an issue. Despite being reclusive, Mr. Downey was very good about managing everything. Deliveries were handled on time, repairs and other servicing was requested promptly, and everything that was required of the employees was properly communicated through written notes left in the store at the beginning of the day. It was unconventional sure, but it worked. Apparently, in the couple of years Mike had been working there, he had never spoken directly to Mr. Downey even once. As far as he knew, no one had.

I wasn't entirely convinced by this. However, I didn't see it as something worth refusing the job over, so I just ended up shrugging it off. Honestly though, Mike was right. Despite having never seen or even spoken to the person I was working for, everything generally went rather smoothly. I've had managers since that I've seen and spoken to almost every single day that couldn't manage to run things even half as well as Mr. Downey. I'd go so far as to say that convenience store was one of the best working environments that I've had in my entire life.

I won't lie though; every now and then the strangeness of it all would make me a bit uncomfortable. There were security cameras in most of the rooms on the main level. They bothered me a bit, as there were no monitors or anything that we had access to. Logically speaking, this left only one person who could be monitoring the feed. Every now and then when I was working, I'd glance up at those cameras and shudder a bit. The idea that I was being watched, maybe even constantly, was unsettling to say the least.

I only ever thought about this for brief moments though. Mr. Downey didn't seem to be the nitpicky sort. There was never really any sort of performance review or much in the way of feedback. One of the other workers got busted for stealing once, but that was really the only indication I ever got that Mr. Downey might actually be paying attention. At such it was pretty easy to forget about the cameras, for the most part. There wasn't much of anything else to complain about, really. All in all, it was a very laid-back and pleasant sort of gig.

Of course, it wasn't all good times. As anyone who's ever worked in any sort of service industry job can tell you, there's one uncontrollable aspect of the job that can turn any reasonably good day into a bad one at the drop of a hat. The worst part of any service industry job: the customers.

Of course, I had my fair share of awful customers working at that convenience store as well. However, one of them stands out in particular. It was a woman that I generally referred to as "Karen". Not because her name was Karen, but because she was a "Karen" in just about every way you can imagine. I think her name was Christy or something like that, but I never really made the effort to try and remember. Frankly I wanted to spend as little time thinking about and interacting with her as humanly possible.

She, however, seemed to want the exact opposite. She usually came in at least once a week and she always had something new to complain about. Maybe we were out of something, or just didn't have something she thought we should have. Maybe it was because the store was too hot or too cold, or perhaps the lighting was too bright or too dim. Or maybe it was the "poor service". No matter what, she'd think up something to gripe about, and, no matter what, she would always be back. I frankly suspected that she came in specifically just to blow off steam by laying into whoever happened to be working at the time, and I absolutely despised her for it.

However, her behavior isn't the reason why I still think about her to this day.

You see, "Karen" had this thing: she *always* wanted to speak to the manager. It was sort of a running theme for her. After every single complaint, she asked, no, demanded to speak with the manager. Now you see, knowing what I've told you about Mr. Downey, it's probably pretty obvious that this was never going to happen. We employees gave her just about every excuse in the book (that he was out, sick, et cetera). We'd tell her that we would "take a note of her complaints, and let the manager know", and she'd begrudgingly accept that was the best she was going to get. However, she never gave up asking.

And eventually, our excuses were no longer good enough.

I had the misfortune of being the one and only person working when she finally reached her breaking point. I forget what her initial complaint was, and honestly it doesn't really matter, but this time she just wasn't taking "no" for an answer. If the manager wasn't "available" then she was just going to wait until he was!

I was a bit taken aback, but I figured that this new thing of hers could only last so long. However, after two hours of her hanging around in the store, I realized that things weren't going to be that easy. She wasn't just quietly standing there either. She was getting angry. Her random, inane outbursts were even starting to scare off other customers.

I was debating calling the police and having them handle it, but I paused, second-guessing myself. Glancing up briefly at the security camera that was angled towards the counter, I thought to myself that I probably shouldn't be the one to decide. I quickly ducked into the back and grabbed the two-way radio, holding it up to my mouth. I was never really the type to get nervous about phone calls and that sort of thing, but I had to take a deep, calming breath before I could bring myself to press the button on the side of that radio.

"Hey Mr. Downey." I said, my voice shaking a bit. "I don't know if you noticed... you know, on the cameras? But there's a customer out there making a scene about wanting to speak to you. It's turning into a bit of an issue and..."

I trailed off, my mouth feeling weirdly dry. I waited for moment to see if I would get a response, but continued after being met with only silence.

"I know it isn't exactly an emergency, per se, but... it's just getting to the point where I might need to get the police involved and...well, I just figured that would be even more of a bother to you. So I just wanted to see how you wanted to handle this."

For a while there was no response. I stood there for several minutes in silence, feeling like some sort of idiot. I was beginning to ready myself for the absolute ordeal this would turn into once I had to call the police, when I heard something. A sound from the radio. It wasn't a voice or anything immediately recognizable. I listened closer, holding the device up to my ear. I realized then that what I was hearing was background noise mixed in with a slight amount of static, as if the person on the other end was holding down the button without speaking. I could just barely make out a few noises through the static, but they were so faint that I could have maybe just imagined them. There was a low hum, a sort of intermittent clicking, and what I thought was... bubbling? Before I could spend much more time trying to analyze these noises, my thoughts were interrupted by the dry, raspy voice of a person who could only

be Mr. Downey.

He said, "Send her up."

I stood there for a moment, just sort of processing that. The whole situation was just a bit outlandish. I felt uncomfortable about Mr. Downey's request, but I figured that it was still better than getting the police involved. I made my way back out to the storefront, trying to figure out how I was going to present this to "Karen" in a way that was as reasonable and normal-sounding as possible.

Oddly enough, "Karen" took it in stride. Without giving me the chance to really explain about Mr. Downey, she simply jumped to the conclusion that he was probably some sort of invalid or something like that. Not that it mattered, as she was still going to give him a piece of her mind either way. Not really wanting to go through the effort of trying to correct her, I just sort of meekly agreed. Besides, Mr. Downey could have actually been seriously ill or otherwise disabled for all I knew.

I don't know if her self-assurance came from confidence or simple irritation, but she followed me into the back office and stomped up those stairs without batting an eye. She tried to twist the handle of the door and let herself in, but the door at the top of the stairs was still locked. She turned around to give me a snide comment about this, but I cut her off before she had the chance, asking her to give me just a second. I looked around the office to try and find a camera to wave at to get Mr. Downey's attention, but there didn't seem to actually be one in that room for some reason. I hadn't had many reasons to spend much time back there, so it wasn't entirely surprising to me that I hadn't noticed.

Lacking any real direction, I opted to pick the radio back up. Pressing the button down, I muttered "She's here" into the receiver.

Without even two seconds of delay after having spoken into the radio, there was a loud click as the door at the top of the stairs swung open on its own. It was a bit... weird, to say the least. The door itself was old and wooden, like it had been in use for 30 years or more. It certainly wasn't the sort of door you'd expect to be automatic. I could see the mechanism now that the door was open, even from the bottom of the stairs, but it was perfectly concealed when the door was not in use. It was as if the door was set up with that specific intention in mind.

All that could be seen through the now open door was a short hallway with another closed door at the end of it. It was almost like an airlock or something like that. "Karen" looked back towards me over shoulder, the first traces of unease leaking into her confident expression. I shrugged noncommittally in response. I had no words of reassurance to give her, not that I would have given them willingly even if I had them. This was as much new territory for me as it was for her.

She stepped forward, and I watched as the first door slowly swung closed behind her, the latch snapping back into place a few moments later.

I waited there for a few moments to see if the radio would crackle to life with further instructions from Mr. Downey, but it remained silent. I had left the counter unattended long enough as is, so I simply took the silence to mean "get back to work".

I busied myself with attending to my daily tasks, helping customers, and by messing around on my phone during my down time. However, I couldn't get my mind off of what was going on upstairs. Why had the reclusive Mr. Downey decided to actually meet with someone after such a long time of presumably having no direct contact with anyone? Why "Karen" of all people? Sure, he may have just

wanted to do his duty as a manager and calm down the angry customer, but some small, paranoid part of me was telling me that it wasn't as simple as that. What in the world was going on up there?

One... two... three hours passed, and "Karen" still hadn't returned from the second floor.

It was nearing the end of my shift. As I was stocking one of the shelves, I debated how I was going to go about explaining the situation to the next shift. That was when, all of a sudden, I became aware of a presence behind me. Whatever it was hadn't made a single sound. It was just there.

I whipped around, stumbling back a bit and letting out a slightly embarrassing, startled yelp. It was... "Karen". I had no idea how long she been standing there, watching me. Somehow, she had wandered downstairs and out into the storefront from the back office without being seen or heard. I hadn't even heard her breathing. Wait... was she breathing?

I quickly lost track of that train of thought though, when I saw her expression. The leathery, sundried skin of her face, wrinkled with years of consistent frowning, was twisted into the widest, most unnatural smile that I ever seen. Every single one of her teeth was exposed all at once. It was truly ghoulish to behold. It looked forced, so much so that it must have hurt to twist her own face to that extent, but it almost seemed... stuck that way?

Before I could steady myself and ask if she was okay, she thanked me for my time through clenched teeth and left the store, walking at a stiff, brisk walk. I stood there for a while, not quite sure how to process what had just happened. "Karen's" sudden change was jarring in far too many ways. What had happened upstairs to bring about this change? Whatever it was, I hoped it wasn't permanent. Serving her as a customer like this would be much, much worse.

Fortunately... but also far more unfortunately, this would be the last time I saw her. That day, when "Karen" got home, she beat her two young children to death with her bare hands. Afterwards, she waited for her husband to get home before promptly stabbing him through the neck with a kitchen knife at the front door. Neighbors who witnessed this called the police, but, by the time they arrived, "Karen" had already hung herself.

Murder isn't exactly uncommon in large cities like mine, and it rarely gets the attention it probably should. However, this particular instance of it was the talk of the town for quite a while, and still is in some circles. Though the sudden, severe violence of this crime, along with the apparent lack of any motive, did play a part in the case's notoriety, it wasn't the main reason it was talked about. Rather, it was the information that would leak out during the course of the investigation that really drew people's attention. Most notably the various... bits and pieces that were found to be missing from "Karen's" body during the autopsy, all seemingly with no wounds to account for the extraction and no reasonable explanation. About a fourth of her circulatory system, three inches of her large intestine, and the entirety of her parietal lobe were some notable examples.

Throughout the investigation, the convenience store was never connected to the crime in any meaningful way. For a long while, I thought about going to the police to tell them about what had happened. I almost did, but then something happened to change my mind.

You see, when I got my next paycheck, Mr. Downey had sent me a little note along with it. It read, in dark red ink: "It would be best for both of us if you never speak to the police about what happened". Along with this was a little, crude drawing of an eye.

The message was clear enough, but the meaning of the eye was a little bit less so. I thought at first that it's simply meant he was keeping an eye on me, which it probably does in part. However, I had soon convinced myself that there was more to it. The cameras. The footage, wherever it is, shows me taking "Karen" to the back office, but that's it. There were no cameras inside the office, and I seriously doubt that there would be any on the second floor. It would be far too easy to implicate me. To make me out to be an accomplice, if not the culprit. Lord knows it wouldn't be hard to establish motive. Sure, the police could believe my story, but I wasn't willing to gamble on that.

Besides, it may be harsh to say, but I wasn't in any way willing to risk my own well-being and the well-being of my family over some self-righteous sense of "justice". Call me a coward, sure, but I sure as hell am not an idiot.

I didn't stick around working at the convenience store for very long after that. Years have gone by. I've long moved away from that city, worked many other different jobs, and even started a family of my own. I haven't ever spoken to the police, or anyone else in my life about what happened. I likely never will. I do still think about it all, every now and then. The convenience store closed about a year after the incident, and ownership the building passed to someone else. There's no real record of Mr. Downey having existed before or even after that. All there is to prove he was real is a name on an old deed.

I still have no idea who or what Mr. Downey was. Hopefully, I never will.

I stumbled upon a wicked guide for my peculiar new hometown [Final]

[Part 1](https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/ff1yro/i_stumbled_upon_a_wicked_guide_for_my_peculiar/)

****Day 2: The bridge****

It was still really early in the morning but not being able to sleep at all, I decided to just go to the park and dig up the next clue. As I was the one with the map and the bracelet, I decided that it must mean that I am the main player of the game. I'm not sure if doing so put Spencer at more or less risk but for now I just needed to find some answer. And I told myself that it was better if he took some distance from it all. At least until I knew what all of this was about.

In this box I found a lock and a key as well as another letter.

Where lovers promise to lock their souls together for eternity, is where you need to go next. Leave your name and the one of your lover on the lock. Putting down the name of only one person will not lose you the game but it might lead to seven years of bad luck. When the assignment is completed, find a new lock and leave it in the next box together with this letter.



****Open your eyes. You might see whoever you seek the most at the bridge of lovers. P.F. 1949****

****Hopefully you have someone to love. The alternative is horrific. R.L. 1967****

****If you made it to the bridge, just jump. Believe me it's the better option. J.P. 1995****

****I need to get out of this**. **Please help me. I.G. 2012****



The writings of former players didn't exactly make me feel better, especially after last night but I didn't even want to know what might happen if I didn't continue. This clue was a lot shorter than last time but I already had a hunch what it meant. Clonseburg has a big bridge where couples often put up locks with their names on them.

I just didn't understand how I would find a new clue, simply by leaving a new lock.

I put the figurine as well as the last letter inside the box and put it where I had found the new one. Then I made my way to the bridge. It's only about five minutes away from where I live so I had to go towards that direction anyway. I figured that there wouldn't be many people around right now.

It was about 7 AM and I was really close to the bridge when I got a text from Spencer.

****Sorry man, Trish is sick and I gotta take her shift. Can't come digging with you. But let me know what you find!****

I sighed in relief. Spencer seemed fine and this way I wouldn't have to explain to him why I went along without him. I contemplated telling him about the burn marks but finally decided to keep it to myself for now.

In front of the bridge railing I sat down to write my name on the lock. Only my name. I didn't have a partner and even if I did I wouldn't put their name on this. Whatever the bad luck meant, I'm pretty sure I already had it. Sitting there I got an idea. Maybe I could find the locks of former players. I had their initials after all.

After approximately two hours of searching, I realized that it was a dumb idea. There were far too many locks and I didn't even know what names exactly they had put on them. I locked up mine, picked up the box I had dug up earlier and walked back home.

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I didn't know how the game defined the seven years of bad luck but I think I know how it was trying to make it happen.

All the mirrors inside my apartment were shattered. The remains were spread all over the floor. The burn marks on my hand had already freaked me out but this was on a whole new level. I walked around the place in disbelief, making sure there was nobody inside.

There wasn't but I still felt uneasy. At the same time I couldn't get the fact out of my head that I hadn't received a new clue.

Or maybe I just didn't know where to find it.

I got out the map from the game and crossed out the bridge. There were at least ten more marks on the map in different places. Not every place was crossed out by all the colours though. Sometimes it was just one or two which I didn't know how to feel about. I thought about a million options on what to do but eventually I just passed out and fell asleep. It was already afternoon when I woke up again and that's when I got an idea. A way that might get me some more answers. I called my landlord and asked about the last residents of this apartment. At first she didn't want to give me any names but when I said that I had found something I needed to get back to them, she caved in. I already knew that the person that lived here before me was called Olivia. She was the one who gave me the keys.

"Oh, I already asked Olivia. It's not hers" I lied. The only name starting with O is from 1958 and Olivia is in her mid thirties. "What about the person before her?" I asked.

My landlord was quiet for a moment. What she said next made every cell in my body freeze.

"Oh that was a tragic incident. The poor man passed away years ago. Ian... Gardner, I believe. But don't worry. It didn't happen in the apartment."

I didn't know what to say. I mumbled something about trying to ask Olivia again and hung up.

****Ian Gardner.****

****I.G.****

Just to be safe I got the box to look at the last thing he had written in the letter. Only then did I realize that the insides of the box were different.

There was a new letter inside as well as a box of matches.

I have no fucking clue how they got in there.

For the rest of the evening I couldn't stop panicking. I had no idea what to do except for finishing this game but I wasn't even sure if this would end it. I felt too anxious to even read the letter. I put it back in the box and started researching Ian Gardner. I found an old facebook page where people wrote condolence messages, and a couple of news articles. Ian hadn't simply died, he had jumped off the Clonesburg bridge.

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****Day 3: Burned remains****

When I woke up the next day, I finally opened the box again. There was no way I could just ignore what was going on so I picked up the paper and started reading.

In the 1700s the town of Clonesburg was marked thoroughly by religion. Anyone who would not comply with the catholic church was written down as a sinner. Both books and humans were burned at the stake. Clonesburg is built on the remains of those so called unbelievers.

For the next part of the game, you will need to find someone you believe deserves punishment. Write on a piece of paper a name of this person without the right faith and burn it at the place of the old stake.

****Everyone defines faith differently. Remember that. -P.F. 1949****

****Don't burn the paper unless you really want somebody to die. -J.P. 1995****

My hands wouldn't stop shaking. I thought about going on with the game but not for the life of me could I come up with a name to write down. What if they really died?

My breath was getting faster, I felt like throwing up again. Eventually I decided to take this new letter and the matches and go to the café where Spencer worked. This was all too much for me and while I was afraid of the consequences, I knew that he might be in danger too and it was time to let someone into the madness that I was witnessing.

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Even after showing Spencer the burn marks and telling him about the shattered mirrors, he wouldn't believe in any of it. He was skeptical and who could blame him? He thought that I was simply going

crazy and maybe he was right. I had hardly eaten since I found this game and my thoughts kept getting stranger.

“Okay man listen. This needs to stop here. Give me that strange letter and the weird bracelet. Then you will go home and pick up some stuff. You’re staying with me for now. Until you’re feeling better.”

I tried to tell him that I was fine but we both knew that was a lie. Eventually he convinced me. I still would finish the game, I couldn’t risk stopping but I thought it wouldn’t be a terrible idea if I had Spencer helping me again. So I walked home to get some clothes and my toothbrush.

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I was just about to open the door when I heard noises inside. Somebody was moving something. Hadn’t I heard it or had I gone inside anyway who knows what would have happened to me. Or if I hadn’t given Spencer the bracelet because what happened next I could never have predicted.

Something inside of me told me that I had to get away as quickly as possible. I ran down the stairs and called the police saying that somebody had broken into my apartment. I didn’t know who or what was inside of there and if it was even human at that point but making the decision of calling the police is probably what saved my life.

Because they did find someone inside. A woman called Penelope.

She was the one who had planned and created the entire game but not in 1947 as the letter said. That was all made up, as well as many of the writings of people who played the game. Not all of them though, Ian and whoever J.P. was were real. Both of them lived in the same apartment as me and found the box in here. They played the game and were sure that it was all real. As well as I was. In reality, Penelope was behind all of it.

The bracelet that looked like an old relic actually had a tracking device installed which is why Penelope always knew where I was. Except for when I gave it to Spencer. Everytime I left the apartment, she could see it. That’s when she broke my mirrors or how she knew when to exchange the content of the boxes when I was at the bridge. And of course she could always see on the map which clues I had already found. Hadn’t I been so distracted, maybe I would have seen her. Or maybe we both would have seen her when Spencer and I were walking around the church. Having keys to my apartment, she was also able to drug me so I wouldn’t feel it when she burned the palm of my hand.

As to why she did all of this, the story is a bit more confusing than all of this already is. Penelope as well as a circle of other people that originate from Clonesburg made it all up. It’s a sick game they are playing and they have a competition going on on how many players they can collect. Players that will not stop the game until the map is fully crossed out and so far I don’t think anyone has come this far. The police are trying to get more information out of her but she won’t say who these other people are. So I guess, somewhere in Clonesburg somebody might be sucked into playing some wicked game at this moment.

I’m just glad I got out of it in time.

I visit thousands of rest stops yearly as a semi-truck driver, but there's one in Texas I refuse to stop at.

There's a rest stop on the border of Texas and Oklahoma that is legendary among truck drivers. It's only spoken of in hushed whispers or brief texts, and never over radio. Only a few of us dare to park there for the night. However, I'm not one of those brave souls—for I value my life more than a few hours of sleep.

This rest stop is evil. Whether this is because of the owners or the land itself, nobody knows. All I know is that after my experience ten years ago, I refuse to drive within five miles of that vile place.

I can remember the night that I spent there like it was yesterday. My nightmares are haunted by that dreadful experience, which nearly caused me to leave the profession. I've never shared the horrors of that night with anybody. Although I vowed to carry the secrets of that place to my grave, I decided this morning to share my story with you. By doing so, my goal is to warn you:

Should you ever come across the rest stop on the Texas-Oklahoma border, keep driving. For a fate worse than death awaits you.

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I fell asleep within minutes after parking my truck. I had been on the road for ten hours, and not even a sixth cup of coffee could raise my drooping eyelids. My tank was on empty, and I needed to get some shut eye if I had any hope of reaching Oklahoma City with my truck in one piece.

Around 3AM, a screeching sound filled the air. This sound startled me so badly I banged my hands on the steering wheel as I jolted awake.

I glanced out the window, and nearly shit myself when I saw ten naked women walking slowly towards my truck through the darkness.

These women were beautiful, and stole the saliva from my mouth. My heart pounded as they approached the window and motioned at me to lower it.

"How can I help you?" I stammered.

"We need your help," said one of the women. She was brunette and had thin smile lines framing her lips.

I fell in love with her immediately.

"What can I do for you?"

"One of our friends passed out in the restroom. We think she's injured. Can you check on her? We don't have a phone, and you're the only person here."

If I wasn't still groggy with sleep, I might've been weary of such a request. However, given that I was captivated by her beauty, I agreed and stepped out of my truck. I didn't even question her nakedness,

nor that of her companions. I simply accepted it, as if nudity was a new fashion trend.

"Lead the way," I said. "I'm happy to help in whatever way I can."

"That's very kind of you," said the woman, wrapping her arm around mine. "We're getting worried."

She led me to the restroom. "She's in the stall."

I opened the stall, and screamed when I saw a creature so grotesque it stole the air from my lungs.

Its body was a pale gray, and coarse brown hairs covered its seven limbs. Four sets of yellow eyes dominated its face. Beneath this mouth was a fetid mouth filled with teeth as large as bones.

"Don't be afraid," said the brunette woman. She had released my arm and retreated towards the wall with the rest of the women. "Our friend just wants to play with you."

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I turned to run away, but the creature's arms grabbed my hands before I could pass from the stall. I gagged as its sordid breath washed over my face. Never before had I encountered a stench so terrible.

Blood poured from my wrists as its fingernails dug into my flesh. Its hands were that of a human, which only increased my fear.

I kicked it in the stomach, but its abs were harder than steel. It grinned as my foot rebounded to the ground, then pulled me towards its mouth.

Blood roared in my ears as my head sank towards its mouth. I imagined its gore-streaked teeth closing around my head and nearly fainted. If it wasn't for the adrenaline coursing through my veins, my legs would've given out.

"Stop resisting!" yelled the women. "She just wants to play with you!"

I offered up a desperate prayer to God to save me from the monstrous creature languishing in front of me. Although I wasn't a religious man, it was all I knew to do.

Just as the creature's teeth passed within inches of my skull, I remembered the knife in my back pocket.

I spat a wad of snot into one of the creature's eyes. It shrieked and released me from its iron-like grip.

I scrambled from the stall and pulled out my knife, pointing it at the women. "Don't touch me," I said. "I'm not afraid to sever your jugulars."

I sprinted back to my truck before they could respond. Whether they followed me out of the bathroom or not I don't know—[for I pulled out of the rest stop so fast my tires left a permanent stain on the asphalt.](<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LcCFj1edpJQ>)

[DHS](<https://www.reddit.com/r/DailyHorrorStories/>)

A bad trip on mushrooms showed me something that I still don't know how to explain

Hallucinogenic drugs are something that people seem to either really love and use regularly, or something they have sworn off forever. To me, nothing is better than a night with good friends tripping balls in the middle of the woods and bursting into fits of laughter until our jaws feel like they're about to fall off.

One of my favorites has always been psilocybin, or magic mushrooms as they are more commonly known. Those little purple-gold bastards will put you in another dimension of giggles for hours on end.

Yeah, the nausea and bouts of vomiting kind of suck, but it's small price to pay to visit an alien landscape. A lot of people are put off of hallucinogens due to their fear of having a 'bad trip'. It's good to be aware of this risk, but out of the hundreds of trips I've had, I've only ever had one which I'd classify as 'bad'. It was the last time I tripped, and it was really bad. I still don't know exactly how much was the trip, and how much was real, but it's the reason I'm here writing this today.

It was a warm summer Friday night, and I had just gotten off work. My buddy Cody had texted me during the day and wanted to know if I wanted to go out and have a bonfire. I of course quickly expressed my interest and returned home to get ready for the night. I met up with Cody and his girlfriend Lexi several hours later.

Cody had a wide devious smile on his face when I arrived, and I knew instantly he had something he couldn't wait to tell me.

"What are you all happy about?" I asked buckling my seatbelt in the backseat of his truck.

"Check it out man." Cody said fumbling for something in his center console. He retrieved a bag several seconds later and tossed it to me.

"Merry Christmas." He said with a smile. The bag was stuffed with a familiar and welcome sight: dried psilocybin mushrooms. I removed one from the bag and admired it in my hands. It was dotted with streaks of purplish-azure and smelled absolutely rancid. All normal signs of good quality shrooms.

"So, it's gonna be one of those nights huh?" I asked, my smile mirroring his own.

"Hell yeah." Cody replied with a raspy chuckle. From there the three of us made our way out to meet up with another couple of our friends. We rendezvoused with Alex, Jovan and Chelsea soon after. Cody unveiled his bag of goodies, and both guys expressed equal excitement as I had.

"Oh shit, it's gonna be a good night." Jovan said with his infectious laugh. Our group headed out from there to grab the usual supplies. We picked up a few pallets from Cody's work, stopped by the liquor store and headed out to our usual spot.

I live out in Oregon, and our go to bonfire area is a place called Goat Mountain. It's pretty remote, some 15 miles south of Estacada. Lots of wilderness, off-roading trails and abandoned logging sites dot the area. People know about this place and regularly camp in the area, but usually you'll never run into them because the place is so vast.

The area is nice for several reasons. First of which, is that cops rarely patrol it because their cruisers have severe difficulty traversing the unpaved trails that lead up to it. A truck or jeep is pretty much a must in order to get there.

Second is that - as far as I know, nobody lives in the area. You can make all the noise you want up there, and nobody's going to complain or come looking for you. It's our own little haven, shared by others who know the area, and a pleasant escape from the bustling and at times overwhelming city.

So, we began our trek, supplies in tow with Cody's truck barreling towards the destination. Lexi was in shotgun, while Chelsea and I sat in the back. Behind us, Alex and Jovan stayed hot on our tail in Alex's 98' Jeep Wrangler.

The roads quickly turned from smooth pavement, to an uneven dirt path. Trees stood like templars on either side of the road, and the forest itself seemed to beckon us onward. We of course, were all too eager to oblige.

We made good time, and within half an hour we arrived at the usual spot. The area is a sort of pit or small valley on the other side of a relatively steep trail. Makeshift firepits were scattered about the area, while shotgun shells, beer cans and cigarette butts littered the area. It appears we aren't the only ones who visit that spot anymore.

It honestly pisses me off that people come out and leave shit all over the place. Like really? If you're going to go camping then at least pick up your trash or at the very least, burn it. I'm no hippie, but I'll admit; I am a bit of a stickler when it comes to not leaving a mess. Nothing worse than having an area you love overrun by garbage.

Despite the initial irritation of the trash, we soon had our gear unloaded and a warm bellowing fire roaring in the background. We wasted no time in cracking open a cold one, and setting up the tents. The sun had just begun to set by the time we finished our set up.

Cody then eagerly distributed the shrooms among the group. Lexi and Chelsea both elected to not participate, which only meant more for the rest of us. Cody had maybe a half ounce or so, meaning that each of us took roughly an eighth, with Cody taking a bit more.

I chewed on the grimy mushrooms, as a taste not entirely dissimilar to stale popcorn entered my mouth. Some people can't stand the taste, one of those people being Jovan who looked as though he was about to vomit as he downed them.

"Shit tastes like ass." He commented, a scowl on his face as he downed a large swig of Coors.

"Well they do grow in cow shit y'know?" Cody replied with a laugh that was echoed by Alex. Lexi and Chelsea gave shakes of their heads from around the fire, as the four of us guys struggled to down the dried mushrooms. After it was done, we grabbed another round of beers and sat in eager anticipation of the desired effects.

For about an hour we sat, reminiscing on past parties and various debauchery as we waited for the trip to kick in. I felt my stomach begin to turn as we sat there, which actually is a good sign. Psilocybin is essentially food poisoning, like mold or something. Makes you feel like shit for a bit, but that's how you

know it's working.

It's always a slow malaise at first, a subliminal inclination that makes you feel like something about the world is suddenly very different. The weirdness is gradual, starting with moderate tufts of distortion on the trees and in the sky. I always describe it as 'the world begins to sing,' which when I'm sober sounds like nonsense, but during the trip it makes perfect sense. The world around you seems to just take on an entirely different form as your perspective gives in to the chemicals. For some reason this is just about the funniest damn thing you will ever see, and soon after the fits of giggles begin.

Chelsea was busy telling a story about some girl who tried to fight her at a party, when Alex suddenly burst out laughing. Chelsea looked to him, clearly annoyed that he had interrupted her tale.

"You're trippin' balls aren't you?" She asked with a laugh. Alex calmed down suddenly, his eyes darting back and forth as hushed giggles escaped his lips.

"I feel like shit bro..." Jovan said.

"Go puke, it'll enhance the trip." Cody replied. I never actually have found out whether that rumor is true or not. Jovan shook his head and pressed his hand to his face.

"Nah man I'll be good..." Cody then looked to me.

"You feelin' it yet?" Cody's eyes seemed to bulge from their sockets, and for some reason his slightly pudgy exterior combined with blonde facial hair in that moment of dismal lightning reminded me of a walrus. I burst out laughing, and Cody followed suit right after.

The three of us continued to laugh for several minutes, all the while the girls giggled to themselves and made fun of us. Jovan meanwhile, had gone to relieve himself away from the group. Silence suddenly befell the group, only for it to be pierced seconds later by the sounds of Jovan retching somewhere in the woods.

This of course elicited another bout of laughs from Cody, Alex and me. We then heard the infectious cackle of Jovan from the shadows who had now also joined in the laughter. Chelsea shook her head.

"Idiots." She and Lexi shared a laugh as Jovan returned to the group.

"Man I splattered on my Jordan's." Jovan said with a laugh while using a towel to wipe the muck from his feet.

"Why you even wearing those out here?" Cody asked with a laugh. The full brunt of the trip really began to hit me then. Around me the trees appeared to breathe in and out, like a pupil rapidly dilating and restricting. Lexi began to play some trap music from her phone. Cody's truck and Alex's jeep also appeared to breathe, and when combined with the music, they appeared to dance in the crimson light of the fire. I giggled to myself, juvenile, like a child who just swiped a cookie from the jar.

We continued to chuckle at asinine things and observe the now distorted world around us. A full moon now beamed brightly overhead, illuminating a cluster of grinning clouds that seemed to sneer down at us. In the woods around us I saw the shadows dance and contort in a bizarre display. Lexi then paused her music, and things fell suddenly silent. That was when I first heard it. In the distance I thought I could hear the faint humming sound of something.

I perked up and cocked my head to the side, trying to better hear the faint sound.

"What is it?" Lexi asked. I put my hand up, as the distant sounds of what appeared to be a low humming echoed in my ears.

"Do you hear that?" The others cocked their heads.

"Sounds like... humming or something." I replied. "Am I just tripping or..."

"No, I hear it too..." Chelsea interjected.

"Probably just somebody blasting music." Cody said. Alex rose to his feet and began to saunter away from the fire. He paused some twenty feet away, and slowly turned back.

"I think it's coming from that way." He said extending a pointed finger towards a cluster of trees. He lowered his hand and then turned back to us, a gleaming smile on his face.

"You guys up for an adventure?" He asked with a chuckle.

"Hell no man, I ain't tryin' to die tonight." Jovan replied.

"Oh come on you'll be fine, it's probably just some people partying. Cody you down?" Cody took a swig of beer and pondered the proposition for a moment.

"Yeah fuck it, let's do it." He said with a shrug.

"Zach, you down?" Alex asked to me. I shrugged.

"Sure, why not?" Cody and I both rose to our feet and beckoned Jovan.

"Come on Jovan let's go..." Cody said. Jovan shook his head.

"Hell no man."

"Come on, don't be a pussy. We're just gonna go see what's up." Alex replied. Jovan gave a deep sigh and downed his Coors. Then with a groan he stood as well, begrudgingly ready to follow.

"Be careful please..." Lexi said to Cody with a pleading glance.

"Come with us..." Cody replied. Lexi and Chelsea both shook their heads.

"Nope." Lexi replied simply. "Somebody's gotta watch the stuff."

"Fine." Cody said rolling his eyes and turning away. He walked over to Alex's spot and Jovan and I followed.

The four of us soon disappeared from the light of the campfire and entered the now chilly woods. Luckily the full moon beamed down overhead, making visibility surprisingly good for that time of night.

Shadows seemed to stare at us around every corner, and the trees almost seemed to try grabbing us as we passed. Our journey was mostly silent, albeit with sparse giggles emitted every now and then.

The strange humming sounds grew louder, and as we drew nearer to the source I recognized it as some kind of chanting. That should've been where we turned and high-tailed it out of there, but we were dumb.

We had gone for maybe ten minutes when we rounded a corner and saw something. Cody who lead the pack paused, and lifted his hand up. Then I saw it. Further down the trail, maybe a couple hundred yards there was a bonfire.

"Dude... I don't know about this..." Alex said turning to the rest of us. I crept closer and stood beside Cody at the front.

"Come on, they're just havin' a bonfire." Cody replied, shrugging off Alex's concern.

"What the hell is that sound then?" Alex replied. Cody's head swayed on his shoulder, before he began walking once more.

"Cody hold up dude..." Cody wasn't listening. He walked across the trail and disappeared into the woods on the other side. I groaned, now with a deep pit of dread opening in my stomach. Nonetheless, and against my instincts I followed him.

I entered the trees on the other side, and took care as to not make a lot of noise. I saw Cody some thirty yards away crouching behind a tree. I tiptoed over to his position, and crouched down beside him. Cody jumped as he heard me, but then relaxed a bit. I saw the fear in his wide, dilated eyes then.

"Dude..." He pointed out beyond our position, in the direction of the bonfire. The chanting now sounded almost like a group of monks performing a Gregorian mantra of some kind. I crept up to Cody and peered around him.

The bonfire was now completely visible- a massive pyre burning brightly some 50 yards away. Around it stood a dozen or so people, all dressed in white robes with hoods up. There was some sort of emblem on their chests, but it was too far to discern what it was. All of them were holding hands around the fire, chanting their ungodly chorus in unison.

My first thought was that we had stumbled upon a Ku-Klux-Klan rally. Alex and Jovan then emerged behind us. Jovan peaked around the tree.

"Oh hell no!" His words elevated almost to a shout. Alex quickly seized him to prevent him making any more noise, but it was too late. I watched from the shadows as the chanting stopped, and those in the group turned their heads towards our position. It was then I saw something truly disturbing. Underneath their hoods I could see their faces, but something about them was just... unnatural. It looked as though they wore the faces of animals, but in the dim light it was impossible to confirm.

My heart began thundering in my chest, and I felt my knees trembling beneath me. The group stared in our direction for what seemed like hours, motionless and still clasping hands with one another. We were adequately hidden in the brush, but if they decided to go investigate, then we would have no choice but to make a run for it. Luckily for us they didn't, and eventually they turned back to their pyre and resumed their activities.

It was then I took a closer look at the fire itself. In the midst of the crimson flames I thought I saw something shaped like a skull. Not human skull, more animalistic. We continued to watch, enamored by the bizarre spectacle.

After several more minutes they stopped, and released one another's hands. They stood in silence for a moment, as only the sounds of dancing cinders filled the atmosphere. Then someone moved towards the center of the group. This one was different to the others though. He wore a robe as well, but his hood was down and on his head was an elaborate mask of some sort. I counted at least six spiraling horns about a foot in length. The face of the mask looked to be the skull of some predatory animal, perhaps a bear or wolf.

He strolled into the center, silently and turned his back to the inferno. The flames stood almost as tall as he did. He stood only a few feet from the voracious fire, and I wondered how he could possibly bare the immense heat.

Another person then approached him, as a bizarre clucking noise became audible. The second member held a cage of some sort which housed something within. The one with the elaborate headdress then lifted both his arms and began to speak. I listened, trying to decipher his words for a moment, before realizing he wasn't speaking in English. I don't know what language it was actually, but to me it sounded like Latin or some other archaic dialect. Goosebumps sprouted all over my skin as I looked on. Cody shot me a glance, an almost petrified look as if to ask 'should we go back'? Neither of us spoke though.

The man then appeared to finish his monologue, and the others in the group chanted a phrase in unison.

"Resurgehmos." The leader lowered his arms, and his assistant opened the cage. The leader then stuck his arm inside and pulled back, withdrawing a live chicken that clucked and fluttered furiously. The poor bird was held by the man upside down by its feet for only a moment, before the man slid a blade across its throat. The chicken squawked in a frenzied, terrified tone as blood began to drip from its neck. The man then took the dying bird and flung it into the bellowing flames.

The bird's body entered the inferno with a sickening squawk of pain before being quickly devoured by it. The flames then lurched upwards by at least five feet for only a split second. By that point we began to move away, completely horrified by the events we had just witnessed. As we scurried away, I heard something echo from the flames. It sounded like a deep guttural laughter.

Cody and I stopped as Alex and Jovan took off back towards the camp. We turned back to the fire, and I could scarcely believe my eyes. By this point I was peaking in my trip, so what I saw may not be entirely accurate.

The flames shifted and the logs within began to crumble as if someone had struck them. The logs fell aside, and from beneath them I saw something begin to sprout upwards. It was dark, blacker than soot and impossible to discern its appearance. We didn't bother sticking around to see anything else though.

Cody and I took off running, frantic and no longer wishing to see whatever the hell that thing was. I felt twigs and branches smack my face and body as I went hurtling through the woods at a torrid rate. A

cacophonous roar emanated from behind us, followed by the sounds of pained shrieks.

The ground beneath me seemed to distort and shift as I ran. The forest itself seemed intent on restricting me, and several times I fell, only to regain my footing and keep running. The shadows seemed to bite at my heels every step of the way, and in the distance, I heard the serenade of manic laughter and lamentations bolster into a storm.

Finally, Cody and I reached the camp, and found Alex and Jovan already loaded up in Alex's Jeep.

"What the hell's going on?" Lexi asked as we entered the site.

"We gotta go, come on." Cody instructed. Alex and Jovan took off seconds later, with Alex's Jeep screaming back down the hill. We quickly doused our campfire and loaded into Cody's truck. The tents and other supplies were left behind, as nothing else mattered in that moment aside from escape.

Cody's truck roared to life and within seconds we were flying back down the trail which had led us to the site. Alex and Jovan were already long gone by that point. Cody quickly but carefully navigated the crumbling trail, and soon we had reached the bottom and emerged upon the dirt road.

Cody gunned it as soon as we were on the flat ground, and his truck began barreling back down the mountains. Lexi kept urging him to slow down, and I'll admit I was nervous of his driving in that moment as well. In the rearview I saw Cody's eyes, stretched taught and unblinking as terror coalesced within them.

Chelsea kept asking me what we saw, but I never found the words to be able to answer her properly. I kept thinking I saw flashes of whatever was in the flames on our way out standing at the side of the road. I still don't know whether I actually did, or if it was all an illusion of my hallucinating mind.

We made it back to Cody's house some time later, and found Alex and Jovan had beat us there. We all just sort of sat around in Cody's basement, not really saying much of anything. Eventually the night grew late, and the others fell asleep. I didn't sleep a minute that night though, as I could've sworn I heard distant laughter on several occasions.

That was all over three years ago, and I have since gotten over the incident, at least for the most part. I've never tripped mushrooms again since that experience; the thought alone terrifies me. None of us have ever really talked about what we saw that night either, but maybe that will change soon.

I had almost forgotten about this entire fiasco, until a couple days ago I saw something that caught my eye. It was a news article from a local paper, claiming that two bodies had been found at Goat mountain. They were both burned beyond recognition, and had to be identified by their dental records.

It was everywhere in the news for a few days and created quite the hubbub around here, and now suddenly, it's just gone. I can't find a trace of it anywhere. I don't know what happened with it, but it's clear there's something that someone doesn't want getting out. That may be the most troubling aspect about all of this.

I know all of this sounds crazy, ludicrous even. I know the mind of a hallucinating individual is not one easily trusted, and I know the things I have written here seem incredible. But at the same time, I've been through trips dozens of times before, and I know what I saw. I know it's the truth, and now I know that it- whatever it is, it's still out there.

COVID-19 is a lot worse than we were told [Part 1]

"We're almost out of here, honey." I said to my wife Beth.

She nodded, blinking lethargically. I couldn't see it because of the mask covering her mouth and nose, but I imagined that she smiled reassuringly. I peeked around the person who stood in the line in front of us. There were only a dozen more people in front of us before the checkpoint. Murmurs of the people permeated the air around us, with an occasional stern military order being shouted from the front.

Armed soldiers in hazmat suits stood menacingly at the makeshift gate, making everyone nervous with their weapons. There were barbed fences on either side, cordoning off all exit points in the city. Just two weeks ago, you could drive through here without a worry in your mind and now there were so many barricades, soldiers and military vehicles that you'd end up like swiss cheese before even stepping foot outside the gate. When we first arrived, there were hundreds of civilians fighting over who's going to go first, but when the soldiers at the gate fired a few warning shots and ordered them to stand in line, no one dared disobey.

"Next!" The soldier in front shouted and the line of people moved forward a couple steps.

"Just a little more, and we'll be out." I said.

"Aaron, what if they can't let us out?" She asked, with a tired look in her eye.

"Next!" The soldier shouted and we moved one step forward.

"Sure they can." I said and chuckled, feeling the warm breath on my face trapped due to the mask "We barely made contact with other people. We're clear, I'm sure of it."

"We should have gotten out when we first heard the news." Beth said.

Yeah, we should have. But no one thought it was serious at first. We all heard about the outbreak in China and how Wuhan was quarantined. About how the virus appeared outside the country and how the WHO declared a state of emergency. But no one thought it could happen in a small town in Oregon like ours. By the time a case was spotted here, the virus had already spread significantly and the military quarantined the city almost immediately.

We were on lockdown for almost two whole weeks, since the government didn't know what to do with us. Beth and I stockpiled food and other supplies almost immediately, because we had no idea how long they'd keep us in quarantine. And then panic slowly started to spread among townsfolk. Most of us know that the coronavirus isn't that deadly unless you're old and sick, but the media bloated the news beyond proportions and pretty soon, the first death occurred in our town. But not from the virus mind you, it happened when food supplies ran low in the supermarkets and one young man shot another over a pack of canned goods. The gunman was arrested immediately, but it caused a chain reaction. One murder turned into two, then ten and then things escalated into mob robberies and vandalism.

Beth and I spent days inside our house, unable to get a moment of peace, as screams, gunshots and constant batters of footsteps permeated the air right outside our house. It wasn't long until houses started getting broken into and people getting murdered, even in our peaceful part of town. It was no longer safe anywhere. The government considered the media coverage of the state in the town to be

largely exaggerated, so they organized an evacuation of the people who were not infected. They set up a checkpoint in which the civilians would be tested and from there either set free or returned to town.

"Next!" The soldier shouted.

We were close enough now to see the small device he was holding in his hand. It looked like a scanner that cashiers use at the grocery lane. The man who was next in line stopped in front of the soldier.

"Stand still, please." The soldier said in a muffled tone under his suit.

The man trembled, but did his best to stay still. The soldier pointed the scanner at his forehead and pressed a button. The device beeped steadily for a few seconds and then the beeping became louder and faster.

"You're infected. You can't leave." The soldier said, putting his device away.

"No, no no no, I can't stay there, no." The man suddenly became panicked, as he shook his head violently.

The soldier who stood on the other side of the gate took a step forward and said:

"Sir, please turn around and-"

Before he managed to finish his sentence, the man pushed the soldier, causing him to topple over and he started running.

"Code red! We got a code red!" The other soldier shouted into his radio, as the man made his way through the gate and was running past an APC parked nearby.

The soldier aimed the gun at the man and fired three bullets. The man fell down and ceased all movement, as the screams of people filled the air. A group of soldiers from the outside approached the body with their guns raised and one of them shouted:

"Target neutralized!"

"Oh, Jesus." Beth said with a quivering voice and I grabbed her hand tightly.

"It's okay, Beth. We'll be fine." I said, feeling my own voice tremble.

"Alright, next!" The soldier shouted louder this time, to drown out the panicked whispers of the citizens.

The man in front of us stepped forward and was scanned. The device steadily beeped for a few seconds and for the duration of that time, everyone around was quiet in morbid anticipation, until the soldier said:

"You're clear. Go through."

The man exhaled in relief and thanked the soldier, before going through the gate with hurried steps.

"Next!"

"Just do what he says and we'll be fine, Beth." I said to her as we stepped forward together.

"Stand still, please." The soldier said, as he pointed the scanner at my forehead.

It beeped slowly, out of tune with my heart, which raced a million miles an hour. There's no way Beth and I were infected, right? We bought masks as soon as we heard about the initial outbreak in China and since we both work from home, there's no way we could have gotten the virus. This was the only time we went out among a big crowd of people.

"Clear. You're good to go." The soldier said and pointed the scanner at my wife.

I could see the scared look in her eye, as the soldier held the scanner pointed at her. The device beeped steadily for a moment that felt like an eternity and any second now, the soldier would remove it and give us the go-ahead to leave, I thought. My hope was short-lived, when the device started beeping violently.

"You're infected. You can't leave." The soldier said, putting down the scanner.

I could see the other soldier approaching Beth, who now looked to me with wide eyes and pale in the face, scared shitless.

"Now, wait a second!" I said, stepping in front of her "That can't be right! We didn't have any contact with people, your device might be broken!"

"I can assure you it's not broken, sir. Step aside, please."

"Run it again!" I said frantically.

The soldiers exchanged looks amongst each other through the dimmed hazmat helmet, before the scanner was pointed at me once more. After a moment of steady beeping, the soldier said:

"You're clear."

He pointed it at Beth, holding it for a few seconds, while it beeped. *Please don't be infected.* My hope was short-lived, when the device started beeping rapidly once more.

"Sorry, but your wife is infected. You can go, but she needs to stay."

"No! I'm not leaving her here alone! Have you seen what the fuck those criminals are doing in here?! It's not safe for any of us, goddammit!" I shouted.

"Aaron, stop!" Beth said "You have to leave!"

"We have our orders, sir. Only people tested negative for the virus can leave. Look, you're holding up the line, either you can leave without your wife, or you can both stay in town. Your call."

I looked at Beth, who despite being scared, tried to put on her brave face.

"Aaron, go. I'll be fine." She said pleadingly.

"We're staying." I said as I looked at the soldiers.

Beth tried to protest, but before she could say anything, the other soldier gestured with his gun for us to go back and said:

"Move your asses. We got work to do."

I grabbed her hand and we strode down the pathway, ignoring the judgmental glances of the people around us. We left the checkpoint and stepped onto the streets devoid of humans. Abandoned cars were strewn about the road, some with their doors opened, indicating that the drivers got out in a hurry. Piles of trash were thrown everywhere and my heart began to race when I saw what looked like a dead body of an elderly woman in the middle of the road in the distance.

I looked away and we rounded the corner, making a left turn.

"Aaron, what are you doing? You should have left." Beth looked at me with a judgmental stare.

"I'm not leaving you here." I said "You could get killed, for Christ's sale."

"Alright. Let's just go home, before we run into one of those marauding groups." She said with a defeat in her tone.

After a few minutes of walking we stepped into the part of town which was teeming with people wearing protective masks. They all seemed to be striding down the streets, as if in a hurry, some carrying supplies, others empty-handed. A car had just driven past us on the intersection at an alarming speed, much to the cursing of the nearby pedestrians. Beth and I crossed the road carefully and it was then that a loud, blood-curdling scream resounded behind us. We turned around and saw a young woman running from an assailant in a hoodie. She had a look of horror on her face, as she ran in our direction. In her panic, she somehow tripped and fell, and she turned around and raised her hand pleadingly towards the robber, but the man was already upon her. Everyone around was frozen in place, staring at the scene in bewilderment. I was about to rush to help her, but what happened next froze me in place.

The young man punched the woman in the face and before she could regain her composure, he grabbed her by the head and violently smashed it against the concrete over and over. The woman resisted him, but after only two slams, her grip faltered and blood stained the ground. The young man kept smashing her head against the floor repeatedly, until a large pool of blood covered the area. By this time, a lot of the people had already started running in the opposite direction of the man, screaming for their lives.

"Oh my god." Beth said with a quivering voice and for some reason, that seemed to grab the assailant's attention, despite the other screams.

He looked up at my wife and I saw a look in his eye I will never forget. His eyes looked bloodshot, deranged, violent. When he looked at my wife, I could tell that he wanted to rip her apart as soon as he grabbed her. He started screaming like a wild animal and running in our direction and I grabbed Beth by her hand, urging her to start running in the opposite direction

We ran between the crowd of petrified people, those who remained on the street screaming in terror. As we ran, I looked back just long enough to see the young man with the hoodie jump on an elderly person and start punching him over and over. I heard more screams, but not terrified ones, but rather ones similar to the one the young man emitted – blood-thirsty, ravenous screams. I looked behind once more, only to see a huge horde of similarly violent people running in our direction, attacking other residents who stood in the way.

“Beth, don’t stop!” I shouted in a panic, panting and squeezing my wife’s hand.

By this point, everyone was already in a full-blown panic and running, stampeding and pushing over each other. Some of the violent attackers were faster than us and I saw them with my peripheral vision jumping on top of some of the unlucky residents. I didn’t even want to imagine them being mauled to death. I expected one of the freaks to grab me by the ankle and for me to meet the same demise as some of my fellow townsfolk, but the adrenaline prevented me from faltering.

Just when I thought I couldn’t run anymore, I saw a nearby pawn shop to the left. An old man was crouching down under the half-closed shutter and he was waving his hand under it, gesturing to the survivors to get inside immediately. Most of the people were in too much of a panic to even notice him, but I immediately pulled Beth aside and we rushed to the old man. A middle-aged lady managed to squeeze in in front of us and I ushered my wife inside, while the screams permeated the air all around us, both blood-curdling and those of panic and agony.

I jumped inside and the old man pulled down the shutter and locked it with a padlock, just in time for two ravenous people to slam into it, causing it to rattle violently. They frothed at the mouth and hissed at the old man and I thought our shelter would give way any second. In the next moment though, something else caught their attention, as they looked to their right and started running towards whoever the poor, unlucky victim was.

The old man slammed the inner door shut and locked it tightly with a loud click. The sound of the screams instantly became muffled and we were able to hear our own panting once more.

“That was close.” The old man said and turned to face us, wiping the sweat off his forehead “Is everybody okay?”

I looked around and realized that aside from the old man and my wife and I, there were five other survivors inside.

“Beth, you okay?” I asked her.

She struggled to catch her breath, so she simply nodded timidly, trembling like a leaf on wind.

“What’s going on out there? Are they on drugs or something?” I asked, shooting a glance at the old man.

He went behind the counter and sighed, before saying:

“No, not exactly. They’re infected. COVID-19. Hell of a thing.”

“What are you talking about? The coronavirus doesn’t cause... whatever the hell that was.” I gestured to the door.

"Oh, it does. Not for everyone, but it does. Don't believe what the media tells you. They're saying that the virus is not very deadly and all and... they're right, but." He shrugged, as he reached under the counter and pulled a handgun out "But it does other things to you."

He placed the gun on the counter. Most of the faces in the room were now facing in the direction of the old man. He noticed this as he brought out a box of bullets and said:

"You don't die. But you change. The virus controls you. And there's no cure. I know it because..." He sighed loudly "The same thing happened to my wife."

I looked at Beth, who stared at me wide-eyed, with a look of
[horror.](<https://www.facebook.com/AuthorBorisBacic/>)

I've Been Trapped in a Hospital for Months.

I don't know what I can believe anymore.

■

This all started back in January. I was sitting with the family just after New Year's when everything went dark. I woke up in the car with my daughter driving furiously down the road. I asked why she was in such a hurry but she told me to relax. I fell back asleep and woke up in a hospital bed. They told me I had a stroke and suffered a serious head wound from the initial fall. Luckily at 62, I'm old, but not old enough for this to be as serious as it could be. We ate dinner as a family and they went home afterwards.

■

I woke up during the night with the light in the hallway flickering on and off. The fluorescent light burst through the windows in my door directly onto my face. I had a splitting headache so I paged for a nurse to come to my room. After 10 minutes of waiting, I pressed the button again. I noticed a man wearing a white lab coat walk by my door so I yelled for him to help. He walked back and looked inside the room before we locked eyes.

■

"I have a killer headache, can you have a nurse bring me some Advil?" I asked.

■

"I'm sorry, I haven't worked here for years." He replied.

■

He hurried off as if he had patients to tend to, but how could that be possible? I shrugged it off and buried my head under the pillow.

■

The next morning, a nurse walked into my room to see how I was doing. I told her about my interaction the night before which threw her for a loop. I was on the 4th floor, the trauma center. No doctor on that floor matched the description I gave to her, and neither did any of the nurses. The family came by later on and I told them about it as well.

■

"I'm sure you just had a weird dream, Dad." Nikky said to me.

■

"No, no! I know it happened." I pleaded

■

"These kinds of things can happen with head injuries." The nurse said to her.

■

I knew it wasn't worth fighting over. I just agreed that it may have been a vivid dream and we went on with our day. We watched a few daytime television shows to pass the time as we waited for a doctor to run a CT scan on me. After a few hours, I was escorted into a really sterile room with a CT scan machine and another small room for them to monitor me. I laid on the bed and listened to them as they spoke to me through speakers.

■

"Okay Mr. Harrison, we're going to have you tell us a story from memory and we'll monitor what's going on inside your head." He said.

■

I began telling a story when I heard noises start coming through the speakers I didn't recognize. It sounded like a foreign language, but too broken to be a fluent speaker. I can recognize a fair amount of languages just from dialect or a few common words, but this wasn't anything I'd heard of. They were hushed and the voice was hoarse and lower than the doctor's that was speaking to me earlier.

■

"I don't know what I'm hearing doc." I yelled from the machine.

■

After a few seconds, it turned off. I was relieved to get out of the machine, but the bed didn't move. The voice stopped, but I was trapped. It was dark and cramped, I was pinned inside the walls as silence was my only alibi. Being alone with my thoughts scared me. I wondered what would happen if I was left in there for days. What if there was some kind of mechanical failure and the machine would kill me? The very idea of what could happen was scarier than what actually happened when I recall it. What felt like days passed when a different doctor came in and noticed I was in the CT machine.

■

"How long have you been in here? She asked.

■

"I don't know, my scan was around 4:00." I replied.

■

"It's almost 7:00." She said. "Let me help you out of there."

■

One of the nurses came into my room as soon as I returned and apologized profusely for what happened. The doctor who rescued me also apologized as this kind of thing should've never happened in the first place. Now, I'm a pretty laid back guy, but even this was a bit much for me. I was starting to worry about the quality of the hospital, seeing as I was forgotten in a CT machine for hours. My family wasn't there when I returned as I had been gone for several hours and they needed to bring the grand kid home from soccer practice. I fell asleep and slept well for the first time in days.

■

The next day, a nurse who was new to me told me they were going to run an IV and do some testing. I had no clue why they were doing this, but they're the professionals, I'm just an insurance salesman. She placed the needle in my arm and also gave me a mild sedative. She told me it would help me relax and numb some of the feeling of whatever they were pumping inside of me.

■

After a few seconds, the clear liquid in the bag was inside my arms, and it burned intensely. I saw my veins turning dark blue, almost a purple color. It started at my elbow and ran down my forearm and up my bicep. I could feel every drop of it but I couldn't move my arms. It felt like the pain from a body that wasn't mine was being transferred to me. I began yelling in pain before a doctor rushed in to check on me. He saw the IV in my arm but checked it and said there was nothing wrong with it. He asked me if I was allergic to any medication, but I'm not allergic to anything. He didn't know why I had an IV in my arm, or who did it, but after it was pulled out the pain was alleviated.

■

My family came back the next day and I told them about the horrifying things that had been happening to me, and they were understandably outraged. The doctor who I saw my first night here walked in to speak with them and told them that I was essentially imagining everything. They argued with each other for a few moments before agreeing that the doctor was the professional.

■

"He doesn't even work here." I said to them in a panic.

■

"He's a doctor here, Dad." Nikky pleaded.

■

"He told me in the middle of the night a couple nights ago that he doesn't work here." I said. "You have to believe me." I replied.

■

They didn't believe me, and I don't think they trusted me anymore. I felt helpless, I was nothing more than another patient who was losing it in their eyes. We ate dinner as they cautiously asked about what

else I was doing during my stay. It wasn't a conversation between father and daughter anymore, it was a chat between strangers who felt the obligation to spend time with each other.

■

A few days later, I was brought in for another test. It was an isolated x-ray on my head but not in the CT scanner again. While the device was around my head I felt a pull on my hand. I looked down to see a badly scarred arm pulling my arm straight out and holding a scalpel to my forearm. I tried to fight against it but whoever was holding my arm was much stronger. Instead of a clean cut, it was thrust straight into my arm. I watched the blood soaked blade slide out of my arm as it went at my arm again. I had two open gashes in my arm as my screams were absorbed by the metal cage holding me hostage. Next the tip of my middle finger was sliced clean off, it had to be a medical professional who could've found a gap in the joint. The scalpel then ran back and forth across the back of my hand like an artist's paintbrush on canvas. I began banging my head back and forth inside the x-ray until I was released by the doctor who initially put me into it. He asked what was wrong as I scanned by arm in shock; there were no cuts. He rushed me back into my room to have me monitored for the rest of the night.

■

Two weeks passed and I hadn't seen my family in that time. I didn't know if they were too scared to see me, or if the hospital was barring visitors, but I couldn't stand it anymore. The gentle humming of the lights rang like earthquakes inside my head every time I blinked. The isolation I felt was met with horrific visits that only made me more uncomfortable.

■

A few days later, I decided I had to escape. I knew I was okay, but this hospital was making it worse. I was on the 4th floor, I needed to get to the 1st floor to leave. I decided to take a staff only elevator by the back end of the hospital. I crept through the hallway and got into the elevator without anyone seeing me. I pressed 1 and felt the elevator descent. I ended up on the 7th floor without realizing it. I was in the oncology ward and realized I was on the wrong floor. I walked back into the elevator again and pressed the button marked 1 as I nearly broke the button from pressing it so much. I ended up on the 3rd floor for a few moments before I realized where I was. I decided I had to take the stairs since the elevator wasn't reliably taking me to the first floor. I descended two flights of stairs until I saw a sign that read "1st floor". As I walked out, I realized I was in the maternity ward, on the 5th floor. At this point, I thought I was losing it. I decided my best option would be to take the elevator back to the 4th floor and go back to bed for the night. I pressed the button for the 4th floor and ended up in a ward I didn't recognize at all. I wondered around and eventually was seen by someone wearing a blue coat.

■

"What are you doing down here?" He asked.

■

"Down here?" I asked. "Isn't this the 4th floor?"

■

"This is the basement, sir." He replied. "Are you okay?"

■

The shock and confusion was enough for me to give up.

■

"Can you help me get back to the 4th floor?" I asked.

■

He gestured for me to follow him and I followed him to the elevator. He helped me get to the right floor and I walked into my room. I woke up periodically to screaming in the middle of the night even though I was 2 floors above the psych ward.

■

The next morning, my daughter came over with great concern on her face.

■

"Dad, you wandered down to the basement last night?" She asked.

■

"I was trying to take an elevator to the 1st floor so I could get out of here and be with you guys and I ended up on several different floors, I haven't seen you guys in months, I just miss you." I said with tears in my eyes."

■

My daughter looked at me like she saw a ghost when I said that.

■

"Dad, I've visited you for the past 4 days in a
[row."\\](<https://www.jake712.home.blog>)(<https://www.jake712.home.blog>)

But who saved me?

I heard something breaking as I woke up. It was around 2 a.m. I opened the door of my room and stared down the stairs.

"Dad?" I called out, but got no reply. I started going downstairs.

I gasped when I saw a man brandishing a gun and was busy opening random drawers in the living room.

He probably heard me and turned to face me. "There you are."

I could hear my heartbeats as he approached me, extending his arm.

"Let's go. I'll take you out of here. Come."

"No! Stay away from me!"

My eleven year old self screamed and shouted, desperately trying to look for a way out of the house.

"Dad!" I wailed, but I didn't think he was anywhere near. I ran back to my room upstairs, peering down into the dark from the window while attempting to descry anyone who was on the road or the open area next to our bungalow.

"Althea!" The stranger called for me. "Come down right now. It's not safe here!"

Great. Now he knew my name too. And then he was the one telling me it wasn't safe for me. How ironic!

"Dad! Help me!" Where was he? He *never* left my side. And by "never" I mean he was by my side all day long. He did not used to go out for work. He didn't go to buy groceries. He never set a foot out of the house while I was inside.

Yet he disappeared when I needed him the most.

"Are you in here?" I heard the guy knocking on my door. "Open up, otherwise I have to break this down."

"What did you do with daddy?"

"He isn't here." He knocked again.

He was certainly lying! He must have fought with my father and probably killed him for all I knew! There was no way I could trust this stranger.

Trust.

It's not easy to trust someone. Especially when someone does an act which you disapprove right in front of your eyes.

The sun had just set when I had decided to run downstairs and grab a bite. I had been playing with my dolls in my room. It was the last time that I heard my father arguing with a person.

That person was my mother.

"No!" He had been trying to explain to her. "I was forced to do that! I can even prove it."

"You can't. And stop with your innocent act already!" Mother was standing in the doorway, her shoulders shaking as she tried to contain her sobbing. "I don't know what you've been teaching the girl, and I won't try to find out either."

I was scared. I had never seen her cry before. I hurriedly ran back upstairs went back to my dolls.

The dolls had been the only things in which I could trust.

"Hey, are you still there?" The stranger sounded honestly concerned. "You aren't thinking of jumping down, are you?"

I wasn't sure. Did I want to get away from him? Did I really want my dad?

This wasn't the first time father had disappeared from the home. I had woken up in the middle of the night, thirsty. He liked to sleep in the living room, but when I got there, I saw only blankets. I went on to check all other rooms, but he was nowhere to be found.

"You have a gun with you." I nonchalantly stated, waiting for the guy's response.

He replied instantly. "It's only to protect you."

"Okay." I wasn't going to trust this man. I grabbed my baseball bat- the only thing I could find to defend myself, and slowly walked upto the door. Now there was only a couple of inches of gap between me and the intruder.

I vowed to find my dad. And my mother.

"Where's mommy?" I had asked him that night while he was busy cooking.

"She went to work out of the city," he had said.

"When will she return?" I asked. I did not want to tell him that I saw their exchange earlier.

"When she finishes her work." And he started chopping onions, probably to hide his real tears.

And a week had passed before I knew it. She hadn't returned.

And then a month.

And an year, filled with hollow lies about the reason why she wasn't coming back.

I put my hand on the knob, proceeding to turn it. I looked up at the man's face. It wasn't covered by a mask, and his blue eyes reflected the moonlight. He smiled.

But I didn't want him. I wanted to find my dad.

I hit him where the sun doesn't shine and ran for it.

"Wait!" He yelled, stumbling his way down. I was already dialling the number.

"Stop!" He said, his voice sounding grave. "Do you know if he's your real father?"

That made me freeze completely.

When he had opened the door that night when he had left without informing me, I was right in front of it, waiting for two hours. He was clearly breathless and was wheezing. And when he saw me standing there, he seemed to be caught off guard.

"Althea, I..." He had begun, but words had been evading him.

The man gently took the phone away from me. I again managed to flee, running as fast as I could towards another person getting in his car down the road.

"Help! Help me!" I shouted, and he turned around. I didn't say anything, but he immediately ushered me in his car.

We drove away from the intruder. "What's your name?" My 'saviour' as I had named him, asked.

"Althea. Thank you for..."

"No need. I'll get you to the police station."

I nodded. The break-in, the chase, the disappearance of my father and his last question had me in a state of mental breakdown. I was confused, shocked and above all: scared.

But I hadn't expected him to be there at the police station.

My "dad" was sitting there handcuffed and was later arrested for past murders and a recent attempted murder of a twelve year old girl.

* _____ *

Years later I find myself working in the police force myself. Perhaps the events changed me completely. I wanted to thank that man who was my real saviour. I never got to learn his name or his whereabouts.

Until now.

I catch a man staring at me as I pick up the cup of coffee. He approaches me hesitantly, and asks,

"Do you remember me?"

I smile.

My School Has A Strange Set Of Rules

I just started my first day of school last week. It was for an old school made in the 1950's. I still thought it was normal as it was generally very popular and has great reviews on things like GreatSchools. When we first entered our first period of the day the teacher greeted us as usual.

She then said, "I am handing out the official school rules."

Once I got my piece of paper saying them I saw that we needed to answer questions about them after we're done reading them.

"It's normal," I thought. "Probably just a precedent set when the school was first built."

The paper said:

Welcome to your new school Westholmes Highschool. This school was made a long time ago but we still follow the rules that were made when it was first built. Failure to follow these rules may result badly don't mess up. If you do fail at one of these rules make sure to do exactly what they say to do if you mess up. We can't wait to have you as one of our students and know you will do great! Enjoy!

1. We have a different bell system from most schools. When you hear the first bell it means you, you need to get to class. You will hear another bell 1 minute later make sure you are at least 10 feet from your classroom by then. If you aren't you may feel something touch your neck. If that happens stop, wait for it to stop touching your neck, and continue. **DON'T MOVE UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE.** When you hear the 3rd bell make sure you are in your class. If you are not run to the office and they will know right away. They will give you an excused tardy and you must be in class by the 4th bell. No one from the office can help this time. If you are in class by the 3rd bell be in your seat by the 4th bell. If not you will be asked to go outside. If you are asked to go outside, stand still and close your eyes. Nothing will happen if you do that. If you don't close your eyes then knock frantically on the door and pray someone lets you in. Close your eyes until the door behind you opens, then open them and go back in. Rule 1 applies for all periods.

2. When you are in class always at all times keep your noise level at a 3. The teacher may talk as loud as she wants though. If the noise level ever gets to a 4 or 5 for over 10 seconds. The windows will break. If that happens go under your desk and keep your eyes open but only look down or up never to the side. Something may be on top of your desk and you may see a sharp claw right above you but as long as you don't move you will be fine. Other rules such as misbehaving will be talked about in our class rules to more.

3. If you ever go to bathroom at any point of the day. Preferably at lunch where more people are around and unwanted attention may not come, but there is always a chance. After you finish your business never flush the toilet. If you do keep the stall door closed and **DON'T EVER OPEN IT!** The lights will go out and you will hear walking. If your stall is closed you are fine. You may hear a high pitched screaming sound. Don't go and see what it is. If you hear that sound lock your stall door if you haven't all ready as some students have complained about their stall door trying to open when they hear this. The lights will turn on and when they do, Do not wash your hands. Run back to class and when you open your stall door, **NEVER LOOK AT THE TOILET EVEN IF YOU SEE SOMETHING SITTING ON**

IT! When you get back to class wash your hands and sit down.

4. Once it is lunch time head straight for the lunch courts. Sit down at a table and eat your lunch. The second you finish go straight to the library and get a book. Make sure to run to as something will be chasing you and you don't want it to catch you. If you look at it you will be mentally scared as they are made to look like your most horrible fear and they will always find a way to become that. Get to the library and read a book even if something cold sits on you read your book and don't look away from it. It will eventually get off you.

5. PE is a special period; it still has the same bell system however a new special rule. If you ever choose to stop working out for more than a minute you will feel a pain in your stomach. If this happens don't lift your shirt up because you won't like what you see. A sharp black claw will start going up to your face. Son's worry as long as you are doing what the PE instructor told you what you were supposed to do that day like he does at the beginning of every class you will be fine. It will eventually go away. If you ever stop working out when you see the claw well, let's hope you never find out. You may never go to the bathroom in PE.

6. We have after school clubs as well. If you ever have a club make sure you are in the club room at the required time. They don't like people being outside during club meetings. If you hear screams while in your club never go outside as people will see nothing except when they go back inside they may suffer a painful horrible...death.

7. We have a 3 strike system to ensure people cooperate in class. Every time you misbehave in class (Bully someone, yell...) rather than get yelled out or get your grade dropped you get a strike. 3 strikes and you must come to school at night and wait there until a teacher appears and says you may leave. You may wander around the school. When your at school at night you will hear things moving around. At some point you will hear a child scream for help. **STOP, DON'T MOVE STAY IN YOUR VERY POSITION UNTIL THE CHILD STOPS SCREAMING!** When you are staying still you will sense something moving towards you. As long as you stay still the thing will move past you. If it ever stops and turns around run as fast as you can and leave the school. You may leave early.

8. Final rule is never enter room 632. The door is always unlocked but if you do you may never leave that room.

We hope you enjoy this school and follow our rules!

The questions were normal questions on rules. These rules sounded fake. They probably we were. Until I saw a kid who came back from the bathroom. He looks horrified and fainted right in front of us...

A Grave Illness

My father was the first in the family to fall prey to it. We could hear his cough from the garage where he worked, at first mild but swiftly turning worse. By the third day, it had devolved into something between a bark and the sound of broken glass.

.

Financially, our family was in dire straits. Ever since my father had been laid off from his job at a nearby factory, his third in five years, he had begun to drink more and had returned to his old habit of isolating himself in his garage; his old hobby of attempting inventions in that dark and dust-ridden space. He was never an outwardly angry drunk. Instead, he would turn his frustration inwards. We could occasionally hear a stream of curses emanating from his corner of our home. A litany of insults against himself. Utterly without explanation. There had been weeks, even months, like this before but he'd always managed to clean himself up for an eventual interview. Things would begin to stabilise as his salary started to come in.

This time things struck me as different, the rhythms of our lives skewed by the onset of this pandemic. People in suits on the television foretold that all would be fine.

"A minor outbreak and nothing to be afraid of."

At first, it seemed they were right. Yet, the trickle of information began to slow and, at the same time, we began to see men in a different kind of suit appear more often. In bright yellow hazmats, they popped up in unexpected places, like dandelions growing from the unseen spaces of our little neighbourhood. One evening, my father returned home later than usual, bitterly arguing with someone on the phone between fits of coughing.

I only heard one word: "Quarantine." At the time, I didn't comprehend the impact of that singular word, those three syllables. It all seemed far too surreal.

.

My parents had always had a strained relationship. One defined by arguments and drunken bouts of passion heard all too easily through the thin walls of our home. His worsening condition had only

accentuated her anxieties, pushing my mother closer to an ultimatum that she had held deep within her for far too long. She left shortly after, in a stream of tears and ugly epitaphs, warning us that we had little time left. As much as I could not bear to see her go, the thought of leaving my father alone seemed untenable.

By this point, his symptoms began to manifest in other ways. He'd spend even more time away from us, occasionally sending me out of the house to fetch him more beer or cigarettes, barely noticing when I returned and placed the purchases at the end of his work table. I'm not sure when or where he slept during this period but I didn't pay it much attention, being somewhat accustomed to behaviour like this. Not able to see the larger picture at all.

My concern only grew in the coming weeks as I began to discover traces of my father's rapidly deteriorating health. The pieces of himself that were left behind began to deeply worry me. First, it was blood in the toilet bowl. Then, a single tooth in the sink, rotten at its core with the roots still attached to discoloured flesh. Finally, I resolved to knock on the garage door, to assure myself that things were still alright, at least in some sense.

Upon entering his workspace I could immediately smell that something was very wrong. A scent akin to asparagus and rotten flesh emanated from the door. When I finally stepped inside I was overwhelmed. The air in here seemed unnaturally thick. The garage had taken on a womb-like quality, wet and warm, with this sick man at its centre. He wasn't at the work desk he normally occupied. Instead, he lay sprawled out, his limbs a grim grey hue that foretold his demise. Bloodshot eyes found me as he attempted to lift himself from the concrete floor, not seeming to recognise me at first, then widening in a shocked remembrance. I wondered how long it had been since he had even thought about the world outside.

An ungodly croak emanated from his throat, something entirely inhuman and, yet, disturbingly like my father's voice. I couldn't decipher it whatsoever.

I reached down to touch him, to attempt to comfort him. As my hand grazed the skin of his forearm, the flesh sloughed off like a melting snowcap. An avalanche of gore. Sinew and fat; exposed bone as the final frontier.

He screamed. If you could call that pitiful noise a scream. A sound that would've barely registered in any space even slightly larger than the one we occupied. A single line of blood poured from his nose, speckled with a grey matter that I couldn't bear the sight of.

He died shortly after. Not swiftly and not softly. Like dominoes collapsing, the wound on his arm spread, his flesh falling in on itself. By the time the meat around his shoulder began to fall apart, the noises emanating from his throat had turned from a harsh sound to a grisly gurgle. He was choking on his own body, dissolving from the inside. Whatever I could see was only a minor indication of what might have been occurring inside of him. I can't imagine his pain.

That night, under the cover of darkness, I began to dig his grave. I'm not a particularly strong person, so I couldn't dig very deep. By midnight I gave up, carried his body, wrapped in a blood-soaked blanket, to the hole and threw him in unceremoniously. I could not work up the courage to burn the corpse, despite the vague notion that it might've been the safer option. Whatever sick things grew from his fetid remains would likely outlive me anyway.

When I returned inside, I broke open the cabinet where he had stored his liquor, only to find it nearly empty. The half bottle of whiskey that remained would be some form of solace as I sat on the porch, drinking it straight. Some sort of sick ritual in his honour I suppose. A wake for a withering world.

.

I hadn't heard anything from the radio for days now. The television offered nothing other than static. If we're being honest with each other, I was afraid to leave the house. Hell, I was sometimes scared to leave my room. I refused to open the curtains that covered every window in the house. Although, I still couldn't stop myself from staring through their corners, looking for any signs of life outside. Even those dandelions of disease, those hazmat helpers, had disappeared.

I realised that I hadn't heard a bird sing for quite some time.

Later that evening, I heard staccato shots from the neighbouring plot of land. Working up some modicum of bravery, I began trepidatiously walking towards their house as dawn arose. I found their family strewn across the property. Two in the kitchen, one in the living room, and the last in the master bedroom. The mother had taken upon herself to make things easier for her family. To smooth their passing and save them from the suffering my own father had endured. There were two rounds left in the revolver, which I struggled to remove from her rigor mortis grip.

A handful of days passed without anything occurring. I began to wonder whether I'd weather this storm. If I'd be a survivor.

.

At first, they were small, sharp coughs. Like the barks of a small dog. After a handful of days, they grew worse. My throat felt as if it were on fire. I knew what I had in store.

Tonight, I dug a grave. Even more shallow than the last but I had little left to give.

I'm sitting in it now. Writing this and hoping that you'll read it. The revolver is beneath my right leg and I'll use it soon enough. I can only impart one piece of advice. If you hear someone coughing; if your friends or family start to seem ill.

Give them mercy.

Every 27 days, someone in the world goes missing. I'm next. [3]

[Part 1](https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/f6nzyl/every_27_days_someone_in_the_world_goes_missing/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=ios_app&utm_name=iossmf)

[Part 2](https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/f86drm/every_27_days_someone_in_the_world_goes_missing/?utm_source=share&utm_medium=ios_app&utm_name=iossmf)

Seventeen days.

I have been trapped in this bedroom for over two weeks and I don't think it will be much longer than that.

There's something that I forgot to mention in the previous update. During the 15 minutes that the creature had given me, the first thing I did was try the window, and it worked. I could only open it halfway so getting out wasn't an option, but it was open wide enough that I could fit my arm through.

There was nothing but silence coming from the other side of the door, so I don't think the creature was there when I called my cousin, who lives a few minutes away from me. It was difficult to explain my situation without sounding mentally insane, but I managed to get him to believe that I was home sick and couldn't leave the house. I started typing the update right after talking to him and somehow finished in time.

He obliged when I asked him to come to my bedroom window and give me some food and water, and he thankfully arrived before my time was up. I thanked him and watched his car drive away before the knocking began again.

Over the noise I could hear a voice say "Your time is up. What is your decision?"

"I'm not going to let you in and I know you can't enter by yourself," I responded. That was a bold statement, since there was a high chance that it *could* enter by itself and all that would do was make my death even more painful.

Thankfully, though, it worked. The voice never responded and the knocking simply got louder. I glanced at the window and was surprised to see that it was now closed. I had not closed it and there was nobody else there who could have closed it. I didn't hear any sound either, but it was closed and I was unable to open it again.

My cousin had given me a month's worth of water, telling me that water would make me feel better, along with a week's worth of food. I ate all of the refrigerated stuff first, and everything was gone within a week but the knocking hadn't stopped. I had a lot of water left, so survival wasn't an issue if I was willing to deal with excruciating hunger pains.

Time passed even slower during the second week with no food left. Eating was basically the only thing I could do besides laying in bed on my phone. Thankfully, my phone battery has not gone down and there is WiFi so I at least had something to do. However, that can get very boring more quickly than you may think.

More recently, I have begun to find myself staring blankly at the wall for hours in some kind of daze. I think the lack of being able to have a conversation with another human is starting to get to me. I haven't eaten in a week and water does nothing to help the constant pain I have in my stomach. I can barely move and I think my muscles are starting to deteriorate.

Maybe this is what the creature wants. Maybe it enjoys watching it's victims suffer for as long as possible. And maybe it can enter the room if it really wants to, but it chooses to give people more slow deaths if they decide not to open the door for it.

These are just theories, of course. I truly have no idea what this thing is capable of, but it is possible that I have found a weakness. It finds a new victim every 27 days. If I can survive until then, who knows what will happen? I could be free, or the creature could just kill me. I don't know if I want to know which one is more likely.

One thing that has made this wait even more agonizing is having to live with the memory of one of my best friends dying because of my selfishness. Needing some kind of human interaction, a few days ago I broke my self-implemented rule of not dragging anyone else into this mess. I knew that my sanity was dwindling and came to the conclusion that I would never be able to make it another 10 days without talking to a single person, excluding the demonic creature that continues to pound on my bedroom door with no signs of stopping.

I called a good friend of mine that would be very likely to show up. I explained that I was sick and sort of put myself in quarantine, but that I would love to talk to him through my window for a bit if he was ok with it. I warned him not to go inside the house and he agreed, saying that he didn't want to get sick. An hour later, he sent me a text that will forever have a place in my memory.

Hey, I'm out front. Your front door is open so I'm just gonna go in through there. I'm wearing a breathing mask so unless you're super contagious I'll be fine.

No! Do not come inside, just come to the bedroom window, I replied, but it was too late. I heard his footsteps enter the house. The knocking stopped, so there was nothing preventing me from hearing his screams that lasted for at least 10 minutes, each one sounding more terrified than the last. Finally, they stopped, and the knocking resumed without the creature saying a word.

I don't know if it's ever going to stop. The knowledge that my friend will never see his family again has been worse than the knocking and the hunger ever will be. I used to think that I would never give up if my life depended on it, but I think I've lost all hope at this point. I am still not completely used to the knocking and I can only deal with the pain for so long before it becomes unbearable. I know that if I open that door, it will all be over and I will hopefully be at peace, but there is something in the back of my mind that keeps me from doing so.

All I want is to make it out of this room alive.

Edit: the creature has offered me a deal. If I open the door right now, I will die painlessly and not have to live like this anymore. I think I'm going to do it.

Rose Petals

I wasn't planning on going this far. I just wanted him to feel miserable, lost. To feel like I felt for years after he left me. After what he did. I woke up one morning and... he was gone. All the promises, memories; everything faded away. What he gave, he took away. What he built, he broke down. In the end, I couldn't bring myself to forgive him. My love turned to blind rage and I promised myself I'll do anything to make him feel what I felt.

He was not an easy man to hurt. His egocentric persona with layers and layers of lies and deceit created through manipulating others throughout his life; I was at a wit's end. He wasn't even aware of my doings. Everything I tried, failed. Instead of getting over everything I continued to sink in the abyss created by my need of revenge. I fell in my own manic thoughts, consumed by what I set out to do four years ago. I thought he won. I thought I finally lost it. Until that night...

■

I was on my Sunday night routine walk when our paths crossed. The pale moonlight peeked through the winter clouds, illuminating the man's figure ever so slightly. His tall stature intercepted my path and his stoic gaze met mine. I must've looked a mess as he gently rubbed his hand on my cheek, wiping my tears away. He must've been in his sixties. The old man was dressed impeccably; a throwback to a better time. Before ever hearing his voice, he reached in his breast pocket and pulled out a red rose. The shade of red... it was unlike anything I'd seen before. It was so pure, dominant and vibrant. The contrast between the red rose and his black suit enticed me. The man gently pushed my hair aside and placed the rose against my ear, making me feel vulnerable. Naked.

■

"Why are you still wearing your engagement ring?" My heart sank. His voice was commanding and lacking of any compassion yet so soothing at the same time. I could hear my heart beat. I could feel the cold breeze gently caressing my skin. Everything was heightened. Intense. I was afraid.

■

He further closed the distance between us. My eyes met his for the first time. They were dark, devoid of life. Unnatural.

"Every time you rip a petal off the rose one of your darkest desires will spring to life." The cadence of his voice was stilted as if forced upon.

"There must be catch?" Without realizing, I spoke. My voice crackled.

Ignoring my question, he let out a devilish chuckle. I was petrified, my legs feeling like noodles.

■

I woke up abruptly, drenched in sweat in the comfort of my bedroom. Collapsing back, I figured it's just another nightmare. I've been having those for a while now; still not used to them. I toddled myself to the bathroom only to see my pale expression in the mirror, bags under my eyes; still wearing one of his old t-shirts that he left behind. Ugh, I'm a mess.

Still, I couldn't shake off this dreadful feeling about the dream I had. It felt unlike any other nightmare. I forced myself to forget and stumbled lazily to the kitchen, needing my early morning dose of caffeine to kickstart my day.

■

Every coffee sip that touched my lips felt bitter and gross, reminding me of the mornings we'd spent in this very living room as we both gave each other goodbye kisses before work. I still remember the taste of his lips, soaked in black coffee and caramel. He'd gently play with my hair and playfully flirt with me all morning, teasing me, telling me I'm his.

I called in sick at work. No matter how hard I try, his remnant still haunts me. I just wanted to spend the whole day in bed, trying to forget.

■

Having accomplished the task of making myself depressed, I lazily meandered back to my bedroom. All I wanted was for my thoughts to evaporate. That's when my gaze met the blood red rose. It was sitting proud on the nightstand next to my bed gently illuminated by the lamp I'd forgotten to turn off. The shadow it cast on the bedroom floor made me realize this is real. It's really happening.

A nauseating feeling took control and made me puke my insides out right in front of me. I felt sick, frightened and overwhelmed. I almost passed out.

■

I gathered myself back up and cleaned the mess I'd made. I realized just coffee wasn't going to cut it. After scavenging through my apartment, an old bottle of tequila was my saving grace. It'd been ages since I've drank but it seemed like a good occasion.

■

I drank myself to confidence and walked in my bedroom with a newfound assurance. I picked up the rose and threw myself in bed, staring at the oddly appealing flower in my hand. I drunkenly wondered; "What if it's real? What if it really works?" I caught myself chuckling at the idea. It was tempting. Ripping apart this fragile flower in my hands would ruin his life forever.

■

I ripped one petal off. It couldn't be true but I was desperate. I placed the rose back on my nightstand and decided to sober myself up and I knew just the place to do it.

■

Our favorite little coffee shop. Well, I'm certain he chose it because it was right across the street from his office; but I was naive enough to believe it's our secret little date place. Just sitting there, waiting for my coffee made me want to vomit.

That's when I saw him. Must be a coincidence, I thought. He is a manipulative liar of a human being but he's never late. In all my years of knowing him, he's never been late for work; but there he was, rushing to make it on time. His shirt wrinkled, his hair a mess... he looked tired and crushed. It brought a huge smile on my face. After so many years of trying to make him vulnerable, there he was, right across the street, jumbled and exposed. He seemed human for the first time in forever.

As he was rushing up the stairs in front of the building he worked at, he stumbled and smashed face first into the ground. My heart skipped a beat. The first thing I thought of was the rose I left at home, sitting gracefully on my nightstand. A mixture of relief, joy and disbelief suddenly sobered me up. If this wasn't a coincidence; I might finally get closure.

■

I made it a point to rip one petal off the rose each morning. The discreet coffee shop began to feel like home again. Morning coffee and watching his world burn. I became obsessed with his suffering. Watching him struggle was an addiction.

But I soon realized my plan isn't perfect. There were only so many petals on the rose. I wasn't satisfied with the outcomes. Parking tickets, tripping out of nowhere, spilling coffee on his brand new shirt... it wasn't enough. Minor inconveniences although interesting wouldn't ruin his life. This wasn't good enough to give me closure.

■

I relapsed into my usual depressed self knowing eventually he'll bounce back and brush it off as if nothing happened. I began heavy drinking, ignoring calls from my friends and parents... I even got fired. Not productive enough, my boss said. But none of that fazed me; if only I knew a way to control what happens when I rip the petals off.

That's when it clicked. It was a long shot but... I only had so many petals left.

■

The next morning I woke up and all I could think of was the rose. I was nervous. I knew that if this doesn't work out, I'll be back to square one.

I picked the rose up and instead of ripping off one petal; I ripped off a handful. I threw the rose back on the nightstand and rushed to get ready. I wanted to see if this alters the outcome. I prayed it does.

■

I arrived at the coffee shop earlier than usual. I ordered my espresso and sat anxiously, waiting for him to show up. I was silently hoping it's not one of those minor inconveniences this morning as well.

He finally showed up. He wasn't late, his shirt wasn't wrinkly and he looked... happy and confident. His usual self. My stomach sank. What if I broke the rules and it no longer works? A mix of emotions choked me up. I was the one vulnerable, not him.

That's when two masked men in black crept up behind him. I was intrigued. Suddenly they ran up on him, pushing him to the ground before starting to spray something on his face. They managed to empty

one container before making a huge commotion. As they ran from the scene I could hear his cries and screams. People started gathering around him, trying to help him but he was screaming and pushing everyone aside. I wanted to get a better look at this.

■

I managed to tiptoe past the crowd gathered around him. It was a while before the ambulance arrived but I did get a snippet. A random acid attack. One half of his face was completely burned off. He was in excruciating pain, weeping as the medics were treating him. He looked disgusting. His pretty face damaged beyond repair. He'll have to live with it his whole life.

■

I was a bundle of joy walking home. The rose... not only did it work but I still had a bunch of petals left. I wasn't done with him. This wasn't enough. The thought of something worse happening to him put me in pure ecstasy; the only time I was this happy was when he proposed. When he got on one knee and asked me to be his forever.

■

The next few weeks were the best I've felt since he left. I got my job back, I started going out with my friends again; I even had a visit from my parents. They were so happy seeing me finally bounce back. I even started seeing someone. I would occasionally take him to my secret little coffee shop just in case... you know, I see him. Just when he thinks he's recovered, I'll rip a petal or two for amusement.

■

But that Monday morning changed everything. I don't know what got into me. I woke up wanting to see how he's doing. Told my boss I'll be late for work, picked up the rose just in case and went to my usual coffee shop. I don't know what I was expecting but what I saw made my heart sink.

Walking next to him was a child, holding his hand. Couldn't have been older than three years old. I was disgusted. I was enraged.

A woman approached them, kissing his disgusting, burned off face and taking the child as he was going to work. Consumed by my anger, I took the rose out and ripped all of the petals at once.

He was standing right across the street, smiling, waving them off as they were crossing. And it happened.

The driver couldn't break in time; he was driving over the speed limit. Swerving and trying to avoid other pedestrians, the car slammed in the woman and child blasting them a few meters down the street. I could hear the impact the car made from inside the coffee shop.

■

I could sympathize with the expression on his face. The pure terror and grief. That's how I felt when I woke up that morning and he was gone. No message left behind, no phone call... he was gone. I took joy in watching him run down the street, tears running down his burned cheeks. He was hysterical trying to save them. People had to take him off their bodies. One minute they were there and the next;

they were gone. Just like he was.



After a few days, he started calling me and leaving me messages. The thought of blocking his number didn't cross my mind once; hearing the phone go off with his name on the screen was comforting. Just thinking what he's going through was arousing. I even recorded a funny voicemail just in case he gets to that part. Hearing my happy voice, saying I can't answer... it must've been killing him. I should've known something was wrong. Why would he desperately be calling me after all these years? After the way he left?



Just when I thought he'd finally given up I received a letter. I knew it was from him and I wasn't planning on reading it but... curiosity got the better of me. I was in my bathrobe, drinking red wine, preparing to go on a date when I opened the letter. Chills ran down my spine when I saw the contents inside.



Inside the letter was a photo of his child and a single blood red rose petal.

Barbro Påle

Back in 2010 me and a couple of friends of mine decided to go and camp by a nearby, crystal-clear lake. I'd known Joakim my whole life, and Martin for about half of it. It is not really a famous lake, but the locals around know about it, and its a popular spot to go and grill some hot dogs, chill out and enjoy the lake. It's somewhat remote, however, and takes about an hour, hour and half to reach. This was in Sweden, where I still live, but I refuse to visit that lake again, and I am here to tell you why.

You see, when I was a kid, around 10-11 years old, I was told about 'Barbro Påle' (Barbro Stake). It is a legend, or a piece of folklore, concerning a ghostly apparition that was supposed to haunt a nearby lake, its former castle, and a nearby church. I don't remember who told me - probably someone who wanted me to loose a few hours of sleep. I had almost forgotten it until we visited the lake, but I was swiftly reminded. I'll try my best to retell the story as well and detailed as I can remember.

'In Brokind, in the parish called Vårdnäs, lived a rich and lordly woman by the name of Barbro. She was considered mean, and would punish her servants for their smallest mistakes by tying them down and throwing them into the "thiefbox". To further torture the servants, she would have a greand feast served just out of reach of the servant. When they complained and cried about their thirst and hunger, she would answer with a laugh:

"They have food and drink, but they do not eat, and it's their own fault if they go hungry and thirsty".

And so the prison at Broking become infamous at the time, and the place where the 'thiefbox' was is now called 'Kisthagen' (Coffinfield). When Barbro finally died, she was buried in the church in Linköping (a nearby city), but haunted the church so much that they dug her up and reburied her at the church in Vårdnäs. She did not get any rest there either, and a priest suggested digging her up again, and pulling her coffin on a wagon pulled by two twin oxen, to a neaby lake. Before putting the lake in the coffin, they stabbed her heart with a stake. As the stake pierced the heart, a shrill voice could be heard shrieking "Barbro Påle! Barbro Påle!"

In the 1800's, she was said to be seen hauntin the castle where she used to live. A cobbler was paid to keep watched during the night, surrounded by salt and with a bible in his hands. He could hear movement coming from upstairs, and as the fool he was, decided to investigate. As he opened the door into the master suite, he could see Barbro Påle dancing with the Devil. They turned towards him, and he ran for his life, sitting in the circle of salt until morning came.'

As you can imagine, I slept under the covers for a few nights, hoping that Barbro Påle would not come and throw me into the 'thiefbox'. Of course, she never did. Years passed, and my friends and I grew up. We were 19 back in 2010, and we had recently graduated from 'gymnasium' (it's like a mixture between highschool and college, I guess) and were free. We spent that summer gaming, swimming and doing dumb shit. At the end of summer, in August, we decided to go camping by the lake. We had always been told that it was forbidden, since it 'was owned by a local lord' or 'there are dangerous boards nearby'. We did not give a shit, however, and decided to go capming anyway. We had been there before, but we had never camped there, and we thought it was a great idea. Some beers, some hot dogs and friends.

We set up our tents, started the fire and ate some dinner. We swam in the lake, where we could see the bottom pretty much wherever we swam. As the sun set, we huddled around the campfire, sharing stories both scary and not. We knew that this might be the last summer we all did something like this,

since people were starting their university studies in September, and the feeling around the camp were melancholic and nostalgic. As the fire started dying down, I volunteered to fetch some more wood for the fire. It was dark, but with a not half-bad flashlight I ventured into the darkness. Sweden can get rather dark at night, and it's an eerie darkness. You can see why tales of trolls, witches and fae creatures are prominent in our folklore. Either way, I soon found the wood I needed, and started to head back.

Now, as is common in darkness, I felt watched. I shrugged this off, blaming the beers and the fact that I'd read a few too many horror stories over the years. The darkness did not help to alleviate this feeling, but I still had my flashlight. I could hear my friends laughing a few moments away, and I walked over to them.

"What took you so long?" a friend, let's call him Martin, asked. I looked at him. "Are you drunk, or just plain stupid as always?" I asked. We laughed, but Martin then shook his head. "Thirty minutes for a measly five pieces of wood? You can do better, genius."

I had no idea that I'd been gone for that long, but sure enough, when I checked my phone the time had apparently flown by. I thought that maybe I was a bit too drunk, and decided to remain by the fire for the rest of the night. Drunkenness and water does not mix well. The fire was fed, and the stories turned darker and more truthful. One of my friends, Joakim, told us about the happenings at his father's farm. Apparently they had found some of the cattle dead a week before, with one of them missing its head. There were talks of vandals, but of course we tried to scare one another - Martin even joked about the "Goatman", for some reason. As the fire died out, the stories did with it, and we soon decided to go to bed. Joakim fetched some water and poured it on the coals, and then we all got into our respective tents.

I should probably tell you that I dislike tents. They get either too warm, or too cold, and it's usually uncomfortable. I never feel safe, either. I did not feel safe that night, that's for sure. We talked a few minutes from inside our tents, and then bid each other good night, and I soon drifted off into sleep.

I dreamt of a lady, old and grim, dancing with the Devil himself. They saw me, and I ran for my life, but they caught up. I was forced to dance with the lady, dance until my feet bled. I awoke just as they were about to pierce my heart with a stake. My sleeping bag was drenched in sweat, and I cursed myself for only bringing one. I was about to go and take a leak when I heard Martin whisper something outside my tent.

'You awake?'

I told him that, yes, I was, and that I needed to pee. He told me to come out, and that he'd join me. We did not walk far, and Martin seemed anxious the whole time. When we got back, he asked me to wait a bit. We sat down around the dead coals, and I could see that he was nervous.

"What's up?" I asked, wishing to go back to sleep, but hoping that the sweat would evaporate somewhat from my sleeping bag. Martin shrugged, then looked at me. "I heard screaming before we went to piss, man."

"Oh? That's weird that I didn't"

"It was right before you woke up. I had trouble sleeping, so I checked my phone, and heard something loud from across the lake. I figured that it was you guys, so I crawled out of the tent. I got confused,

since I could see that your guys' tents were still closed. Then I heard it again. Fuck, I actually heard something scream."

By now it must not come as a surprised that I got chills. He seemed to serious, and I could tell by the tone of his voice that he was not joking. "It must have been some other campers, dude, it's probably -"

I will try my best to describe the shrieks. It was as if they were starting somewhere else, somewhere not in our world, and arriving in the middle of the lake. It was a furious and despairing shriek, and it froze me in place. It continued forever, or so it felt, and I could only distinguish the word "Påle" from the shrieks. Me and Martin looked at one another, and then dove into his tent, which was larger than mine. I fumbled with the zipper as we heard the shrieking come closer, until Martin pushed me aside and finished it. We both sat there, staring in the direction of the shrieks, not saying a word. They stopped just outside our campsite, and we remained quiet. The silence went on for what felt like an eternity, at least until Joakim broke it.

"Shut the fuck up, I'm trying to sleep."

Neither me nor Martin dared to speak, and we heard a zipper being pulled open. I was about to shout for Joakim, but I found no way to do it. I had lost any control over my voice, and Martin looked as helpless as I felt. We heard when Joakim climbed out of his tent. "Who are you?" he asked out loud, and we heard steps. Soon, we heard Joakim's voice give out a surprised yelp, and then we heard movement. Steps upon steps outside of our tents, accompanied by the screams of Joakim as he cried out for us. We could do nothing but sit in our tent and shake. Soon, Joakim's screams turned to sobs, and we realized that he was dancing with someone. It dawned on me then, the story I had heard as a child. I had never felt so much despair.

They danced until dawn. Me and Martin had cried ourselves empty, and our eyes hurt from the strain. We waited a long while after the sound of the dancing stopped to pull down the zipper. In the dirt we saw two sets of tracks - one looking like those of shoes, and one with cloven hooves. By the fire lay a stake, and the tracks led toward the lake.

We packed our things in a hurry, knowing that Joakim was gone.

In the end, his disappearance was deemed a drowning. He was found by divers in the lake, and the village mourned. According to rumors, which the police tried their best to deny, he was found with his feet broken and bloodied, inside an old coffin. I've since moved away from there, and I lost contact with Martin. I make sure to bring a small container of salt wherever I go ever since.

ALL EIGHTEEN LIVES OF OMEN, THE CAT

****1.****

It was a shock when our family cat, Nancy, passed away whilst giving birth to a litter of only one kitten.

And an even further shock when we noticed that this particular kitten, wrinkled and pink, had two heads.

Pa said it was an omen.

“An omen of what?”

The kitten made a noise; half-way between a squeak and a cough.

Pa paused.

“I don’t know.”

We were silent for a bit whilst we thought on this. We didn’t know either, but no-one could doubt that it had to mean **something.**

It made for a good name though: Omen. And so it stuck. The vet told us Omen didn’t have long for this world, said that animals with mutations like this rarely lasted more than a few weeks at best. He suggested we make a quick bit of cash and find a museum, or lab nearby to sell them to.

Two heads, two sets of genitals, he said, Omen was a five-figure paycheck waiting to happen.

We refused. Omen was ours.

In the end, Omen would end up outliving that vet, and part of me, although I know it can’t be true, believes that Omen always held a grudge against him for what he told us that morning. The vet made a joke in poor taste as we left.

“Might last a little longer. You never know, nine lives and all.”

I remember our whole family watching the way Pa looked to Omen’s two heads, and then back to the vet.

“Eighteen” he corrected.

“Eighteen lives.”



****2.****

We spent the next few months hand-feeding Omen, both of their heads desperately hungry. Ma would often joke that it was like they had two stomachs, with the amount of milk they’d get through. We’d take

turns to feed in the night, and even though I was much too young to be staying up that late they could see how much this cat meant to me, and they'd give me an hour or two after dark.

Omen had the most beautiful black coat, with sleek white socks, and a small cream spot, like a monk, on the top of their left head. The heads would sometimes chatter to each other, in meek little mews when they were alone, as if comparing notes on their new body.

Omen always ate better if they could sit in your lap, nestling their body in the fold of your legs whilst both your hands would hold two small bottles for them to suckle from. Sometimes I'd sneak out of bed and sleep on the floor in Omen's room, only to be found and scolded by my parents when the morning came.

But they didn't mind, really. Omen was our favourite.

■

****3.****

On the morning before his first birthday, Omen brought in a two-headed mouse, clamped in the right head's jaws. The thing was limp, and made a soft *pat* when they dropped it onto the floor. I must have been 12 at the time, but I remember poking the mouse with a brush, turning it over to have a better look at each head.

I was so absorbed in the rodent's strange biology I completely ignored the sound of my Ma and Pa coming to stand behind me, hands on hips, watching me watch it.

"I think it's a message." Pa said.

Ma made a noise; *he's right*.

"I think they're telling us they're not alone."

Both of Omen's heads mewed in sync, as if to agree.

■

****4.****

We went on holiday as a family, and as much as it pained us, were unable to bring Omen. Omen knew something was up when they saw us putting our clothes in bags, and when we all left at once, and they tried to sink their claws into our shoes to beg us not to go.

But we had to, and, we did.

When we returned, sunburnt and at ease, we found that Omen had taken the time to smash every single clock in the house.

■

****5.****

Omen would bring in all sorts of creatures; rodents, small birds, beetles it found interesting, frogs, toads, even fish every now and again.

One evening in particular, the family were gathered round the TV, watching I-can't-remember-what, when Omen strolled in, sat straight in front of the screen (*attention please)* and dropped the bottom half of a squirrel at its feet. The organs and intestines were hanging out, putrid and red, and we could see the way Omen's fur was matted around the mouth.

"He thinks we're hungry. Trying to feed us." Pa said.

"Disgusting."

"Doesn't look half bad."

"If you're so hungry, you can clean it up."

Omen watched with disappointment as Pa dropped the offering into the bin. Though I didn't miss the whisper that followed: *sorry, Omen.*



****6.****

We lived in a big house, and family and friends would often cycle through, staying in various rooms when they encountered problems of their own, or just needed a roof over their head for a while. Our Uncle came to stay with us during the last days of his life. There was no more modern medicine could do for him, and he told everyone he wanted to die with dignity.

We obliged him.

And so, for the last week of his life, Uncle lived as normal a life as he could, told stories until he grew too tired, never complained, and despite our protests slipped Omen meat and fish under the dinner table.

Around 24 hours before he died, Omen took up a vigil by his bedside. We'd been advised by the nurses that we should keep Omen away, that having a cat that close would only cause trouble, that you never knew where your pet had been.

But that day, Omen wouldn't budge. They hissed and bared their teeth whenever anybody made a motion to pick them up, and the whole thing quickly became more hassle than it was worth. It was clear Uncle was deteriorating, and we didn't want to disturb what could be his final moments.

Omen lay on his stomach without moving for water, or food, all day. Both of their heads stood watch, making periodical sweeps of the room, examining the doorway. About an hour before he passed, Omen watched something, invisible to the rest of us, enter through the door and come to stand by Uncle's bed.

Omen mewed softly, pleadingly. The sound grew, and grew, until eventually, Omen was silent.

Five minutes later, whilst holding Ma's hand, Uncle nodded, as if greeting an old friend, and took his last breath.

■

****7.****

Ma told us she was pregnant.

In response, Omen sneezed twice; one for each head.

■

****8.****

Ma had twins.

And, God, Omen **loved** the twins.

From the moment they came home Omen was all over them, transfixed by their angelic little faces, their impossibly thin wisps of hair, their laughs and their cries. I could almost hear Omen's thought process as both heads stared up at the newcomers.

Two of them!

Just like us!

Two of them!

■

****9.****

A local kid, who must have been roughly the same age as the twins at that point, say, around 4, fell from the top of their garden wall and broke their skull on the concrete below.

Our neighbours told us that they found Omen at the scene, lapping at the pool of blood as if it was cream in a saucer.

The broken child was taken to intensive care, immediately.

Despite the doctor's best efforts, the child didn't make it.

Omen came home with blood matted in the fur around their mouths, and turned their noses up at the dinner we'd prepared.

They were full.

■

****10.****

An old woman with matted hair and yellow teeth came to the door. She said that she'd seen our cat, and she would pay *good money* to take them off our hands.

She looked like a ghost dragged through a swamp. Her skin was so pale you could see the mass of veins underneath contracting like small worms, and when she spoke it made my skin hurt.

Cats like that are bad luck, she said.

Touched by the devil, she said.

We told her that they were ours, that they were family.

She snarled, and spat on our front door.

I'll see you soon, she said.

■

****11.****

One night I heard a noise from the kitchen. Upon investigating, I found that someone was banging against the door. I recognised the voice. The woman from the week before. She was hammering the door now with her fist, frantically.

Let me in, let me in, let me in. She said, over and over and over again.

I stood, paralysed by fear. There was something about her that I didn't trust, that I *couldn't* trust. I'd seen the way she'd looked at Omen, like she wanted them for something.

Then the noise spread out over the house, and I was aware of the windows on three separate sides of the room, and that through each window, as I turned, I could make out the same dark figure, pounding against the glass, screeching. It was as if there were several of her, all silhouettes, all at once, begging and pleading to be let in. And the voice cracked and changed, grew hoarser and harsher, and before long she didn't sound much like a woman at all but something hungry and vicious-

Pa eventually came down, and found me hiding under the table.

Omen was sat, facing the door, tail flicking from side to side. Pa said that in the following silence, he could hear their heads chattering away to one another. He said they sounded serious, concerned.

■

****12.****

I was brushing my teeth the following week, just after my shower, when I heard some scratching at the door. I tried to ignore it. Sometimes Omen would do this, beg to be let in after you'd had a shower so

they could drink the water around the drain, but Ma had said we had to stop Omen from their more unsavoury habits in case we had guests.

I kept the door firmly shut.

Omen grew more and more persistent, raking their claws down the wood, and mewing as if there was a fire.

I could have sworn the door was shut, but in my reflection, behind me I could make out the door start to open, slowly, fraction by fraction – and my hand stopped moving the brush, leaving it stuck in my mouth like a cocktail stick, when I saw a hand slowly emerge from the door in the reflection. A hand, and then a face I recognised, a gnarled and ancient face, all gums and loose skin, and I could see the woman slowly force her way into the room in the mirror, and, falling backwards, it was all I could do to try and grab the door, slipping on the handle.

The door flew open – in both real life and the reflection, and as I staggered back I could see the women now dead on, smiling, reaching out towards the surface, towards me – and my hand found something hard and heavy, and it was all I could do to throw it at the mirror.

There was a crash, the sound of falling glass, and the silence.

It took me a while to absorb my surroundings, for the adrenaline to wear off.

I had thrown my alarm clock. A heavy, brass thing that was so loud it was impossible *not* to wake up. Omen was sat by the shattered clock, their two faces reflected endlessly in the dozens of mirror shards that covered the floor, blinking and preening themselves, before stepping closer and pushing their forehead against mine.

Just for a moment, I felt as if I'd touched something old and dark and so *hot* and then Omen pulled away,

and left me to clean up the mess.

■

13.

The twins were followed home by a strange man in a long coat, with thin blonde hair that he'd very carefully slicked back over his otherwise bald head.

He made lewd gestures at them, which they could repeat but not understand, and said words that made Ma blush.

Ma said she'd found the man by our gate, staring into Omen's eyes, all four of them, without blinking. Said that she told the man she'd called the police, and that he should get off our property *this instant,* but the man stayed still. Wouldn't take his eyes off Omen. Spoke strange words to himself under his breath.

Prayed.

When the police came, some time later, the man was gone.

■

****14.****

The strange man made local headlines, filling his pockets with rocks and throwing himself into the river. They said he'd finally lost it, that the weight of whatever he'd done had finally caught up to him.

But I knew something had happened that day. Omen had shown the man something in that moment, shown the man something so real and terrifying he'd had no choice but to drown himself.

And, as if to confirm my suspicions, Omen coughed up a wet, blonde hairball.

■

****15.****

Omen discovered catnip and spent three days in a daze, like some sort of feline junkie, until Ma caught them staring at their own reflection.

Embarrassed, Omen quit their newfound habit there and then.

■

****16.****

Omen brought in the top half of a squirrel whilst we were watching TV.

The twins laughed.

Pa said: **looks familiar.**

Ma said she felt something a little like déjà vu.

Try as we might, we couldn't place it.

■

****17.****

Omen was sick in the night, and when we took them to the Vet she showed us her tattoo of a two-headed cat.

"It's just like yours! I've never seen a **real** one." She said, feigning surprise.

But the looks she shared with Omen made me think otherwise.

■

****18.****

Omen spent their last five nights with each one of us.

First Pa, then Ma, then the twins for one night each, and last of all, me.

They slept by my side, purring like kindling whenever I'd tickle one of their chins. We both knew that their time was nearly up. They were growing old, and what had once been muscle and fat had quickly become skin and bone.

Their eyes were not as sharp, and had developed a thin milky membrane. Sometimes one head would wake the other, and they'd spend a while bickering before they realised they were talking to themselves.

Before they passed they made one last, slow circuit of the house, checking behind each door and under each bed, as if to say, to us and to the twins, *see, you're safe now.*



We buried Omen under their favourite tree, in a little wooden box we filled with shredded newspaper. Just above the box, to commemorate Omen, we planted a single orchid. We thought that every time we looked out and saw the flower we'd be reminded of our friend and protector.

And it was a surprise to none of us, when, a month later, we saw two green buds rising from the soil.

[x](http://reddit.com/r/max_voynich)

JOURNAL ENTRY 0001-1 NAME: HELP.

#



JOURNAL ENTRY 0001-1

My name is Pietro Wilson. I don't know what's happening. I think I might be the only one left.

The date is um oh two oh one twenty twenty (sorry thought transcription is tricky (sorry im not used to this yet um)). The date is 02/01/2020. I've just. I have just escaped from Exclusionary Site-06. I think ... I'm not certain, but I think everyone else is dead. Those guys, they were thorough. If I hadn't got to the suit, I'd be ... oh god.

JOURNAL ENTRY 0001-2

I need to get myself together or this thing isn't going to be legible at all. Most likely they're going to want some kind of record of this whole incident for posterity.

I'm currently on my way to the nearest Foundation installation - a small safe-house for Agents making their way through this part of the country. Most likely there won't be anyone there, but I should be able to get into contact with my superiors and find out what exactly is going on.

Things started around six, maybe seven hours ago. A group identifying themselves as Mobile Task Force Zeta-19 ("Lonely Only") - Insurgent infiltrators, maybe? - entered the Site, they had proper identification and everything, and gathered everyone into the canteen. Then they started the shooting.

Jesus, I ... I can still taste the blood. I can't get that awful metal taste off my tongue. It's a miracle I didn't get hit or trampled on, the way people were climbing over each other to get out of there. If I hadn't gotten to the Exclusion Harness, I'd be dead. No doubt about it - like I said, they were thorough.

I'm a technician for the power grid on ES-06, so I don't fully get how this thing works, but I understand the basics. This perception filter thing doesn't mean people can't see me, but it does mean they can't recognize the fact that they can see me. Which I guess is the same thing when you get down to it.

But those infiltrators ... they didn't even take anything, didn't even try to. I watched after I got into this thing - I was too scared (fucking coward) to make a run for it. They just checked the bodies and left. An extra bullet for every head.

They were just there to kill us.

JOURNAL ENTRY 0001-3

Finally made it to the safe-house after hours and hours of trudging through this goddamn desert. Heard a few explosions in the distance - maybe the Foundation sent an MTF to engage those infiltrators before they got away? Hope so.

Never been happier to see bottled water in my life. The Harness sustains your body while you're wearing it, apparently, but my mind still thinks I should be drinking. Human nature, I guess.

Anyway, once I get these legs of mine rested, I'm going to try to get these systems online. I need to get in touch with the Foundation and find out what exactly is going on.

JOURNAL ENTRY 0001-4

Holy shit.

DOWNLOADED FILE 0001-1

Context: They sent this to every government, news organization and anomalous agency on the planet. Fuck.



The following is a message composed via consensus of the O5 Council.

For those who are not currently aware of our existence, we represent the organization known as the SCP Foundation. Our previous mission centered around the containment and study of anomalous objects, entities and other assorted phenomena. This mission was the focus of our organization for more than one-hundred years.

Due to circumstances outside of our control, this directive has now changed. Our new mission will be the extermination of the human race.

There will be no further communication.

COMPOSED FILE 0001-1

Immediately following the release of their worldwide announcement, the Foundation began their assault on mankind.

The response to the anomalies the Foundation let loose was as quick as it could have been, but the damage is being done. It's hard to tell what exactly is going on, but from my position here - accessing the Foundation network and keeping track of the news - I've managed to grasp a little. I'm going to get everything I know down - so that when this is over, if anyone's still alive, they'll know.

Stories from a line cook part 3

Hello I am back to continue telling my story, I also think I am getting better at opening these posts. I recommend you read my previous stories but to give you a quick recap, I am a cook at a bar, strange things happen here and I may be responsible for someone dying.

Part 1 https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/feb92t/my_stories_from_working_as_a_line_cook/

Part 2 https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/fexgw2/stories_from_a_line_cook_part_2/

When I came into work the other day i knew something was off. I opened the back door and immediately felt like i got pepper sprayed. I began coughing and tearing up the second i stepped in. Like a good cook I didnt let pain stop me from working so I covered my mouth and nose with my arm and walked in. There I saw the food wizard conjuring a spell. Not really of course, dave was stirring a large stock pot with a metal spoon and wearing a swimming mask. He looked up at me and said.

"Hey Josh how's it going?"

"What the hell are you making? It hurts to breathe." I said keeping my distance from the pot.

"I'm making our new suicide sauce! I had to special order a scoville test because the ones on the market dont go high enough." He said excitedly before continuing. "Theres a mask on the counter if you want to come closer."

I walked over to the counter to see a box with five mask took one and put it on. Then I made my way over to Dave, who was still stirring, the liquid in the pot was sticky and black. It looked gross but knowing dave it was probably delicious.

"Is it safe?" I asked. Dave shrugged and giggled. I grabbed a spoon and dipped the tip of it in to taste. As I did Dave looked at me with a big smile. When I put the spoon in my mouth I learned it tasted like pineapple, it was amazing. A second later the heat hit. I started coughing and crying again, sweating and stumbling over to the sink. I turned the tap on and stuck my face under it

"Capsaicin isnt water soluble. Get some milk or sour cream." Dave instructed, never once looking up from his pot of sauce.

I stumbled into the walk in fridge taking my sweat soaked shirt off and started drinking the sour cream straight from the bucket. It was really gross and it barely helped at all. I spent the next ten minutes crying on the floor. Every once in a while Dave would walk in, step over me, grab something and leave. When I was done with my crying and the pain was mostly tolerable I got up and left the cooler shirtless.

When I got back to the line Dave and one of the new servers Suzy were laughing as he poured his concoction into a bucket. Suzy is a small cheerful girl with pale skin and long red hair. Maybe a year or two younger than me and always smiling. Or at least she was until she saw me turning the corner shirtless. Her eyes darted down to the recently stitched stab wound on my stomach.

"Oh my got what happened to you?" She asked sounding very worried. I didnt realise right away that she was reffering to the stab wound so I just shook my head and said.

"Dave just let me eat a fireball." that's when I saw where she was looking and looked down at my injury. "Oh that, I got stabbed by a co-worker, he doesn't work here anymore." For some reason she apologized, then walked back to the front of house.

Suddenly there was a knock on the back door. I flinched and instinctively reached for the nearest knife off the wall. Dave waved me off and walked to the door. He knocked three times, in response four knocks came from the other side. Dave unlocked the door to let someone in and I saw that it was Andy.

"Hey buddy, you look like shit." He said addressing me. He walked over to the coffee pot next to me and started making himself a cup.

"Dave let me eat a fireball." I replied while Dave giggled. Dave grabbed a marker off the shelves by the door and walked over to his bucket of pain. He wrote, deus interfectorem, on the lid before putting a tally on the side. Andy handed me a clean-ish shirt he pulled out of seemingly nowhere. I took it, put it on and continued with my shift.

So in my last post I promised to tell you about the grease monster, apparently named Charles, but unfortunately I have never seen it personally. When I first started I noticed scratching and other weird noises whenever I would go to dump the deep fryer oil. I asked Colin about it but all he did was grunt and tell me not to worry about it. I shone a light in there a few times but I never saw anything so I assumed it was just rats. I paid no mind to it until Andy started living in the shed. I found him throwing orange peels down the hole.

"Hey you probably shouldn't do that. We don't want the smell getting any worse if you're going to be living out here." I said while I was smoking a cigarette and tying my hair into a ponytail and stuffing it into my hat.

"No it's ok the thing down there likes the treat every once in a while." He said shoving an orange segment into his mouth.

"What do you mean the thing down there?" I asked walking over to the grease trap, making a note not to put the cigarette out on the heel of my shoe and putting it back in the pack.

"Looks like you have a shogoth or something down there." Andy said this with a straight face but I laughed, thinking it was a joke. He looked at me and asked if I have ever seen the monster. I shook my head.

"Well if you drop something in there I would recommend considering it gone forever." Andy said looking serious.

I spent the next few months trying to get a look at the monster in the grease traps but I never managed to see it. If it weren't for the one time it threw something up at me I would have assumed Andy was crazy. After that incident I googled what a shogoth was only to learn it's a creature from a book. I didn't think a racist writer from a hundred years ago would be correct about the thing that actually goes bump in the night. I've asked Andy many times to show me the monster but he always just told me I would see it, in due time.

One thing that creeps me out about the grease monster is that once or twice I've found shoes by the grease trap. I asked Andy about this and he just said that he found shoes on the street but that they didn't fit. It hasn't happened in a while, but it occurred to me a few days ago that the monster killed

someone, as far as I know, for the first time not to long ago. Has the grease monster been killing people this whole time. I'll ask Andy when I see him next.

I should probably get back to work soon, I'm on my lunch break as I'm writing this. I assume you will all be wondering how I got stabbed so I'll tell you guys that story next time. Till then I am still Josh.

Part 4 coming soon

Light hurts me

I really, really needed to pee.

My bladder ached every time I shifted in bed. I turned and looked over at my girlfriend, who was fast asleep and definitely didn't need to pee.

How dare she. Why could I never get a good night's sleep, like normal people?

I slid out from under my covers from the foot of my bed, so I wouldn't accidentally wake her. I grunted a bit, but it couldn't be helped.

I found the door handle and made my way down the corridor in the dark. This place was pretty small. It was a slightly dirty student flat, probably better than average. The smell of burnt pizza and disinfectant was everywhere. Gross, I thought. But kind of comforting.

I put the toilet seat down and flicked the light on simultaneously.

But instead of sitting down to pee, I puked into the bowl.

I shocked myself with that. I stood up, took one look at my puke mingling with the toilet water, and puked again. My throat burned as I felt chunks make their way upwards. Something felt viscerally, fundamentally wrong as I stood there hunched over the toilet bowl, smelling the sour acidity coming from it in the dim, uncomfortably cool fluorescent light. Goosebumps and sweat coated my skin. And my stomach felt like it hated my guts. Literally.

I could not stop breathing so heavily, so rapidly, that I felt light headed. Partly because of the laborious puking, partly because my head had become a terrible place in which to be. I contemplated leaning in and drinking that diluted puke water. I heaved again. Eline, asleep in just the other room, definitely resented me.

I should break up with her.

I steal the blanket away from her when we're asleep. I'd found the cashier at the pharmacy kind of cute, god, was that wrong? I'm bad with money, my grades are garbage, god, I'm not even a good artist. Why would she ever see a future with me? I waste all my time painting when I'm supposed to be a goddamned accounting student. And I'm not even good at it. What an absolute fucking waste of space I am, I'm going to fail this semester, throw my scholarship away, and lose my mother's love and I'd deserve it, too, because I was never able to help her- I'm going to be homeless, that's what-

I forced myself to the sink, cupped my hands under the stream of water so I could drink. I shuddered, my goosebumps intensifying as my sleeves clung to my wrists. I looked into the mirror and saw my acne scars, deeper than ever before, oozing that translucent, light red fluid.

I hate my face.

I turned the light off and bolted back to my bedroom, tripping over my flatmate's cat on the way. I practically jumped into bed, and my thoughts calmed. I squeezed Eline's hand. I touched my face. It was dry.

I don't even paint that often. And anyway, I'm kind of good at it.

My bladder burned, but no way I was going back to the bathroom.

I awoke to Eline squeezing the life out of me with a hug. I smiled, I swear, the girl is made of marshmallows and buttered bread.

I opened my eyes, and saw her clinging to me, despair written all over her face. I sat up, and pulled her to me.

"What's wrong, El?" I asked, stroking her hair. It smelled like artificial grape.

"Hmm? What, nothing," she said dismissively, "Morning, cutie."

I closed my eyes and touched my fingertips to her lips. They were curled into a smile, her lovely smile.

I opened them again. I was touching her lips, pursed in worry. Sweat pierced through my skin again. I was so, so cold despite her body against mine.

I pushed her off me and took my phone to the bathroom, saying I really needed to pee.

Really, I had to pee. But this time, I kept the lights off.

My phone brightness is at it's minimum, but I'm still seeing those underlines highlighting a typo when I shouldn't have made any.

I truly need help. What am I seeing?

Welcome Home, Honey

"Welcome Home, Honey"

Before either of my feet could fully make it through the entryway of our home, I flung both of our suitcases down with a calculated passive aggressiveness. All while attempting to keep at bay any intruding thoughts I felt floating up in the back of my mind concerning the indentions that I had surely just left on our newly remodeled hardwood floor. Imported Brazilian Walnut. Another expensive home makeover project pushed forward by my wife, Jess, all in the name of "feng shui" as she would so mindlessly put it. Although she would never dare to admit as much, I knew that the only reason she became so obsessed with sprucing up our house was just to impress her equally vapid friends, if you could even call them that. My anger that had been steeping to a perfect brew for the past eight hours in the car had surprisingly begun to subside upon our arrival back home. "Home Sweet Home" as people who have never been married before often say. However, I knew that my lovely shrew of a wife would find some way to poke and prod at me until I was visibly steaming once again – she always did, almost as if she found some strange joy reveling in my ever swelling sea of displeasure.

"What did I say right before we left? I told you that we couldn't trust your sister to watch after our house while we were gone."

"I know honey."

"She doesn't even know how to answer the phone of the people whose house she's supposedly been watching over. Ridiculous. I mean-"

"I know, I know. I'll have a talk with her tomorrow."

"Don't interrupt me like that when I'm in the middle of a sentence. Besides, come over here and look at this, how hard is it to water some damn plants anyways?"

Our month-long retreat to salvage, not simply save, our already crumbled to pieces marriage had been for naught. Just as I had suspected it would be. Our marriage counselor, out of desperation, recommended that we go on a "spur-of-the-moment" romantic getaway apart from our cellphones as well as our work lives. While most normal couples would probably have chosen to visit Hawaii or perhaps even the Bahamas – we decided on Detroit, Michigan in the dead of Winter. "Romantic." The sad truth of it all is that we likely wouldn't have even done that much had it not been for the fact that we had to leave our house vacant for the workers to finish remodeling our floors. For the duration of our trip, I stowed away in our hotel room alternating between the local news station and the Game Show Network, merely counting down the days until our eventual return back to the monotonous rut of a life that was our marriage. My wife on the other hand, simply swept away her marital woes and sorrows by going from town to town, filling up shopping bags and maxing out our credit cards.

(~For better or for worse.~)

Despite Jess being rightfully upset regarding my younger sister's blatant disregard towards the general upkeep of our house, I found myself somewhat bemused with my sibling's actions or rather inaction. The only thing that I found myself annoyed with was my lasting inability to defy my wife in the same manner as Alex always did. Getting under Jess's skin seemed to have become my younger sibling's favorite pastime.

"I'm going to change and freshen up before the Thompson's come over." Jess shouted out from her walk-in closet.

"Obviously, cleanliness is not a trait shared amongst you and your other family members but could you at least try to tidy up some before they come over, if that's not too much to ask from you."

"Of course not, sweetie." I said through gritted teeth, tongue planted firmly in cheek.

I began walking around the house while Jess changed into her dinner garb, haphazardly surveying each room for any table that my sister may have left undusted or any floor or carpet that might have been deprived of its scheduled daily vacuuming. Almost immediately, this strange feeling of insurmountable unease and dread began to envelop me. I couldn't exactly put my finger on what it was that was causing this feeling in me but I knew in my gut that something was awry. Now, I'm the first to admit that I have never been an obsessive clean freak like my wife, much to her dismay, but I have also never been what one would classify as a slob. Alex and I were both raised in an extremely tidy, chore-oriented household while growing up. So, while I knew that my sister had very little respect for my wife (and for good reason), I also knew that for her to leave our house in such a state of disarray wasn't in her nature either. It almost appeared as if my sister had neglected to even pay our house a visit once for the entire month that we were gone. Making my way towards our living room, dreading the thought of what my wife would say about the state of everything, I suddenly noticed what looked like drops of matte chocolate syrup sprinkled in a steady droplet pattern down the length of our hallway floor. I flicked on the overhead lights to get a closer look. I didn't need to be a professional crime scene investigator to know that what I was looking down at was clearly dried blood.

Panicking, with my racing pulse now pounding audibly in my head, I clambered for my cell phone. I tried to rationalize the current situation in my head, perhaps this was all just a silly misunderstanding or my sister's idea of a prank. Surely, I thought, she would be able to clear things up. While waiting on my sister to answer her phone, I began to push on further towards the back of our house to inspect the living room. As soon as I walked through the final doorframe, my body completely froze. Broken glass and bits of mangled wood that had once comprised our coffee table were now strewn across the floor chaotically among tufts of shredded pillow and couch stuffing. I was immediately snapped out of my near catatonic state and pulled back into reality when I heard a faint ringing noise coming from our laundry room. The chime sounded strangely familiar but due to my state of shock it still took me a moment to realize where I recognized the melody from.

It was my sister's ringtone.

I warily inched closer to the door leading into our laundry room, shards of glass crunching underneath my feet as I moved with a glacially slow pace. The pale moon glow coming in from the adjacent windows ominously illuminated the floor as I made my way towards the source of the sound. However, I immediately stopped dead in my tracks once I reached the outside of the laundry room. Although the lighting was admittedly dim, it would have been impossible for me to not notice the growing pool of dark maroon colored blood as it seeped out from underneath the laundry room door. Without hesitation, I spun around and sprinted directly towards my wife.

(~'Til death do us part.~)

"We need to leave." I said, "Now."

"What are you talking about? I don't have time for any of your stupid games tonight. I'm still getting ready and the Thompsons will be arriving any minute now." she said.

"This is serious Jess."

"Yeah and so is this dinner party."

Suddenly, all the power in the house went out at once with a loud pop, plunging us fully into the darkness of night. It became clear to me very quickly that none of this was mere coincidence. Without a shadow of a doubt, I knew that there was somebody else in the house with us and that they had already displayed their level of lethality.

"Go around the front of the house and make sure that all of the doors and windows are locked, I'll head to the back of the house and do the same. Understand?"

"Yes, I understand." she replied back with a slight tremble in her voice.

Heading back through the living room, I noticed that the laundry room door was now left wide open, still swaying back and forth on its hinges despite being closed only a few moments prior. I hurriedly zig-zagged through all of the debris in the middle of the living room and made my way to the back door of the house, locking it before wedging a chair underneath the handle for good measure. I then began checking each window to ensure that they were all locked when I came upon one that appeared to have been pushed ajar. While attempting to close the jammed window, I caught the outline of someone in the reflection of the window as they quickly passed by behind me. As soon as I spun around though, they (whoever they were) had disappeared from sight. I grabbed a large chef's knife from our kitchen before making my way back to the front of the house where my wife was located. As I got closer to our bedroom, I began calling out hopelessly for my wife, only to be met with nothing more than an eerie silence in place of her response. As I was rounding the corner leading into our bedroom, I heard the distinct creak of a floorboard directly behind me. Not wanting to give away the fact that I was aware of this unknown assailant's presence, I played it off as if I was completely unaware until the right moment came along. Just then, right as I felt their breath hit the back of my neck, the doorbell rang.

No longer holding back, I swung knife first right into the chest of the intruder, plunging the blade deep into their chest cavity. Then, without warning, the power came back on as if it had never gone out in the first place. My eyes had become so quickly adjusted to the dark that the sudden switch temporarily blinded me. When I regained sight, I looked down to find Jess laying motionless on the ground, knife jutting out from her chest and with a ball gag in her mouth. The mahogany tinted blood spurting out from her freshly acquired wound began to spread out irregularly in a Rorschach-like pattern on her lavender blouse. I stared blankly into the growing blood stain as if it would somehow tell me how I should react or feel regarding what had just occurred. A sense of numbness along with the uncontrollable, overwhelming urge to laugh took control over my body. I became so violently hysterical from this sudden laughing fit that I was actually doubled over, now staring eye-to-eye with my now deceased wife. I began to laugh even harder at the sight of this. The front door then slowly opened to reveal the now-arrived Thompsons who had decided to simply let themselves in.

"Wow. I am absolutely loving the new hardwood floors. Brazilian Oak, right?" Mrs. Thompson said.

“Imported Brazilian Walnut actually.”

The Graffiti Whispers in Paris

I am a nomad. Let's get that out of the way, I travel from place to place, encountering interesting and strange things along the way. Right now I am in a manor house in the Netherlands, where I have spoken with a spirit much older than you or I. But, that is a later tale you will hear in good time.

Right now, I talk of the first stop in my Europe tour, Paris. The city of lights whose shadow is far darker than the one cast by the buildings.

I have a habit of walking late in the night, long past the hour that decent folk have gone to bed. Those night walks were some of my best in my hometown of Savannah, Georgia, where my first...

Encounters, I guess you could say, were. My first day in Paris, I slept, because travel is exhausting. In the morning I woke and went to see the touristy spots. I wanted to get them out of the way. While the Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame are both breathtaking, what got me was the graffiti.

Something told me there was something off about a few of the pieces I saw. It wasn't until my night walk that I understood. I started at Gare du Nord, walking out around midnight. Several hours later, as the people of Paris went to bed and I found myself sharing the streets with vagrants, drunkards, and the occasional night creature.

It was then, in the quiet, I could hear the whispering. A chorus, echoing from the walls, "L'eau dans les égouts est du sang, nous sommes les noms des villes mortes.." I didn't know the translation at the time and took a recording on it from my phone. The rest of the night I searched for the source, but it seemed to echo from everywhere.

It must be said that not all of the graffiti in Paris are names, some are actual pieces. The ones with faces would watch me, their eyes turning ever so slightly as I passed by. After searching the northern part of Paris through winding alleys and empty boulevards I finally gave up on my initial hunt for the source of the whispering.

That was my second night in Paris.

I looked up what was said the following day, it was: "The water of the sewers is blood, we are the names of the cities dead." That's when it clicked. The graffiti whispers.

The next two nights I spent in due to poor weather. I also made a friend and we got drunk both nights. He was Portuguese and shared his food with me. It was a good start to my trip.

On my fifth night, I walked again, in the same streets I had searched before. This time I knew where the whispers came from. It was tough to read the names, as they had taken the shape of artist signatures. It wasn't until about 2 am that the whispers started to change.

I will translate what I know they said, but there was much more. "The eyes, they think he hears us. No one listens to us. We chant and chant and chant, yet no one listens." It continued along this vein until I finally decided to touch a wall. I touched the name, and suddenly there was silence.

It stretched for what seems like minutes. I looked around and saw more names on the wall than it could support. Their paint started to fade into one another, as it seemed they were trying desperately to get close to me. "Bonjour, je ne parle pas Francais," I said.

They all started to speak at once. Some in broken English, most in French. But the sound was matched with a wind that cut me cold to the bone. I watched in awe as these names blended together, morphing and bleeding, trying so desperately to get their story told. I raised my hand. They stopped.

I waited a second before speaking, "Now, you all know I cannot hear you all at once." My hand went down and I sighed, "I also don't have time to listen to all of your woes." The whispers started again, summoning a small cold wind. "Settle down," I said again, "that doesn't mean I don't wasn't to hear them. Just, some other time, after I've had some sleep."

"When?"

That word was repeated throughout the alley, now crowded with the names of the dead. I merely smiled, "Whenever I want." Then I walked back towards my hostel, the whispers following me, begging me to hear them. If anyone was awake they must have thought they were dreaming, a man walking along and the graffiti seeming to change as he passed by. I paid them no mind however and went to sleep.

The next day I changed hostels. It was a frustrating and cold walk to the center of Paris. I was staying just on a street that hosted a weekend market. I had to walk all the way through the market and back down the other side to get to my hostel. It was fun seeing all of the fresh produce and other goods for sale in such a large city.

That night I stayed in, I needed to write a little bit.

My seventh day was spent inside, which is a good thing as it rained for most of the day. During that time I met a kid from Maryland who was on holiday from the University of Scotland, we had great discussions about good old US of A, also travel.

After the rain subsided I went out. The whispering started almost immediately. Names that saw me would vie for my attention, which brought even more names towards me. They were stuck to their own buildings though, so I ignored their questions and tales of dying in the Seine, or of disease, or in a fire, or with their heads chopped off.

I was walking down a particularly noisy alley when I came upon a piece depicting the face of a woman with her eyes crossed out and the symbol of anarchy painted on her head. It was strange, there weren't any names around this piece, just a couple of adverts for an upcoming show that were faded and torn. I watched as several names got close enough to touch the face.

Her mouth opened. And all I could see was black. It dripped like paint onto the ground and sizzled. The black mass spread, consuming the names on the walls. The whisperers started to panic, I watched as several were consumed, the others started chanting, "We will not die again, we will not die again," on and on until the thing was full and the darkness receded.

I stood there for a time, watching the face, it did not whisper, it merely consumed. I picked up a rock and tossed it at the face. The mouth gave a sort of snarl but did not open.

"What are you?" I asked the face. It did not answer. So, I tossed another rock at it and asked again, "what are you?"

The thing just snarled at me. I turned to the names surrounding, "I will listen to your story, if you answer my question," I said to the gathering. None of them spoke.

I sighed, and continued on, my curiosity unsatisfied. That's where I'll stop for today.

When Boy Meets Girl

I am not the one that believes in the supernatural, like ghost. I do believe in God and His Holy word, but what happened to me, has my world turned upside down still today.

I'm a 40 year old male but when this happened, I was 24 years old. It makes me feel old to say this but Facebook hadn't become popular yet. Heck, I had never even heard of Myspace yet.

Well, I started a Facebook account to keep up with my family all over the state and in other states. Three days after I started that Facebook account, this woman that looked my age sent me a friend request. I thought she was beautiful, so I accepted her request.

Soon after we started talking. Just for the story, let's call her (T), to protect her family. After talking for a couple of weeks we went out on our first date.

No this is not where it gets weird yet.

Me and (T) dated for about a month before I got to meet her two kids. I'll just leave their names out completely. A couple of weeks later I met her mom and dad, and she met my family.

It really was going great with (T) and I, like a match made in heaven. On the weekends, I would sleep over her house. We would take the kids to the movies, out to eat, and even Tannehill state park.

We got along so great together, I even got along great with her kids and family.

Well, I talked to her dad to ask him if I could marry his daughter. Yes, I'm old fashion. He said yes. Well I went and bought the ring and called (T) up and asked if we could go out to eat the following weekend.

Now this is the part where it started to get weird.

That following weekend I was nervous as all get out, I just couldn't wait. I left my house so I could be at hers on time.

Now when I got to her house, it was all boarded up.

So I went to her parents house . Her dad asked, "Can I help you"? So I just asked him, "What happened to (T) and the house? Did it catch on fire"? He looked at me as if I was crazy. He asked, How do I know his Great, Great, Great, Great Grandmother? And How do I know the house burnt down?

I asked "when the house bur..... What? Your Great, Great, Great, Great who? No! (T) is your daughter! I have pictures to prove it." So I showed him pictures that was supposed to be pictures of me, her, and the kids, but they were just pictures of me.

No, My family didn't remember meeting her either.

Like I said, I dont believe in ghost, but what happened to me in that year changed me. I cant date human women anymore, sure I tried a couple of times, it just ain't the same. So, I'm waiting on (T) to come back, or someone else like her.

The Dreadful Hunt

It's all a game of course, this endless cycle of life and death. A game and nothing more. Only the pain of losing makes it real, the fear of an untimely death, the cheap possessions we accrue scattered to the winds, our life hurled into the void only to coalesce and face the pain of existence anew. We are merely the spawn of those who have come before, the afterthought of former efforts.

It was another day and I had nothing except the clothes on my back. The wilderness, a sprawling greensward lined with leafy trees and angular hills, stretched in every direction. Truly untouched, unblemished countryside, verdant beneath a blazing sun.

I had limited time. I knew that. Without supplies or weapons I wouldn't last the night and the day always trickled away faster than I expected.

I walked for a while, exploring my surroundings. A cave or bluff whose overhang I might shelter under failed to present itself so I put the skills I'd learned to good use, collected dead wood and fashioned a few rudimentary tools.

I knew where to find flint, locating a small stream with banks of shale and gravel. Using such sparse resources I stripped the dead wood and with string-like reeds put together a hatchet firm enough to hack rather than peel the unevenly shaped splinters. A crude tool, the axe soon broke, but not before I'd managed to create some useful batons. I pared away a tapering point to make a sword-like weapon, equally crude but better than nothing. The rest would do for stakes which I'd bury two thirds in the soft earth. An unwelcome surprise for the nocturnal hunters I knew would soon be putting in an appearance.

At midday I fished in the stream with the sharpened baton and managed to spear a few morsels. I'd learned how to pile stones to make a miniature furnace, trapping heat intense enough to cook meat and provide a slow release of warmth. Not that the sun wasn't warm enough, but those heat retaining stones would be a life saver when the darkness came and the temperature fell.

I spent the afternoon creating a dug-out, a back-breaking job with barely functioning shovels made of flint and shale. By the time I had a deep enough ditch my hands were blood raw and my skin sheeny with sweat.

I lay more dead wood over the fox-hole and on top of this placed much of the excavated earth along with plenty of foliage stripped from trees. Thus camouflaged, my shelter would give me ample safety against the hunt.

The sun sank toward a dusky horizon and snow-capped mountains in the distance. I watched the wilderness with a sense of foreboding, wishing I had some decent metal at hand and a forge.

I cooked and ate the last of the fish then settled into my den, surrounded by the musty odour of soil and root, a mournful wind sliding between the cross-hatch roof of dead wood above my head.

I couldn't sleep as the night pressed in. Stars winked through gaps in the makeshift ceiling, beautiful and safe in their distant cradle far above and away from my deadly world. But otherwise there was no light and the darkness was unsettlingly silent.

I heard shuffling and snorting, the low moan of one of the walking dead, searching the darkness for meat and blood. Peeking through a sliver-gap between the crude wall of my fox-hole and the ceiling, I glimpsed him, a ragged mannequin shambling between the trees, dead eyes piercing the night, hands clutching and clinging.

He moved on and I sagged with relief. I'd been gripping the sharpened stake so hard my hand was numb. I massaged the tingling flesh back to life, flexing my fingers.

The night was still young and the darkness growing deeper by the minute. I continued to keep watch through the convenient slot, desperately trying to discern between enemies and trees, but both resembled little more than sentry smears of deeper blackness against the dark. Only when they moved could I know for sure I was looking at a threat and not just scenery.

More dead people were wandering in the far distance, their grotesque silhouettes breaking the stars as they clambered and rose over hills bordering the stream. But they were far enough away not to be an immediate worry. Probably they'd spend the rest of the night wandering around in circles and wouldn't venture even close to the woods. They were vicious, but stupid.

I had more a more pressing worry. Something was moving high in the canopy of the trees. Something large and black, its chittering voice and red-coal eyes betraying an otherwise stealthy approach. The leading edge of the hunt had found me.

The thing rattled away in the treetop for some time more then started down the trunk, eight long jointed legs defying gravity, propelling a fat, bloated body toward the ground a mere four or five metres from my shelter. It skittered sideways at some noise I couldn't hear, looking for all the world like a black gloved hand crawling over grass. Its foul stench filled my nostrils and I gagged, barely containing a rising flood of bile by pressing my hand over my mouth and nose.

It came close. Deadly close. And I bit my tongue until blood flowed, fear poisoning my reason, a creeping madness I'd experienced before. Panic was the enemy of the survivor, I knew. Self inflicted pain was an easy way to keep the mind sharp and fight away the rising tide of terror.

The creature loomed then passed over my shelter as a shadow deeper than the bowels of a mine, legs thudding down then stamping away as it stalked deeper into the woods. I remained undetected.

As it passed the foul things exuded long streams of oozing plasm, the stuff I'd often stumbled into during my daytime explorations. Not quite web, but stronger than string and with an elasticity that made it oddly useful, the excretion was something I'd learned to use. In the morning I'd be able to gather up whatever I found, but for now I remained hidden. Only a fool ventured forth into the night.

Things grew quieter and I dozed for a time, waking to hear the sound of feet crunching over dead leaves. The night lay still and dense over the woods and the stars were still icy in the blanket of the sky. My night was not yet over and the approaching footsteps were the herald of more terror yet to come.

I narrowed my eyes through the viewing slot and saw the outline of this new hunter moving quickly between the vertical posts of trees. Starlight chalked the edges of bones, fleshless and ochre with age. A grinning skull with flashing eyes turned my way and I ducked down. Seconds later an arrow whirled out of the night and struck the wood above my head with a resounding thunk.

I could stay where I was and wait for the monster to come to me. He'd rip away the roof of my shelter and feather me with arrows before I could scramble free. I had only one other choice. Leave the shelter and charge. Pray the sharp stick would be enough to fend him off and scatter his undead bones. The noise might alert others to my presence, but the alternative was certain death. So I leaped out into the darkness brandishing my wooden sword and raced toward my attacker.

He ducked back behind a tree, shrewd and cunning as all of his ilk. I dodged sideways as he loosed another arrow, the shaft whipping past my cheek and quivering in a tree inches from my head. He didn't have time to notch another missile before I was upon him, hands clutching the exposed glockenspiel of his ribcage, fingers digging into the graveyard mulch underneath. I drove the tip of my crude sword into his eye socket and he grunted, the weapon standing a foot proud of his brittle skull. He dropped his bow and quiver of arrows and crumpled to the floor. I finished him off with the driving heel of my boot, crushing his egg-shell head into a pulpy mash of bone and brains.

A brutal, short skirmish and I was the victor. But his talons had dragged my flesh and opened several wounds. Moreover, the hushed, breathy sounds of the fight had carried through the silent night and I could see the black outlines of the undead now erect and alert on the hillside, searching the sward below for the source of the noise. If they caught the scent of my fear and my blood I'd be done for. They moved slowly - slower than the archer - but in great numbers they could easily surround and overwhelm me.

I grasped the archer's discarded bow and litter of arrows and turned back toward my shelter. At least now I had a decent weapon.

But I stopped short.

Something lurked in the gap between me and safety. My worst fear realised. A thing I had hoped I might never see again, so long as I remained lost in this brutal world.

It crept forward on stumpy legs, the ugly green shade of its leathery flesh visible even in the dark. Its glaring eyes, black and fathomless, were locked upon me, its down-turned mouth a pitch slash in the gruesome melon of its head. It had no arms. Didn't need them. It had its own unique way of inflicting death on those it hunted in the night.

I lashed out and struck it with the stake but, though my enemy flinched, the wooden weapon made little impression. Its eyes glittering with spite and the thing began to inflate, skin ballooning, head bulging, sagging flesh stretched taut and pulsing with vitality. It hissed like steam jetting from a fissure and those hideous, malevolent eyes shone with delight at the look of horror on my face.

There was nowhere to go. Nothing I could do. Experience told me the shockwave would be too intense to outrun. Like a detonating bomb, it could turn your innards to liquid at twenty feet.

The Creeper exploded and I was hurled into the air in a vicious skirl of green flesh, blood and shrapnel bone. I hit two trees before striking the ground. There I could only groan, my body shattered, the stars spinning overhead. Shadowy forms pressed in from all sides - the undead horde finally down from their hill. They shuffled forward, mouths drooling and closed in for a feast.

But this life is a game that never ends. Death is only a chance to start again; a chance to do better; to be a better person. When we die we learn from our mistakes, if we're smart, and we carry the skills we've acquired into the next incarnation. Thus do the odds improve. One day I will survive the night,

then the night thereafter. I'll craft better weapons and mine the ore I need to forge armour and steel. I'll build a place in this unsacred wilderness which the dead and the creeping death cannot infiltrate and there I will thrive.

Then, and only then, will they become the hunted and I, the hunter.

My mother wrote a letter that told a dark truth about my family

(Full Story)

Before I tell you this story, I have to say that my dad is an absolute drunkard who is unfortunately rich and is a common target for female gold diggers. He works as an executive of a large enterprise that is constantly launching new products, or at least that's what he pretends to be. In reality, he's a drug dealer who hides drugs and ships them off to other countries to make people think that he gets his money by actually working hard. In my eyes, he is nothing more than a father, and I don't mean that as a compliment.

A lot of times, he is too busy to spend time with me. Out in bars talking to probably my future mother-in-law who is probably younger than me. I see him walking in and out of the house with suitcases of whatever the hell he has and he always threatens me to not tell law enforcement or the police in general because he would promise to decapitate me and bash my disembodied head against a brick wall. That is probably the worst one I have heard so far.

I don't live with him today because as of now, I'm 25 and engaged to the girl of my dreams. We have a good 2 story house and I got a job that pays extremely well. However, this story is not about me. Or at least it's not just about me.

This story is about my parents.

My mother was a ray of sunshine and she had golden hair, a good physique, such a good person who wanted the very best for me. However, another thing you should know is that my father wasn't actually a drug dealer when my mother was here. My father was a Sr. Medical Biller who was actually making good money.

Our family was like the other average families that you would see on the streets of good old New York City. Watching musicals on Broadway in Times Square, cruising the Hudson river, and having breakfast at the local dunkin donuts because man, that place was good as hell. We would see the beautiful night sky and the lights of NYC with the signs on stores that would light up in the most colorful patterns you would ever see. Hearing the buzz of traffic and pedestrians running across a red sign.

However, my family hid something from me that I knew of. On a Saturday afternoon at around 2 PM, I was playing in my mom's room. Her room was pristine, yet her desk was a mess. Being the curious ass little boy I was, I rummaged through her papers. Her desk was mainly fashion magazines and newspapers. I sat on her chair and used my hands to part out the mess to look at some papers. However, there was one thing that was at the bottom of the pile. It was a corner of a piece of paper that mom would use to write important letters. I honestly didn't know why the hell mom would have it because she never kept important stuff lying around on the desk or even the bottom of a mess just for her 12 year old son to find it.

However, when I picked the corner up, it didn't reveal a full piece of paper underneath. It was just a piece of the entire thing. It was like a puzzle piece. That just got me more curious and I began to search for some more pieces that may be lying around. I put my foot forward when I felt pain at the bottom of my sole. I stepped on a corner of a box. That box wasn't there before and I know because I have been

in my mother's room hundreds of times. It was a teal box with a ribbon over it. It looked like those shiny Christmas presents that are under the tree on Christmas day just begging to be opened.

Inside the box was 12 pieces of ripped up paper. It didn't take me long to realize that it was the rest of this letter. I pieced together the letter. I froze as I was reading it and got chills when I finished. I almost cried because I understood something. The truth about my parents. I'll tell you why later on.

However, I can't leave without letting her know that I understood her.

So, I wrote something to my mom, returned all the pieces back where they were and next to the piece of paper on the desk, I wrote on a sticky note,

Your secret is safe with me

- Brandon.

As of the next day, I woke up to once again see my parents not home. I was on break due to it being Thanksgiving break. However, my parents had to work 3 more days before they were off. When they got off work that day, my father instantly went to take a shower and go to bed. That was quite odd because he was always active afterwards. However, my mom went into her room and I rushed to mine and shut the door. I could hear her reading my note and then I heard a thud. I don't know why but I heard a thud on the floor. It was my mother who was crying. I went and gave her a hug.

She was on her knees crying. She hugged me back for what seemed like forever. Once the whole thing was over, she left her room for dinner. I took that time to piece together her letter.

Dear Libby,

Hi Libby, I have to write to you about this because my phone is not a safe place to keep what I'm about to say to you.

I'm not ready to tell him this, but I think I'm ready for a divorce. I want you to know this because you are the closest one to me who I can actually tell. My son is way too young to understand this and my husband will literally kill me when he finds out.

I can't stand living with this man anymore because I have to hide my bruises and scars from the family. They will never believe me if I told them nor if I proved it to them. I tried going up to my other cousin Lara about this, but she ignored me. My mother and father have also denied what I'm going through.

I don't know why but every time I sleep with him, I wake up in bruises and whenever I'm in his presence when he gets mad, he takes out his belt and...

This part of the letter looks like it was smeared out with a stain. It looked like water.

I have to cry myself to sleep every day here because there is no way I can break off with this man. He won't agree to a divorce and he got mad the last time I discussed this with him. I can't keep repeating this cycle over and over again. The worst thing is that my son will have to live through this with him and I don't want him to suffer because of me.

I wonder what she meant by “suffer because of me.” Wasn’t she the victim? This was probably the only part of the letter that I didn’t understand at that time.

You know what I mean Libby. Please, I’m planning to talk to you tomorrow and go over to your house to discuss planning to divorce and get away. How am I supposed to tell my son this? I don’t want him to live without a mother. I want to see my son graduate high school, get into college, go to university, get a job, and have kids. Then I can die happy. I want to see that. I want the best for my son. He is the greatest little angel that can be given to me and if you want me to be honest, I don’t deserve that. However, the least I can do right now is to watch him succeed. I want him to succeed me, and his father. Even if I don’t get to live my life the way I want to because I get bruises and scars at night that I have to hide the next morning, I get to see him grow up. That would be the greatest gift to me of all.

As a mother, that is literally all I want. To see my baby go through life without getting controlled by another force. I want him to be successful so that one day, he can pass this gift on to his children. I want to see him push out negativity and bounce back from trials of life because no one said it was going to be easy.

Most of all, I want to see my baby conquer life because I can’t. I can’t give up now, or else I would fail as his mother. I only want the best for him, and for him to move forward to not regret a thing.

Only God will tell, and guide my way.

Please reply as quickly as you can.

* *Your cousin,*

Christina

I understood a bit then about my family.

It all made sense now. Even though we looked like the average family, or so I thought, I began noticing things that were out of place, even before reading this whole letter. I noticed that mom began limping a bit and I remember her sleeping with dad and I would see mom limp a little more the next day.

I would always see mom wearing long dresses inside. She always tells me that she wears them because she doesn’t want to change into pajamas too early and she would always wear the same dresses to work.

I was lied to for a long time. I realized that by this letter, I can begin to make sense of those things.

I can see dad come home slightly off and she would be on the couch instead of being active. He would sometimes send me off to my room because he wanted to talk to mom alone in the room. He would also spend less and less time with me as time passed.

Now, I know the truth, we weren’t the perfect and normal family in the city of NY. My parent’s marriage wasn’t the perfect marriage. I just had one question about this whole thing that has gone unanswered for 12 years.

Why?

Why would this happen to our family specifically? My mom and dad are trying to put on a good face in front of me, and yet in that bedroom, unexplainable horrors would happen in that short amount of time. Now it hurts to see mom in her flower dress that covered her whole body and my dad sitting on the couch instead of cooking or getting the water from the local dispenser. I no longer see my family as normal. All because of this ripped up piece of paper that I found when I was 12 on a Saturday afternoon at 2 PM.

I woke up the next day and got dressed for school. I was dropped off at school and had to go through the tedious hours of PE, Science, Spanish, History, English, and Math. The moment I got home I saw mom packing and she is doing so an hour before dad gets home. She was still crying. It looked like she didn't want to go just yet.

I went over and asked her what she was doing. Her response however, did not make sense to me.

"Now that you have seen the note, I must leave." She said,

"Why mom?" I asked

"He's actually going to murder me if I don't leave." She replied.

She did something else that was very strange. She began taking the pieces of the paper from the box and pieced them all together. She did this before she left.

"I promise that I'll get you out of here." she said.

She took her suitcases and left in her Mercedes down Penn Street, Times Square. I watched her go. She didn't even say goodbye or any of that shit. No 'I love you', or any 'mommy promises to come back.'

She just left like that. However, I have this weird instinct telling me to trust her and pray to god that she will come back. I am still hesitant about what she said about dad. I saw some tiny little hints that she is right, but I didn't want to believe that dad was a violent bastard right off the bat. Even though I was a kid, I wasn't that gullible.

However, something did in fact, made me believe her. When I was doing homework, I saw that dad came home. When he went upstairs, he went into mom's room. However, he wasn't wearing the same pants as when he left for work. He was wearing shorts and he laid his pants from work out on mom's bed. He took the belt out of the pants and closed the door. Normally, I would be too busy concentrating on homework to notice something like this. How could I have missed this?

However, I heard absolutely no sound when he went in after taking the belt. In our doors, there is a crack that we could look through in the door. I can only see the shadow of his feet. However, he was walking at a fast pace in a circle like someone who is 1 day away from getting evicted.

I instantly went back into my room because I had the feeling that he was going to get out of the room instantly. My feeling was correct when he rushed out of the room and into the streets. He ran back inside. I really couldn't believe what I was seeing. He was like a mad man.

"Brandon, stay in this house, dad is going to go on an errand run." He said, putting on a jacket and angrily running out of the house to his car.

I didn't know where he was going. I waited for a long time. I watched TV in the main room, gorged on whatever edible thing that is in the house, and quite literally fooled around with my phone because I had nothing to do. The strange thing was that by 8 PM, dad still has not come back yet.

I decided to go to sleep in one hour. Which meant taking a shower, and doing whatever. I slept alone that night.

I woke up at midnight to the sound of footsteps near the door. Due to the fact that my room was on the upper floor, I had the distinct advantage of peeking down to the bottom floor and seeing who was there. I expect to see some noisy ass neighbors coming back from a day trip. However, that is not what I saw. I saw a man at the steps. Not my father, and he was tall with a fedora on his head that was covering his face so that his facial features were invisible in the darkness. My house also has an automatic sensor light which lights up the porch when someone comes to the door. The light lit up.

The worst thing happened just then. The man took off the fedora to reveal a head of golden hair. However, the kicker was his neck and face. He was facing away from the house, yet he slowly turned his head a full 180 degrees to look at me. If that was not disturbing, I nearly screamed when he looked at me. I only had a glimpse of his face when he did so. However, I can vividly remember his face. His face had a sallow pallor as if he was too sick to even get up. However, he smiled an inhumanly wide smile where his lips nearly hit the sides of his eyes. His eyes were black and hypnotizing. If I continued staring at his face, I would have been so screwed. However, I ducked away from the window.

He rang the doorbell. I was going to call dad and tell him that this motherfucker is at our porch and to get the police here ASAP. However, I saw dad's car on the sidewalk. I looked and I saw dad in the driver's seat with his phone illuminating his face. He began to turn his head my way and I ducked to avoid him seeing me. He walked up to the man who was on the porch. I wondered what he was doing.

He gave the man a trash bag and gave him a case of what looked like weed and he also had another case of an accumulated 20K\$. I don't know what was happening with weed and this enormous amount of money that I have no idea where dad got it from, but it hit me. Dad was meeting with his drug dealer. I nearly passed out and I kept thinking that this was fantasy and dad wouldn't do something like this. Tonight he proved me wrong.

There was also something else that was interesting, the man gave my dad a gun. A .38 caliber revolver. They exchanged a few words. I caught one word in their conversation: Christina. That was my mom's name. Dad drove off into the night and the man walked down the sidewalk into the night.

I didn't know what the hell they were talking about because I was way too young to understand this. However, for you readers, it must be pretty self evident that something was going to happen to my mother.

The next day after school, dad still wasn't home. He didn't come home until 5 PM. He was then livid and when I tried to greet him, he pushed me out of the way and went into the bathroom to take a shower. I didn't know what he was doing. So I went downstairs and made my own food, and headed to my room. There was a presentation at my school that day and there was no work for me to do so I went to sleep because my afternoon was extremely uneventful and I don't want to bore you to death with the details of the afternoon.

When I went to bed, things got interesting.

I opened my bedroom door just a crack and I quietly escaped my room to see what was happening downstairs without being detected. Dad brought home a shopping bag with luxury designer clothes from Versace and 1-2 bags of Giorgio Armani. Behind those bags of designer clothes, I saw bottles of alcohol. All kinds of alcohol, and I mean bottles of beer, bottles of wine, champagne, bourbon, and whiskey. Jack Daniels, Martinellis, Red Bull, and Corona were all tucked in the bags. He opened a bottle, drank it, and began sobbing.

Dad never cried. Not even when both of his parents died.

I could tell that the tears he was crying were not of guilt or regret or even anger, but tears of 'why am I doing this?'

It was hard to see him like that.

However, why was he crying?

Did he commit a crime, does he plan on doing something, is he suicidal-. No, that can't be right. He was plotting something. He was constantly dodging me and he didn't even want to talk to me and that really made me sad.

What did he want to do?

What does he want?

Why was he avoiding me?

Most of all, what was he doing with that man on our porch and what were they talking about?

Those are all the questions that I desperately needed answers to because I'm scared of one thing. Whatever he was talking about with that man that night about mom could not have been good because they were trading with weed and money.

I just don't want to think too much about that night. Now, I had to wait for the next day because I already saw too much in such a short period of time.

The next day was Saturday and dad didn't have work that day, yet he still drove off. I thought he was just going to the store to buy stuff when I noticed a bulge on his belt. It wasn't a bulge. Actually, to be more precise, it was more than just a bulge. It was a gun holder. I noticed a gun handle and the worst thought popped into my head.

After he left, I went to his room. He had a bag under the bed. It was his Versace bag from the night before.

I looked inside and things became clear.

There were 40 bullets in there big and long. They were for a .38 caliber revolver. Dad was going to after mom. He wants to kill her.

I was so mentally distraught that I could barely sleep that night. Thank god that it was a Saturday night and it didn't matter how much sleep I got. I heard my father storm up the steps, paranoid. He pushed open my door and checked if I was asleep. He loomed over me and checked. I shut my eyes and made it look as natural as possible. I made myself look as calm as possible, and as peaceful as possible just like all people look like when they go to sleep.

He then got up and got out of my room as he slowly closed my door at precisely 8:30 PM. I heard his footsteps quickly rush down the stairs, and the engine of his car roar to life. I got up and watched him drive out of the sidewalk and into the night.

Now, we have a family phone that we keep on the counter. It's one of those old timey telephones with a number puncher and has a cord that comes with it. 3 hours into my sleep at almost midnight, I heard the phone ring. I picked it up. However, it wasn't a live call, it was a voicemail. What was stranger was what was on the voicemail. I could hear a man's voice talking into it and it was those deep voices. Raspy and guttural with an accent that I cannot identify. The man said a series of numbers.

"933 44288833 4433777 44466 84433 22 2 4"

What the hell was I supposed to know what that meant? I was only 12 at the time and that sounded like a bunch of mumbo jumbo shit.

I woke up the next day with a Ford at our house carrying tree branches and a black trash bag entangled in the mess. I also found about 5 men digging a rather large hole in the floor. Way too big for a human. The bag was on the bottom of the pile and when the pile was put into the hole, the bag was practically invisible. This was done in about an hour and 45 minutes. However, my father was not in the group.

My father was in the Ford on his phone and signaled all the people to come over. He saw me and waved at me.

I heard my phone ding and it was a message from my father.

Hey son, my friends here are just moving the dead tree branches and securing them here for the night so we can donate them to paper making companies, love you.

My fingers typed "Love you too," yet something didn't feel right. I felt like that was a lie and so utterly fake.

My father didn't come home for the next few hours.

"Hey buddy, saw you up there." he said.

He sounded more upbeat and happy. That was not like him. He looked as if there was a weight lifted off of him. He was lighter and looked healthier. He didn't look so drab anymore. What has gotten into my dad?

He did one more thing that almost made me jump. He began to cook. Dad never cooked, and yet somehow he was doing so well. It was probably him binging Food Network Asia all the time, but he never actually cooked. He only cleaned. He had a new confidence and this is something that I have never seen. Not even after having me. He is now a better person.

Curiosity took over and I had to ask.

"Hey dad, you seem extra happy today." I said,

"Oh, I just got promoted at work," he replied.

I knew that he was lying instantly. He had a tendency to smile when he lies to make it more natural. I noticed it throughout life. However, this is something more serious that he lied about. I felt like he had something orchestrated and planned.

He wouldn't put out such an outlandish lie. Just last week, he almost got fired. Now he's telling me that he's gonna get promoted.

At that point I can't take it any longer. I can't get answers from him. He would only lie to me if I tried to crack at him and I would see it but I can't push him about it or else he would know that I've seen him do these bizzare things.

At night, I pretended to go to sleep once again. I opened my door just a crack just so that it's not noticable. I peeked through the door to see that man. That same man that I saw on the porch the other night. This time, he was inside the house.

The man held out a suitcase, bigger than my torso. The suitcase was opened to my dad and inside were 14 envelopes. All of them were black and stamped with red wax like a formal invitation.

My father opened the envelope. Inside was a note. He looked at it for 5 seconds, then threw it in the trash.

Dad then did something that was so bizzare it took me so long to process. He began making out with that man. He did this for a long time and I was too shaken to keep track of time.

He forced the man up against a wall and continued into the bathroom.

This was too much for a 12 year old to handle because I just walked back to my bed and hid under the covers.

I came back to the door about 30 minutes later to see the man once again. However, the man, after leaving, put his hands on his face. I almost passed out when he basically took off his entire face and I found out that it was a mask. When the mask is taken off, a bundle of wavy golden hair with sun-streaks were revealed. It was a woman.

I turned back to look at my dad to see lipstick stains on his face. This woman was disguising as a man. I felt like I witnessed a part of an intricate plan and a motive. Like those crime TV shows where they bust the criminal after explaining their long and twisted plan for 30 minutes.

Dad then put on his slippers and headed up to my room. I quickly dove onto my bed and hid under the covers. He looked, and then closed the door. I waited for him to then shut my door, then go to his room on the other side of the house.

I tip-toed in bare feet quietly down the stairs and into the living room and took the slip of paper and saw another sequence.

6 666 66 3 2 999 66 444 4 44 8 2 8 33 444 4 44 8 222 2 777 666 555 999 66 66'7777 3 444 66 33 777.

\-See you there

I had to find out what he was doing.

I needed a plan.

So I decided at the moment to do something that I now feel like was stupid. It worked somehow. I decided to record my father. Dad brought a suitcase and I slid a small camera into his suitcase and I waved him goodbye. I watched from my phone while fucking around with it for a good 15 minutes which is how long it took him to get to drive.

I was watching and listening as my father decided to put his suitcase down and wait. I waited patiently. I heard the high heel steps of a woman. The noise is so muffled because the material on the suitcase impeded the sound waves.

I could hear murmurs and snippets of their conversation. They just kept talking but the words they were speaking in were French.

My father taught it to me when I was 1 and kept going up to when I was fluent at 9 so I would never forget it. I'm trying to translate the conversation.

"Well did you get her?" came a man's voice. I guess it was his.

"No," came a woman's voice.

"Why didn't you get her?" the male voice asked.

"Because.....she,"

The woman's voice began breaking.

"She what? What did she do?" asked the man.

"She.....she hung herself," the woman finally said exhaling.

I sat there and I had to rewind the tape to make sure I heard the woman right. My mother actually killed herself?

I continued the tape.

I heard sobbing from the woman who was originally talking. The sobbing continued. I heard some more inaudible speech from my father before I was cut off by the opening of the door.

My mental instinct says that it was my father, but that wasn't the case, no. It was that man from the first night where my father handed him the money and briefcase.

He looked at my room, then looked at me.

"Hi," I said on instinct.

He quickly stormed up the room and took me by the arm.

"Little boys don't spy on their fathers"

He got out a syringe and that is when I began to try and get away. I was literally scared shitless. It's pretty hard to have a stranger bust into your home, grab you by the arm, and stick a needle at you.

The bad thing was that my room was on the 2nd floor of the house, therefore I could not escape through the windows and the man was blocking the door, so it was physically impossible for a small boy like me to get past him.

He advanced towards me with his syringe, and the needle is looking sharper than ever. He then reached into his pocket and pulled out an aerosol can. I then decided that it was now or never and he sprayed the contents of the can into my eyes. Remember, there was virtually nothing I could do other than run and pray to god that I can make it down the stairs. The spray from the aerosol burned like hell and I felt a sharp pain on my exposed forearm.

He injected me. I was fucked and I held my arm and surprisingly ran out of my room and dashed down the staircase. I chose a discreet closet and locked myself in.

I sat down on something hard and it wasn't the floor because our house had carpet floors. I had no idea what it was until I stood up to look down. It was a briefcase and inside was a bottle of succinylcholine, which is a powerful muscle relaxant as I learned from the crime TV shows I watch all the time. I remembered something important then, I had 2-3 minutes before I would lose consciousness.

However, it was too late by then. He already found me, I guess for more of the succinylcholine. My body was then ready to give up, and the man ended up carrying me, and I blacked out after hitting the seat of the car.

Sometime later, I woke up and we were still in the car. I noticed that I was at a diner. Was the man who literally injected me with a relaxant that can virtually kill me now taking me to dinner?

That is when I saw my dad as he was sitting right next to the front window of the diner with a woman.

I couldn't identify the woman at first, but I then realized that it was Aunt Libby, my mom's cousin.

I watched as the man got my father's attention and pointed a cold finger right at me, clear as day.

We parked right in front of that window and I could see the man's mouth moving and saying inaudible words.

My dad then looked at me. The oddest thing was that, he didn't look pissed or mad that I was awake at this hour and out of the house.

He looked at me with a face filled with sadness. Not a disappointment kind of sadness, but just plain sadness. He waved at a waiter to get a check and the waiter brought him his folder and he put his card

in it and waited. The 3 all sat and spoke for a bit.

Aunt Libby decided to leave and she shot a look at me as she got in her car. She shot the same look that dad gave me. I heard the gravel beneath the wheels of her car grind before she backed out of the lined parking and drove off.

The waiter just came back from the desk from taking my dad's credit card and gave it back to him with a receipt for my dad to sign.

You know those moments when you have butterflies in your belly? Not when you are about to perform in front of people, but when you break a priceless vase and your mom is moments away from walking into your room and you are just awaiting your demise? That was what it felt like in that car.

My father signed and walked out of the room.

He got in the car with this other man and all 3 of us were in the car with it being dead silent and the only sound was that of the cars and the hustle and bustle of the streets of NYC.

My father said absolutely nothing, he just looked at me. Not with fury, or any sort of anger, but with resentment. We were about 3 minutes away from home. The man who drove me to the diner gave me a hoodie. He ordered me to put it on. I did just as he told me. Just at that moment, we were on the street of our house. The man stopped the car right at our house, but he locked all the car doors. He jumped to the back where I was sitting, then took a napkin and covered my mouth. It was stained with a substance that smelled sweet but kind of weak. I felt my body weaken. The man's eyes widened as he began staring at me. I was confused, and drowsy. However, I realized that he wasn't staring at me. He was looking through the car window behind me. He covered my mouth and nose one more time. Before passing out, I heard the sound of sirens from police cars.

I woke up with a sharp pain on the side of my head. I didn't really know what it was until I touched the side of my head. I was bleeding like hell from the left side of my head and I noticed that I was in a room with curtains on both sides of me. I was in the hospital.

"Give him the anesthesia," a man said.

I guessed that it was one of the doctors. I once again fell into unconsciousness as the doctors fixed up my head.

When I woke up, I was greeted by my grandparents. My gran Maribel, and my grandpa Axel. They gave me a hug and told me to get dressed. I was discharged just a few hours later with prescribed painkillers. I went to their house and they forbade me to go back to my old house where my stuff was and hired a moving company to pack my stuff and move me out of my father's house.

That was the last time I saw my father. The only thing that I have left from him is his phone number and I'm allowed to call him once a month. He was never invited over to see me. Now I know why.

He's dangerous, and 13 years later, I know that. He's nothing to me anymore. Everytime I look at other families, there is always a grandpa and his son laughing next to each other over dinner. I no longer have that. Fathers are supposed to be a role model for how they teach their kids to treat others. They're supposed to spend time with their kids because they want their kids to do better than they did. No matter how successful or unsuccessful they are.

I still miss my dad though. I really did wish things went differently.

I forgive my dad as well because I believe that his punishment is up to god and he is my father.

After all, this all happened because I pieced together my mom's letter on a Saturday afternoon at 2PM when I was 12, and I don't regret a thing.

My cousin died, and something else came back part 1

A few weeks ago my cousin, whos also my dear friend got into an accident. It was tragic, to say the least. Since i worked far away from home across the country, i had to take a flight, back to my hometown in Indiana.

Seeing my family again, was an unusual feeling, i couldnt explain. Its not that i didnt have a good relationship with my parents, thats not the case. But all these years seemed to separate us more than i tought.

I stayed in a small motel, close to my grandparents house. I got in contact with my parents, who told me, they would like me to attend their family reunion. I agreed.

There was I, sitting at the dinner table, my family surrounding me. The atmosphere was kinda cold, there was an akward silence between all of us, but im sure we could agree, that talking wouldnt help us much.

-The doctors say hes in a critical condition right now, but they believe, he can be saved. We just need to pray for him.-said my aunt, trying to break the silence. I stopped my spoon mid air. Praying wont bring my cousin back, but its not the time to argue with a woman who just lost their child.

My mother looked at me, seemingly noticing my disapproval.

-So how is it working in a different place? How have you been lately?- i couldnt even force a smile on my face.

- I get, that you try to make something happy out of this situation. But you dont need to. Its okay mom. We are all devastated with the news.- I replied, gently caressing her shoulder.

The truth is, even if i wanted, i couldnt make anything happy out of this. I was emotionally and physically drained.

I watched as my mother quetly sobbed, while my father tried to comfort her, looking at me with anger in his eyes. I quickly turned my head, looking at my cousins family.

I could tell they were uncomfortable. All of us were. Really.

-Its okay. All of us were quite shocked from the news.-started my uncle.

- Noah was a great kid. He had a lot of potential in him. What happened to him is truly tragic, but we have to be strong for him. Hes in coma right now, suffering from multiple injuries. I know how hard is it. Im sorry for causing sadness among us.- all of us, sitting around the table silently agreed.

Then nothing. Just akward silence. The only thing i could hear, is the sound of silwervare.

My mother calmed down, and went back to eating. At least she wasnt that visibly sad. I smiled a little, looking around the table.

I kinda felt nostalgic seeing all these people. My parents, my grandparents from my mothers side, my mothers younger sister and her children Mia and Gart, and of course my mothers brother, his wife, and Noah.

Noah. Noah. He used to sit next to me, no matter where we were. We were like best friends, almost the same age, always hanging out. I would wait for him every family gathering, and we would play different games. Gart was not yet born at the time, and Mia would rather hang out with the adults, instead of playing dumb games, as she said.

As we grew older, he would visit less and less, but we would still talk almost every day, and occasionally we would go out to eat something, or just grab a beer.

-I really miss him. I mean, maybe we didnt hang out that much, but hes still my cousin, and i still love him really much. Aunt Betsy is there a chance we could visit him?- asked my cousin Mia, turning towards Noahs mother. Aunt Betsy smiled reassuringly.

-That wonderfull to hear. Of course. You sould also bring this fella over here -pointing at me - Im sure you will enjoy paying a visit, just like in the old days. Isnt that right?- i nodded, with a soft smile on my face.

Next to his sister, Gart snorted smugly.

-Is there a problem?- asked Mia, looking over his brother, raising one eyebrow. Gart shook his head.

-No. I just think its bullshit.-he said, not even looking up from his phone- We all sit here and pretend to like Noah, while we all know he was a fucking weirdo. Seriously! Does anybody except you even like him? But go on, cry a bit more about him.

-Gart!-yelled Mia, slamming the table.

-You little entitled shit!-screamed his father, uncle Rob. In just a couple seconds, the dinner table became a war zone. Everybody was screaming, mom and aunt Betsy were crying. It all ended with my father slamming the table, and walking away.

-I fucking hate this family!-he screamed, leaving the room.

Well that escalated quickly.

That night, uncle Rob dragged Gart home, while all my other family members slept in my grandparents house. My mother tried to convince me to stay, but i insisted on going. There were already enough people, and i was staying in a motel anyways.

-Alright then, see you all later.-i said, standing at the door, ready to leave. I hugged my mother, and said goodbye, to aunt Betsy and my grandparents. Lastly, i hugged Mia.

-So, are you down tomorrow? Aunt Betsy said we will be able to visit Noah.-i nodded, giving her one last hug.

I woke up the next day dizzy, from all the drinking the day before. After i arrived at the motel my emotions and memories got the best of me. As a result i missed six calls from Mia. I wiped my face, and

with eyes still adjusting to the light, dialed her number.

-Hey cuz. Hope im not late.

-Morning sleepyhead. No, its all okay. Just meet me at grandpas house in a hour. Is that alright?

-Sure.- i said goodbye to Mia, got dressed, and met her at my grandparents house. She already had breakfast, and was long waiting for me. I could tell. She had enough time to do her hair, and even put on makeup.

The ride there was alright. We talked about our childhood memories, and mostly about Noah. She also mentioned whats happening in her life right now. Shes going to university, and planning to move in with her boyfriend.

-Alright, we are here.-she said, interrupting her story. We walked in. The hospital was quiet that day. Just a couple of nurses walking around. Mia went to the front desk, while i sat down waiting.

I held my head in my palms, massaging my eyes. My head was still a bit dizzy, but better. I didnt drink that much, why the hell do i feel this shit?

From the corner of my eyes i could see people walking down the hallway. Occasionally i would look at them a bit longer, and they would make eye contact me, but then walk away.

Suddenly, i noticed a patient with infusion bag. I only saw his back, but i instantly recognised his brown locks. Are my eyes deceiving me? I didnt care to answer that question. I got up, and walked towards the stranger, as fast as i could. When i was only steps away, i stopped. What if its not him?

-Noah!- i called out my cousins name. The man stopped, and slowly turned around. My heart pounded so quickly, i taugt its gonna explode. Despite all the stitches and and bandages covering him, i could still easily recognise him.

-Noah!-i almost yelled, i was so exited. Quickly, but carefully, i hugged him, trying, not to hurt him. His body was so fragile, it was almost too hard not to cause damages. My tears came running down my face, burrying my head in his shoulder.

His hands slowly wrapped around my back.

I could only let him go after a couple of minutes passed by.

-Man, i tought you wouldnt survive. So happy to meet you. Yesterday you were in a coma, and now you are alive? You know, your mother might be right about god.- i said jokingly. Noahs face slowly lit up.

-Yea... Im also happy. About you...-he dragged out his last words like he was waiting for something. I quickly realised what it is.

-Its Vince.

-Yes. Vince.-his face lit up-I remember.

A couple minutes later, Mia also joined us. I spent the next few days in Noahs hospital room. It seemed like he forgot a lot of things, so i had to remind him of everything we have done. It was really good, going back to the happy moments of our life.

His face and body was covered with stitches and bandages, but none of us really cared. We were just genuenly happy Noah came back. Aunt Betsy called it a miracle, and would thank god every day.

After a couple of weeks, Noah finally arrived home to our grandparents house. Aunt Betsy decided, that the best for him would be to stay a couple more weeks at the family house, and then when he made a full recovery he will return home to their house, wich was in a different city from here.

The first couple of days went smootly. I helped Noah with the things he needed. Mia and her family returned home, and so did my parents.

-You sure its not a problem for you?-my mother asked, packing her stuff in dads car. I shook my head.

-Its okay. If im already here, im not going home till everything is alright.

-Aww come on Monica! Its alright, your little angel isnt a baby anymore. Also, its good being home.- teased her sister aunt Betsy.

Both of them laughed it off, and with a smile on my face i said goodbye to my mother, and shook my fathers hand.

After they were gone, i went back inside the house. I couldnt help but notice, Noah was gone from the living rooms couch. Hes still too weak to walk alone for a longer period of time, hes probably just in the bathroom, i figured. I went upstairs, and found Noah looking at himself in the mirror. He didnt seem to notice me. He was running down his fingers on his face, touching every little scar.

From the corner of his eye, he saw me, and jumped in suprise.

-Sorry bro. Didnt mean to scare you.-i said, placing my hands on his shoulder.

-You okay?-he nodded, covering his left hand with the other one.

-Let me see. Did you cut yourself, or what.- Noah hesitantly, but showed me his hands. Couldnt help but notice how the skin around his fingertips and nails was torn apart a bit.

-Bro you picking on your skin again? Didnt aunt Betsy tell you not to do that when you were like twelve.

-Yea you right.

I shrugged it off and went on with my day, but something kept bothering me, in the back of my head. There was something, maybe a gut feeling, that gave me chills.

After this, a couple small things happened, that made me more and more concerned.

Noah would never show the back of his neck. He started growing out his hair, and would always hide it with bandages. I assumed its just a painful, maybe uncomfortable scar, but after a while, it started getting more and more suspicious. He would always make sure norhing touched that spot. Sometimes,

when i was behind him, he showed signs of being mildly uncomfortable.

He also completely changed his personality. The once happy, but chill guy became a kinda emotionless, quiet person.

I understand, going through such events are painful, but my suspicion grew bigger and bigger.

I decided to talk to aunt Betsy.

-So Noah. Hes been progressing lately. But i cant help, i have to mention, hes kinda quiet. Way too quiet.-aunt Betsy looked at me, brows raised, as she took a sip from her tea.

-Well, you know him. Hes always been a special kid.-she said, as she shrugged her shoulders.

-I suppose you are right. So when are you going back to Seymour?

-Next week. And you? Arent you missing out work?

-Well its kinda complicated. Im a car mechanic, also my own boss, i dont think it will be an issue. Noah needs my assisting, and im happy to help. Besides, my partner back home is working, so i guess its ok.-i said, while i watched as Noah behind her poured himself a coffe. My eyes trained to his neck, where i couldnt help but notice, his shirt still had the label on it. So normally i reached out, and grabbed the little piece of paper, ripping it off.

Bad idea. With the speed of light, Noah turned around, and screamed.

-Dont touch my neck!- akward silence.

-Im sorry. Mom, Vinnie, i didnt mean to be rude. Its just... My neck really hurts.

-Yea sure, sorry.-i played off as if it was okay, putting a fake smile at my face.

But i couldnt shake the feeling that something is wrong out of my head. That night, i layed on the guestrooms bed, thinking about what happened, replaying the scene in my head over and over.

What the fuck was that.

I couldnt sleep. Every time i closed my eyes, his words echoed in my head.

Curiosity got the best of me. I pulled the blanket off myself, and stood up in the dark.

Slowly and quietly, i approached his room. I put my hand on the doorhandle.

What if hes awake? What if its just a scar and im being creepy about it? What the fuck am i expecting it to be? What happens once i see the something in his back? What if there is nothing? What if he wakes up?

So many questions in my head, so little answers.

I swallowed my fear and stepped into the room.

Noah was sleeping, him facing to the wall. Perfect.

Slowly, not to wake him up, i approached his bed.

Be brave Vince, its not the time to be scared. You already made it this far. I taught. Painfully slowly, i reached out with my arm, setting aside his brown locks. I opened my eyes a bit more, so it would adjust more to the dark.

What i saw, was beyond creepy. The edges of his face, what was hidden with his hair, was torn apart. Like his face was ripping apart from his head. In places, his skin fell off, and revealed some of his pink flesh.

Noah moved under my hands. I got scared, and yanked my hand back, making sure hes not awake.

God, what the hell am i seeing. I carefully pulled down the tip of his shirt, revealing his nape. It was a completely different skintone.

What the fuck? With my hands shaking, i pulled up his shirt to reveal the most horrific thing i've ever seen.

The flesh on his back was almost completely torn apart, and was missing in a lot of pieces. Under it, there was a different layer of skin. It was all held together by a long set of stitches, going from his neck to the bottom of his back, along the line of his spine.

It almost looked like somebody was wearing my cousins skin. No, that cant be true.

With shaking hand, and heart beating fast, i grabbed his hand, and peeled the bandage off. It was the same ripped skin on top of a different skin.

My heart was pounding so fast, i thought im gonna have a heart attack.

-Vince? What are you doing?- Noah said, turning around to face me.

Strange apparition with pictures.

So as a technology engineer a buddy was working on a facial recognition software for making public places safer by recognizing criminal faces and playing a tone that will be recognized so criminals can be caught in public. Cool advanced technology.

So one day he brought most of us over to a little testing studio. He wanted to record it so he set a camera that was for some reason one of those old ones that are super heavy and have really bad quality but I didn't question it. costume that he 3D printed on it. Which we all laughed at. But we all quieted down as he said he was going to test it. He sat down in front of it. And pulled up a picture of a normal human. The machine didn't move. Then, he pulls up a picture of a known killer. The robots eyes light up and goes "æ". We all clapped and he repeated it.

A couple more times later he gets out the innocent picture but the animatronics eyes light up and it gets up on it's two feet. It stares at him. Before shakily walking towards him going "æææææ" then falling over. We turned it off so it wouldn't do that again and while my friend tries to make sure it's ok. I rewatch the footage. It was disturbing. In one part of the cheap studio where a light burned out. A pale, white, long face with soulless eyes was sitting in the corner. Looking at the robot. And then for the rest of the video the apparition stares directly at the camera before fading out. But a second later the face fades into the window. Staring in. I actually have a picture of it. I will find it again and post it in the comments of this post.

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Terrance The Shadow Figure

A couple years ago I decided I was done with college and instead applied for a job at a furniture store in my home town. I only got the job because my mom was friends with the owners. I was hired for deliveries and to work in the store's warehouse on slow days. All of the sales employees would never enter the warehouse. Instead, if they needed us, they would call us over the radio. When I was first hired I just thought maybe they were lazy or didn't want to leave the customer during a potential sale just to get our attention.

A few months go by and I'm working with another delivery employee who actually became a close friend (we will call him T). We had come in early, about 5 in the morning, for a delivery out of state. When we loaded the last piece of furniture in the truck I noticed a small frog that looked as if it was crushed by one of the pieces we had just loaded. Jokingly the other worker and I decided we should hold a small funeral for the little guy and we named him Terrance. We had drawn a picture of him, and made up a "celebration of life" note for him, so that the other employees could get a good laugh. When the warehouse crew came in later that day, they weren't as impressed as we were. One of the employees told our manager, who forced us to throw it away and told us things like this were not tolerated in the store.

I should mention, in the warehouse, there was an attic. When we were all hired to work in the warehouse we were told to never enter the attic. We were told there were cameras watching the door to make sure we would keep our promise. After the whole frog incident, a couple days go by and all of the employees in the warehouse all started to notice creaks or thuds coming from the attic. We decided to blame these occurrences on the ghost of our close frog friend "Terrance". One day, after lunch, I entered the warehouse and noticed the attic door was wide open. I had just assumed that one of the owners or the building manager had gone up there for maintenance, but no one ever came back down. We closed down the warehouse that night locking all of the doors, with the attic door still open.

When we returned the next day, everything was the same, except for the attic door. It was shut again. More thuds and creaks continued in the attic, but it also moved to inside the warehouse. Everyone claimed to hear whispering, rustling noises, or even footsteps in the warehouse, but no one was back there. I decided to ask one of the managers (who also became a close friend) if they believed there was something strange in the back. His face drained. His expression went from happy to horrified. He was quiet for a few seconds before he answered, "Yes. I believe there's something back there."

All of us in the warehouse were in our early 20s, and most of us were fascinated at the thought of there being a ghost in the warehouse. We did everything we could to communicate with the spirit but never got any answers. One day I downloaded a ghost app on my phone that claimed it could detect the energy signals of paranormal entities and even detect words. I decided to test it out while I was working with a worker that didn't believe in ghosts. He claimed it was all coincidence. We walked into the warehouse and noticed the attic door was open again. I decided this was the perfect time to test out the app. The app showed small blips all around the warehouse here and there, but there was only one blip that stayed constant. And it was where the attic would be on the radar. We decided to ask questions to see if we would get an answer, but again, we came up empty. The other employee decided to ask, "Are you Terrance?" The phone quickly detected the word YES and announced it in its strange, robotic, text-to-speech voice. Both of us fell silent... He broke the silence by demanding, "If this is true, give us a sign." Without hesitation the door slammed shut. We both ran out of the warehouse and waited inside of the break room for a while before returning.

One day T and I both decided “screw it. Let’s see what’s in the attic.” So we both walked up the creaky wooden stairs. We got to the door and T decided he would open the door. The door wasn’t locked, he said it felt as if as soon as he turned the knob, the door swung open on its own. We looked around for cameras but found no sign of cameras or anything to prove we were up there. We didn’t make it far though. T took one step in the door and we both heard a deep but faint growl. We both decided we should forget the attic and get back to work before we get into trouble or something bad happens and we shut the door and went back to work. To this day, the owner doesn’t know we were up there, or if he does, he has never confronted us about it.

A few weeks go by and other employees started noticing a shadow figure walking around the warehouse, but they’d only catch glimpses. They’d also report nose bleeds out of nowhere and 3 strange scratches on their arms, legs or back. One day, I was working with a newer employee in the warehouse. He was a former Marine and claimed he wasn’t afraid of anything and that paranormal entities were attracted to him. One day we were moving a couch to another section of the warehouse. When the other employee bent down to set it down, I saw him. The shadow figure. But it wasn’t a glimpse, it was clear as day. It was an outline of a figure, about as tall as I was, standing right behind the other employee. Before I could say anything it opened its eyes and mouth, revealing glowing red, cat-like eyes, and a ear to ear smile, full of razor sharp teeth. I was frozen. Time felt as if it had slowed. It felt as if the figure and I were just staring at each other for a good minute or so. Then it disappeared, like mist. I told the other employee what I had just saw and he told me that people tell him they see that around him all of the time, but he was known to be liar or to agree with anything you said just so you would like him so I never really believed anything he said.

I was offered a better job a couple of months later, but decided to sketch what the figure looked like to my closer friends so they could see what I saw before I left. A couple of weeks go by at my new job and my friends informed me they had decided to frame the sketch and hang it on the wall. One day the owner came back, saw the sketch, and went pale. They say he stared at the sketch for a good minute or 2 before he lost his mind, started screaming at the employees demanding to know who drew the picture, and then he threw it in the trash. No one had admitted to the sketch or ratted me out, but they did tell me the owner acted as if he had seen the figure before, and was upset it was “free” again.

I’ve been back to the store a couple of times to visit my friends since then, but I will never enter the warehouse. I still get chills anytime I get near that place.

We are all capable of so much more...

This is an EMERGENCY BROADCAST...

Please STOP whatever you are doing...

Now run & hide.

That's how I was told to survive by the US Government. *Run & Hide*.

It's been a long time since that message was broadcast throughout the country; phones, tablet's, TV's, radios... They all emitted the same message over and over all those years ago. People woke up that day not knowing how different their lives were going to be only a few hours later.

I was heading out to lunch. Dragging myself out of the office, the place I hated more than anywhere else. Now, I'd give anything to go back. I'd put up with all the politics, backbiting and brown-nosing in a heartbeat. It's funny how perspective only hits you when you're in the shit.

The only place close to the office was this run down burger joint. It was run by a well-meaning Pakistani immigrant, who would always try and persuade me to load a fuck-ton of his homemade chilli sauce on my food.

"Oh come on mayn! Don't be such a pussy!"

"Hasan, for the last time I don't want any of your vodoo sauce. Just get me my usual...oh and can you *please* make sure, no stray hairs this time," I remember the hurt look on his face. It's weird though... I can't be sure if he was upset. Am I only remembering this because of what's happened? Has my brain decided to amp up the emotional factor of this memory to give me a reference point of when emotions existed... Or when they mattered.

By the time I was sat at a plastic table, wolfing down my processed burger with one hand and scrolling through my phone with the other, it was almost time to go back to work. A surge of indigestion erupted in my chest at the same time another mouthful of charred beef went down. This, along with the vibration and beeps from my phone sent me into a coughing fit.

"Oh shit, he's choking. Iqbal! Did you put the chilli sauce on the burger?!" Hasans voice trailed off as his own phone started to beep. I looked down at mine. The whole screen had been taken over by blackness. In the middle a flashing red exclamation point. Then the words started to appear -

This is an EMERGENCY BROADCAST...

Please STOP whatever you are doing...

Now run & hide.

They repeated themselves again, this time a high note resonated out of the phone, it vibrated violently and turned red hot in my hand. I dropped it as the heat seared into my palm. A clang next to me confirmed Hasan had also been burnt. When I looked up he was sucking his finger, scowling.

"Samsung..." he said half smiling. I highly doubted that. I never got the chance to reply.

Have you ever seen a nuclear bomb in real life? I know it seems like a silly question. Nuclear bombs usually don't leave witnesses. However, if you're far enough away from one, you'll experience something insane.

Once the bomb goes off and the atom has split, an enormous amount of energy is released into the environment. We're talking the equivalent of 1 Million sticks of TNT here. That initial explosion will bend all the rules of the weather, environment and light. If you could look upon it, with your own eyes, you wouldn't believe what you'd see.

But you wouldn't really be able to do that. You'd maybe get a second before the light hits you. There's no point closing your eyes; this light will make your eyelids as useful as a chocolate teapot. The force of that energy rapidly being released in such quantities creates a sphere of radioactive light, so intense you can see the bones in your hand if you held it up to your face.

So when this godly light encapsulated me that day, I almost had a heart attack when I looked over and saw Hasan. I saw Hasan more clearly than anybody had ever seen him. You could say I know Hasan better than anybody else on the planet. Not that there's many of us left now.

His entire skeleton was shining like bronze through his skin, which in turn had transformed into a thin transparent layer of tracing paper. I could clearly work out his blood vessels and veins, and saw the interstices of the central nervous system as it wound up from the small of his back to the base of his skull. Our eyes met and they both halted dead set, staring blankly into the pupils.

Then it was gone, the world was cast back into shadow. From light to darkness in the blink of an eye. Before I even had a chance to feel disorientated or work out what was around me, the world shook.

I was thrown off my feet and felt the ground moving like a wave. The tiles underneath me, caked for years in cooking oil and dirt rippled like water and then burst into cracks like crystal smashing. I've still got the scars from those cuts etched deep into my face. Over twenty-five miles away from ground-zero and I was *still* marked for life.

I managed to pick myself up. After the blinding, and now with the burning cuts to the face, I don't know how I was still moving. But if anything, curiosity as to what was happening was my driving force. I tried to grab a few napkins and went to dab at my face, feeling chunks of tile protruding from under the skin, but I stumbled over what felt like a pillowcase full of soap bars.

It was Hasan. More accurately it was his arm, stretched out and facing upwards, the fingers crooked and unmoving. He'd been knocked over too. The pool of blood growing bigger under his head confirmed that stone floor is stronger than skull. I'm ashamed to admit it, but I threw up on him. Not on purpose of course. I'd just seen this man's soul. We'd stared at each other as the world around us seemed to break. We had lived, however brief, through something monumental and now on this cold stone floor, my partner in this adventure had met his end.

I'm essentially hamming up a five second moment. I'm allowing this segment of my life such significance. I have to though. Because right now, as I sit here so many years later, it breaks my heart to admit that was my last real conversation with another human being. The last one that actually meant something.

Another thought comes to mind. A thought I try and push down and forget about, because admitting it means defeat and I've come too far now to admit defeat.

The thought starts to poke around the back of mind, not daring to surface right away. I pull out my hunting blade, worn down and in need of another sharpening. Taking a generous cut off the meat slowly turning on a spitfire. As I eat and savour this rare treat, the thought tries for a quick dash to the front of my musings.

You wish you were him...

I stab at the meat, shaking it on the spit, and causing some embers from the fire below it to scatter across the rock floor. I'll have to distract myself otherwise I'm going to go insane.

It's a cold night and I'm thankful for the fire and food. I can't risk leaving this place tonight, not with the wind crashing about like it is doing. I guess I was lucky to find this small cave, dug just deep enough into the forest floor to keep the rain and cold at bay.

Living in a cave, eating THAT, how low you've become. What was the point in living through all those years

"SHUT UP!"

When you've been alone for such a long time, it's not uncommon to have arguments with yourself. For you to see your brain and your *self* become two different entities. It's almost healthy if you think about it. Until one of you becomes a dick!

Another piece of meat, and another pang in my head.

Scum. Lower than scum

Hacking at the meat now. It's wasteful and the fire is going down, but if it stops that voice I'll stab this grey matter until it's mush.

That's right, destroy it. Don't put another bite of that in your mouth

I stop slashing away, my stomach rising to my throat and my heart dropping to my belly. What have I done?

Oh, here we go, light-bulb moment!

"Shit!". I've ruined the food. It happens every time. I let it get into my head and now, it was all for nothing. The meat is torn and scattered, pulp in places and sinking into the cracks of rock in the ground. I try and taste a little bit. Dirt and dust intermingle with the meat and cause me to spit it out.

I sit back down on the cold hard floor and lean my back against the wall. The dying embers of the fire cast a foreboding glow around the small space and the howling winds outside amplify the feeling. As I survey my small surroundings, my eyes focus in on the only other thing around me.

The body. Clearly rotten by now. I took too long deciding if I could do it, I failed to realise I should act. One arm was missing, hastily hacked off. I thought the arm was the best place to start. Enough meat,

easy enough to cut off. It wasn't the cutting that was the problem though.

Even wild animals would rather starve than eat their own

"What we've become... Even wild animals would fear,".

I saw what taps on my window at night. [Part 1]

Let me start off by saying that ever since I was a kid I've always had an overactive imagination. That's why, when I started to notice things going south I didn't tell anyone.

It's not like it started suddenly or anything. I think I noticed it overtime but the more I think about it the more I think this thing has followed me ever since I was a kid.

I've always heard the tapping, and It always happens at night. It's soft, and inconsistent, exactly like a branch hitting the window with the wind, except it's not. It never was.

I remember when I was a kid, calling out to my parents because there was a monster outside, and it was trying to get me. My parents always blamed it on my overactive imagination and the tree that was conveniently placed right outside my bedroom window. This happened several times, so eventually I grew to accept that it was the tree outside, and eventually I grew used to the sound and forgot about it. It fell to the back of my mind and was replaced with fantastic adventures and superpowers that seemed to dominate my dreams when I was a kid.

Recently though, things have changed. My family and I moved out of my childhood home.

The first night I slept in the new house, I heard the tapping. I didn't think about it at the time but the thought of it now terrifies me. It wasn't until a week later when I realized there was no trees anywhere near that window, no birds nest on the window seal, no way for a squirrel to climb there. That side of the house was a bare brick wall except for my one window, on the second floor of the house. There was nothing to explain where that noise was coming from.

It sounded identical to the tapping in my old home, I became obsessed with it. I would lie awake for hours and just listen to it. No pattern, no specific amount of time, it was so consistently inconsistent.

It took me days of just listening to gather the courage to just open the blinds. To just take a peek. I convinced myself there had to be some logical explanation. Maybe somehow a squirrel had managed to scale brick just to try and naw it's way into my warm home? Maybe a bird was having a mental breakdown? Maybe it was just all in my head?

I eventually gathered the courage and yanked open the blinds right after a particular fast series of taps.

The noise immediately stopped. It almost seemed to stop mid tap. No noise rang out or even finished making noise, it simply stopped. I couldn't see anything into the pitch black. I stepped closer to the blinds, my heart was pounding. I peered into the darkness straining to see anything, I felt it peer back into me.

I could have sworn, right then I heard the tapping. It wasn't coming from my window anymore. It was coming from the other side of the closet door.

It wasn't so much like tapping though. It sounded like someone placed their fingernail on the door and began to draw a straight line all the way to the ground. It was so quiet I could barely make out the noise at all, yet it seemed to fill my ears. I traced the sound with my eyes until it reached the bottom of the door, closer and closer and closer it crawled.

It began to slow down before it reached the bottom of the door. I felt a dread I have never felt before, my stomach turned to lead. It finally reached the bottom, and everything came to a standstill.

It seemed like the world came to a halt. I didn't breath. I didn't think. All I did was stare at that one spot on the door. BANG! I lost all concentration on that spot. The window I was so preoccupied with earlier still vibrated from a force that had hit it with a lot of power.

The soft sound of the glass vibrating rang out into the night before slowly the darkness became still once again.

The booming silence seemed to screamed at me. And I screamed back.

I don't know how long I screamed for, I don't remember my various family members bursting into the room, and I don't remember how I got on the floor eyes wide, staring into that blaring dark.

I only remember what I saw.

A thing, distorted and deformed. Slender, unnaturally long fingers. It's eyes seemed to pop out against the darkness surrounding it. Big white eyes with beading pupils which seemed to pierce through my very soul. It was smiling at me, a jagged thing with teeth like needles. It's mouth ripped at its skin until it reached its ears, or at least where it's ears should be.

I don't remember seeing it leave. The image was burned into my eyes, it's face was the only thing I could see before my mother shook my shoulders. I found that tears streamed down my cheeks, I don't remember that either.

I told them it was just a nightmare, because that's what I thought it was. That's what I hoped it was, and for a while I thought it was.

This only happened a few days ago. Ever since then I haven't heard the tapping at night.

But yesterday I thought I saw something around a corner, just for a second. A familiar smile and a pair of eyes I will never forget.

The more I think about it, maybe this is all in my head, my "overactive imagination" as my parents would put it.

I just heard it again, just one tap, this time from inside the bathroom. A reminder, I think.

I'm writing because I need to tell someone what I'm going to do. My family can't know, they'll think I'm crazy. I'm going to get a picture of it, I need to know what it is. I know it's real. I don't know what I'm going to do but I need to know what it is, why it's been torturing me for so long, what does it want from me?

I'm going to record my findings here, if anyone has any ideas, please, please, tell me. I'm desperate.

If the sky goes dark in the middle of the day, hide! (Part 2)

[Part 1](https://old.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/f56nrh/if_the_sky_goes_dark_in_the_middle_of_the_day_hide/)

Part 2 - Current

Self-preservation might not be my most redeeming quality, so when I saw a figure walking around in the overwhelming darkness, my first instinct was to help them. That fact, mixed with the skull-crushing headache I'd received as a parting gift from the alcohol, caused me to fuck up monumentally enough to call out into the dark.

There, on the streets, hundreds of dark figures approached me. Mere shadows with humanoid features barely resembling people. While they hadn't necessarily seen me, they'd definitely heard me idiotically call out through the window.

I ducked down out of sight, and closed the blinds. I contemplated whether I should leave the light off to keep myself hidden, or turn it on to fight the darkness. Then I noticed a few scribbles on a piece of paper, posted under the light switch.

"Leave on!"

I turned on every switch I could find, hoping it could repel the bizarre creatures from entering my temporary home. Then, after I locked all doors and windows, I collected my mobile phone, my gun, and the provided flashlight, before boarding myself up inside the pantry.

With little hesitation, I decided to call the Sheriff again, hoping he could give me some further instructions on how to survive the oncoming nightmare. Alas, despite my best efforts, the call wouldn't go through.

I glanced down at my service weapon, and considered whether hiding, or escape would be my best option. But, even if bullets could maim the creatures, I wouldn't have nearly enough ammunition to put a dent in the horde.

My only option would be to hide until the darkness rescinded. The driver had told me earlier, that only a couple of hours would pass while the darkness loomed over us, and while I prayed that was true, something within me felt instinctively doubtful.

I kept as quiet as I could, keeping my eyes fixed on the door in front of me, and a hand on the gun. While I couldn't hear the creatures move around, I knew they'd gotten close once the lights outside the pantry started to dim. It wasn't as if the lights died, but more like their presence swallowed the light. The sliver of light that sneaked in under the door had all but vanished, and I had little more than the weak light bulb inside the pantry, and my exceptionally strong flashlight left to keep me company.

Hours passed, and I held my breath as I awaited what felt like my inevitable demise. Then, days passed, and the darkness remained. I tried my best to preserve the battery on my phone, only turning it on every few hours to check the time, and attempting to call for backup.

I managed to keep the phone going for a week before it eventually died. Even if I had the charger with me, there were no outlets to connect it to.

The pantry itself had become a disgusting prison. Food and water wasn't exactly a scarce resource, but dealing with my bathroom habits made me weigh the pros and cons of consuming anything more than absolute necessities.

Time became a foreign concept without my phone to keep track of it. I had to rely on my own internal clock, which had been wrecked by the lack of a day and night cycle. Based on the growth of my beard, I assumed two weeks had passed by the time I looked at my gun as more of a way out, than means of self-defense.

By then, the light outside my door had completely vanished. It had taken the creatures a long time to consume all the light, but once they were done, I could see slivers of shadow penetrate from under the door. I shined my light at it, which seemed to keep them at bay, but I only had so much battery power, including the extra batteries left in the pantry.

Day by day, my sanity started to fade. Every thought was occupied by the immense desire to escape, be it through a heroic act of defiance, or by a bullet to my own head.

Then, as if a switch had been flicked, a beam of bright light appeared under the door. A heavenly, white light brighter and more beautiful than anything I'd ever seen. I stared at it in disbelief, could it be daylight? I didn't know, and I didn't even dare open the door. I must have sat there for an hour, before a familiar voice finally broke my trance.

"Robert! Are you in there?" I heard the Sheriff call out.

I carefully started dismantling the makeshift barricade I'd placed in front of the door, and stumbled out into the bright hall of my home. The light of day hit me with blinding power.

"Thank God, you're still here. I thought we'd lost you for sure!" Sheriff Riley exclaimed as I opened the door.

I just stared at him for a moment before I fully believed he was real.

"What – what happened?" I stuttered.

Robert tried to hold back a grimace as he noticed the smell and state of my worn out body. He stepped inside and closed the door to keep me out of sight. I caught a brief glance of my own reflection in the window; Greasy hair, untrimmed beard and bloodshot eyes.

"How long was I in there?" I asked.

"Nineteen days. It's the longest time we've ever..." he trailed off as he noticed the look of dread on my face, "I'm sorry, Robert."

I reeked of sweat and shit, after being trapped in my own filth for almost three weeks. The Sheriff seemed slightly fresher than myself, probably having had access to a bathroom. It wasn't his fault that I'd been trapped in the pantry. If I hadn't called out for the creatures, I could have stayed safely inside my own home and lived an isolated, but comfortable life.

I had a lot of questions, but in my tired state, all I could think of was to clean myself up.

"I'm going to have a shower," I said.

He nodded understandingly, and said he'd wait for me while I got ready.

As I washed the past weeks off my body, I finally started to formulate a plan. I'd been so preoccupied with surviving, that I hadn't been able to question the reality of the situation. I decided that the best course of action would be to call headquarters back in the city. I was out of my depth, and needed serious reinforcements.

When I got out from the bathroom, I saw Riley talking on the radio with a distraught expression on his face.

"What's wrong?"

"I just got word from the others. We've – we've lost some people. The others are out looking, but the situation seems pretty bleak," he said.

"How many?"

"I don't know... current count is twenty-four."

"Jesus Christ..."

"The longest bout of darkness only lasted a couple of days, and that was almost thirty years ago. This is – this –" the words got stuck in his throat.

Though he had fared far better than myself in hiding. The people that had been taken were his own; Friends and family that he'd known his whole life, and it had taken a toll on him. A surge of pity filled my body, as I realized the true gravity of the situation.

"Sheriff Riley, we're going to figure this out, I promise. We just need to get help from the city, to let people know what's going on here."

He nodded. "You're right, but what are we going to tell them?"

"The truth."

I charged my phone, and attempted to call my supervisor. He was a good, albeit skeptical person, but even he couldn't reject the call for help with several dozen people missing.

The phone wouldn't even ring, not a single bar of signal visible on the little screen.

By all accounts, we'd effectively been cut off from civilization. I ran through a few ideas, ready to suggest that we just drive a town over, but before I could formulate a proper plan, someone called Riley over the radio.

"Sheriff, you there?" a voice said on the other end.

He picked it up and responded.

"James? Yeah, I'm here, what's going on?"

"We found something at the edge of town, we – we – don't know - " the officer said with a shaky voice, "oh God."

"What did you find?"

"There's a wall of darkness! It – it just took Louis, we need to get out of - " he continued before getting cut off.

"James? Can you hear me?" Riley kept repeating, getting no response on the other end.

He turned towards me with terror in his eyes, "we have to help them."

We rushed to the car and started speeding towards the border, only stopping briefly at the station to see if anyone had gotten back, but apart from a prison guard too old to partake in a search and rescue operation, it was seemingly abandoned. The streets were empty, everyone either hiding in their homes, while the police did their search. Yet, despite every available officer being on duty, we could reach any of them over the radio.

"These creatures, what are they?" I asked as we sped down the road.

Riley glanced over at me with a look of confusion on his face, "what creatures?"

"I saw shadows wandering through the dark, just barely resembling humans. There were hundreds of them."

Before I could ask any further questions, a car came speeding towards us from the opposite direction. Riley swerved to the side, narrowly avoid collision, while the other car broke violently, skidding into the ditch.

A panicked man stumbled out from the car, his face bruised from the crash.

"James, what the fuck are you doing?" Riley asked.

"They're dead, they're all dead, and I just left them there. I'm sorry, I – I couldn't – I couldn't," he stuttered as he frantically looked around.

I stared towards the horizon from where James had fled. The light at the horizon seemed to cut off, fading harshly from day to night, as pitch black clouds were moving towards us. For each second passed, the wall of darkness grew closer. It was what had terrified James, and what had killed the others.

"Sheriff, we need to move," I said as he tried to comfort James.

I turned around, and noticed the same darkness had occupied the horizon behind us. By the time we'd picked James up, the darkness had enveloped the entire town, shrinking by each second passed.

[It had already killed most of the police force, and I was starting to fear that by the time we got back to town, there wouldn't be anyone left...](<https://www.facebook.com/richard.saxon.author>)

I came home to a terrible incident and it changed my life forever

I looked up at the sky as the wind brushed by my pale cheeks. The cool winter air flowed through my hair, pushing it uncontrollably around my face. The brown locks of hair slapped my eyes as i stared at the full moon light the city. The lights of NYC making the streets seem surreal.

I began to realise the beauty of the world. The good that needed to be uncovered with determination and time. Sadly, i don't have time.

As i plummeted to my impending doom i thought about what got me into this scenario. Maybe it was the fact that i had murdered my own wife. No. It was why i murdered my wife. Why she sat on the floor with my child's, our child's, lifeless body in her arms . She didn't cry. Not when i hit her. Not when she looked into our now dead sons eyes. She was gone, mentally i mean. I just made her disappear for good.

I came home from work when the smell of blood infected my nose as i opened the door. I rushed into the kitchen hoping it would be nothing. A small cut perhaps. But this, this was no small cut. It was a fucking gaping incision in my sons head. She had grabbed the biggest knife we had, cleaver like; and buried it in his skull. I never got a chance to ask why. Everything went quiet as i grabbed the frying pan on the stove and repeatedly slammed it into her head. I didn't think. She didn't flinch. White noise filled my head as i swung the metal against her cranium.

Her crimson blood sticking to the pan like gum to the back of a shoe. I liked the rhythm. The methodic tendencies of murder made the act seem more, normal? I didn't mind killing my wife. After what she'd done, she deserved it. She deserved the worst. The absolute fucking worst.

Now, back to my suicide. The beauty of the passing clouds lit by the cities lights and shine of the moon made me reconsider my decisions. Like i said, the beauty was breathtaking, but i do suppose you think about all the good things while you're story is about to come to an end. As you remember everything that stands out. All the good, never the bad. Maybe that's why i thought about killing my wife. Why i thought about ending her life after she had just ended another. When i woke up that morning i didn't expect to be falling to my death. Falling to my new home. Maybe if i hit the ground hard enough then i'll break through and get straight to where i belong. Hell. That's where i belong.

Well, i guess this is it. The day it finally ends. The day i fall. I sure do hope the cleaner scrapes my body up well and doesn't have any trouble. After all, i never was someone who liked to cause harm.

These thoughts rushed through my head as i stood on the edge. Realising all these new found discoveries of life, i've changed. What i've done isn't bad right? Right? I'm not a monster. I can't be.

Something happened to my friend and I don't know what to do

I don't know where else to turn, I have posted this various places online this week and no one will take me seriously, so this is my last hope that someone will listen.

Everything started a week ago on a hiking trip with some friends of mine. We enjoyed a particular hobby that would make most people would recoil in fear. We would go caving (also called spelunking) in wild caves around the United States a few times a year to get our adrenaline pumping. Now, wild caves are very different than what most people think of when they imagine visiting a cave. The grand passages and giant stalactites that are beautifully photographed in the National Geographic are nothing like the majority of the caves that exist. Those are far and few between, and the giant caves that you can pay a fee and get a cool tour walking around in are nothing like what we would visit.



These wild caves were hidden from public knowledge and often locked with a metal door or gate to prevent people from wondering in and needing to be rescued. These caves were highly dangerous and were restored and maintained to allow scientists to do research and natural animal habitats to exist without too much disturbance. Since these places were pretty sensitive ecosystems, you had to have connections to be able to get access to explore them. Every state with a decent amount of caves have state workers who will often be partnered with caving societies who get can access to certain caves that weren't home to sensitive animals in exchange for assisting with cave mapping and other restoration projects. People with these connections can explore the caves as long as an experienced caver from that area is with them to help make sure they don't get lost.



Now, even though we had been caving for years, we never got too cocky and tried to go without a guide. Wild caves can be terrifying and dark mazes and a lot of dangerous things can happen. One mistake can leave someone stuck in the dark with no way to rescue them, possibly with broken bones or worse. Forgetting to bring any of your supplies could mean life or death. A flashlights batteries going out without a replacement could lead to falling down a dark passage and breaking your neck. The large majority of caves we visited had at-least two long stretches of travel where we were literally belly crawling through mud in tight claustrophobic tunnels where you could barely lift your head up in order to make it to larger cave rooms.



Why did we do it? You might be asking yourself right about now. Truthfully, we did it for the feeling of seeing something cool that almost no one else ever could. For the rush of exploring and pushing your body to the max and being rewarded with beautiful sights and amazing adventures. The tourist caves that were frequently invaded by so many people could not ever compare to the untouched beauty of the wild places in the earth.



We got dressed and packed our supplies in good spirits, me and my two friends Matt and David, and went to meet up with our guide Nigel at a local restaurant. We had never met before, that being our first time in that state to go caving, so we had a nice dinner and got to know each other beforehand. He was an awesome guy, and we laughed and joked over the meal before going over the cave map in great detail.

■

"I am genuinely glad that you guys came to check out the caves around here. I am excited to get to spend a bit more time in the Ice creek cave. I've been through the majority of it, but the map ends here. The rest is unexplored at the moment" he said, pointing to where the lines ended.

■

"Why is that?" Matt asked, "If you guys were running out of helping hands then maybe we could fill in a bit while we are here."

Nigel suddenly got quiet and frowned a bit, looking uncomfortable. "No.... it's not that..." He said shaking his head. "I don't understand it man, but it seems like this cave tends to give people the creeps. Anyone I've taken in here tends to call it quits pretty early on. I took a group of girls and one guy in there a few months ago and the guy ended up having a panic attack, saying that 'he couldn't stay in there any longer and had to get out.' I don't really understand it though personally, I have never had an issue with the cave."

■

David shrugged, "Maybe he just got too claustrophobic? I think some people don't expect it to be as restricting as it is sometimes. I've been on a few teams where people have gotten pretty panicked before."

■

Nigel nodded and said "It could be that. The way the guy was acting was pretty alarming though. He took off like a bullet, crawling on his hands and knees and nearly fell down the side of a cliff down there acting like that. Honestly scared the fucking shit out of me man. I thought I was going to have to call a rescue team. I'm glad you guys are pretty experienced though. This should be a pretty good time."

■

We finished eating and climbed into our cars, heading towards the cave location. What Nigel said was bothering me a bit, but I tried not to think too much about it because it was pretty common for people to get scared their first few times in more tight passages. We finished gearing up and headed inside, Nigel taking the lead.

■

The cave itself was pretty basic at first, the humidity skyrocketing as soon as we got inside. People always expect caves to be cold and damp, but when you live in a hotter climate the caves are HOT and humid. We crawled along on all fours in a straight line through many winding passages before getting to a larger room where we could stand up and stretch for a bit. The soupy air had all of us pouring sweat

so we took a quick break and all chugged down some water. Dehydration was no joke when your no where near a hospital.

■

A little farther inside, the cave started to change. We crawled along the narrow side of a cliff, overhanging a steep drop to a gushing river underneath. You could shine your headlight across the chasm, and the light would fade out before reaching the other side. "Wow!!" Matt exclaimed, yelling to be heard over the echoing water. The cave was truly beautiful sight to see, and the trip was going along wonderfully so far. Despite this, there was a strange aura to the place. Something didn't feel right. The air felt too thick and heavy and I was supporting goosebumps since we went past the first room. I kept shrugging it off, thinking it was just a placebo effect from what Nigel had said about people getting scared.

■

We reached another area where we could stand, and strapped into some repelling gear to allow us to safely reach the river below. The passage seemed to go on forever and was one of the bigger caves we had been in for a few years. We enjoyed exploring around the river for a few hours, getting some great photographs and basking in the glory of the hidden treasure, before David found a small crevice half a mile down the river.

■

"Hey Nigel! Is this area on the map?" He yelled, waving the rest of us over to him.

"Naw man, I've never gone that way before. We don't have it mapped yet." he said, smiling with a cheeky grin, "But I'm down to go if your up for it."

■

Matt shook his head, "No I'd rather not guys. I'm getting pretty tired so I'd rather save my energy for the climb up. You guys can go ahead, and I'll just hang back here and get some more photos until you come back."

■

I was tempted to stay with him but David goaded me on, "Awe come on Dude! This is fully unexplored cave! You don't want to miss being the first person to ever set foot in there!!" And he was right. I didn't want to give up the opportunity despite how wary I was feeling.

■

We headed off down the passage with David taking the lead and me following behind. Nigel followed last in case he had to turn around to get help. The passage narrowed quickly and we left a large gap between each of us in case we needed to retreat at a dead end. The tunnel got so cramped that we were crawling on our knees soon, and then army crawling on our stomachs soon after. The air was so hot and sticky that it made the passage seem even more cramped. At one point my backpack got caught on a sharp rock above and it was a struggle to maneuver my arm up my side to free myself.

■

After about 30 minutes of crawling, I was starting to get worried. It was going to be a bitch and a half to army crawl backwards for that long to get out of this tunnel if it didn't start to open up enough to turn around soon. Just as I was starting to get a little panicked, the passage started slowly opening up and I could no longer see David out in front of me. We all crawled out into a wide open space and looked around in awe. Huge rock formations stretched out in front of us, spattered with gypsum crystals and long delicate calcium straws. A little trickle of water dripped from somewhere high up in the ceiling that our light wouldn't reach.

■

"Oh cool!" David exclaimed, "Matt would've loved this!! I wish he would've came with us! This would be a beautiful photo!"

Nigel could visibly not contain his excitement. He pulled some gear out of his bag and started mapping the area, telling us to feel free to explore, but to be careful and stick together. We started climbing around the rocks, checking things out. That is when everything went horribly wrong.

■

There were many large passages off of the main room, full of more amazing rock formations. David slipped into one, and I went into one immediately adjoining it. I heard something strange that sounded vaguely like mumbled whispering and I shook my head, trying not to let my imagination make me start hallucinating in the dark. I was looking at a little water salamander in a teal underground pond when I heard David scream.

■

Without a second thought I got up and ran to where he was, gasping in awe at the halite crystals jutting out from the walls down the pathway. As I went further, the air got thicker and harder to breathe. It was so hot that it felt like smoke in my lungs. My head had started to hurt, making me feel dizzy, but I kept going. My heart was pounding, thinking of all the awful things that could have happened, when I finally found David standing in the middle of the crystal covered room staring at his hand.

■

"What the fuck happened???" I yelled, confused. "Why did you scream??"

■

He said nothing, and didn't look at me. A sinking feeling punched me in the gut as I noticed his hand was dripping blood.

■

"What happened??" I repeated, rushing over to him and grabbing his hand. It looked as if he had been horribly burned across his entire palm. He didn't answer me and just continue to silently stare, making quiet whimpering noises. I was utterly terrified. The aura in the room had plunged into this sickening and terrifying feeling and I felt like I was going to throw up. The rational part of my mind kicked in, and I

pulled off my backpack, quickly rummaging through it for a first aid kit.

■

I grabbed his shoulder and forced him to sit down on a rock, and began cleaning his hand. Under all of the blood, the skin had been charred nearly to the bone and the wound was very severe. "Oh fuck..." I whispered. "How the fuck are we suppose to crawl out of here with your hand like that?"

■

He stared at me blankly the whole time I cleaned and bandaged his hand. Luckily applying pressure for a few minutes was enough to stop the majority of the bleeding. My heart was still pounding from the initial scare, as well as the creepy feeling that was surrounding me. I didn't like the way he was staring at me.

■

"David, I know you seem to be in shock right now, but I need you to tell me what happened." I said. "Can you do that?"

■

He nodded stiffly, not saying a word but pointing towards the wall behind me. I shuddered and slowly turned around, half expecting to see lava leaking from the wall after seeing how bad the burn was. I stood up and walked to the other side of the room, scanning the crystal covered area with my headlamp until I saw a strange circular carve out in the wall. It was an a perfect shallow hole in the wall about the size of an apple. It looked like someone took an ice cream scoop and carved it through the wall like it was butter. Puzzled and terrified, I shined my light inside the hole, being careful not to get too close to it. There was nothing inside at all, just an empty space.

■

"What the fuck?" I mumbled to myself, looking down at the ground and shuffling my feet. That is when I noticed something strange. A black orb lie at my feet, presumably what was formerly located in the strange hole. I reached out to pick it up before recoiling sharply when the logical side of my brain kicked in and told me not to touch it. "How did this burn you?" I whispered to David, not taking my eyes off of the orb.

■

He said nothing, just continued to stare at me in a creepy silence. I stared at the orb, trying to make sense of what was going on. My body was screaming for me to get the fuck out of there, but there was some sort of odd feeling compelling me to look at the orb. The more I stared at it, the stronger the feeling got. The light danced on its surface, mimicking glittery flames. An impossibly black shape that somehow seemed even darker than the orb itself was swirling in circles inside it. The urge to touch it was growing stronger and stronger and I was having to hold myself back from picking up the orb. Suddenly, fear gripped me and I pulled away from the thing, falling down backwards on my butt in the mud. Nausea swelled over me and I leaned over and vomited on the ground, shaking in fear.

■

I crawled backwards, getting as far as possible from the orb, trying to escape the terrifying feeling that was smothering me. I got up and ran over to David, grabbing his good hand and pulling him up. "We have to get out of here!" I said urgently, dragging his zombie-like body behind me. The whole time, I felt like eyes were watching me from every direction.

■

When we reached Nigel, I instantly felt better. I guess having someone else around made me feel more grounded and less like I was in some sort of fairy tale horror movie. I tried explaining what just happened, but he just stared at me with a skeptical look on his face. He took a look at David's hand and tried to tell me that "He must have just burned himself on his lighter or his headlamp." I could feel his judgmental attitude and it was making me angry. He was thinking that we were just another dumb group of cavers getting scared and freaking out and ending up injured.

■

Finally after a few minutes of me trying to explain things, he started packing up his gear and said he was going to go look. Icy cold fear gripped me and I started yelling, "No!! YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE!"

■

He paused and looked at me for a moment, and I racked my brain trying to think of anything I could say to keep him from going to that room. I wanted to get the fuck out of this cave so badly and David seemed to be in some sort of state of shock. "David needs medical attention!!" and that was what won him over. He agreed that we needed to get him out of here and to a doctor soon.

■

Nigel pulled a bottle of painkillers out of his bag and handed some to David, asking if he would be okay to crawl back through the tunnel with his hand so injured. David cleared his throat a few times and finally spoke, "Yes I will be okay" he said.

■

Dread swept over me, an all encompassing, overwhelming feeling of dread that was so strong that it was made me feel like I was going to pass out. His voice didn't sound like him at all. It was deeper, more raspy than I had ever heard. Even Nigel noticed the difference because he had a puzzled look on his face for a few moments.

■

He told David to start crawling first and we would follow, and David quietly obeyed. He didn't wince or seem to notice the pain in his hand at all and it was terrifying me. I lagged as far behind him as possible in the tunnel back to the river. When we came out the other side, Nigel was no where to be found.

■

"He went back to that fucking room!!" I screamed angrily, kicking rocks around. Matt ran up to us asking what was wrong and I gave him a brief explanation. I hadn't realized how badly I was shaking until I tried to explain what happened again. Matt looked absolutely horrified, "I've had a bad feeling ever since we came in here. I want to get out of here." he said, his voice trembling.

■

We were waiting for Nigel to catch up with us, our hearts pounding hard with fear, when we heard loud screams echoing through the tunnel. "We need to get the hell out of here!" Matt yelled.

We started running down the bank of the river, trying to make it back to where we had repelled down the cliff as quickly as possible. I felt horrible for leaving Nigel to whatever was happening to him in there, but my own sense of self-preservation was stronger than the urge to stick my neck out for someone I barely knew. When we reached the repelling gear, David had a hard time clipping himself into the safety rope, so we helped strap him in and then quickly began climbing up the wire ladder that was anchored at the top of the cliff.

■

Matt and I had reached the top long before David, and we looked over the side, ready to help pull him up if necessary. He was climbing slow and steady, likely doing a horrible amount of damage to his hand in the process. I realized after a moment that I could hear him whispering. It sounded like his normal voice again, but what he was saying was anything but normal. "Please..... please make it stop. It hurts. It's hurting me. Please help....." He repeated over and over quietly.

■

I could hear Matt breathing heavily beside me, and I tore my eyes away from David long enough to briefly meet Matt's gaze. We shared a silent moment where we both confirmed that the other person was actually hearing the same thing. As soon as David was in arms reach, we grabbed him and hauled him up as fast as possible. Continuing to book it out of the cave.

■

It seemed like a lifetime before we actually got out of there. My anxiety was so high the entire time and it felt like we were being watched. I was sure that at any moment, something was going to grab us and drag us back down to the depths of the cavern. Even when we reached the sunlight, the feeling of dread had not left me.

■

On the way to take David to the hospital, I started to question myself. What if Nigel was right and David had just injured himself somehow? What if my imaginative mind had run away with me and that orb was nothing other than a strange rock formation? What if Nigel had gotten hurt and a rock fell on him, and we ran away like scared children and left him to die?? What if he was waiting down there calling out for us and we just ran off??

■

David had barely said a few words since getting to the hospital. We called the police and told them that an accident had happened and someone was stuck in the cave. They took me and Matt's statements and called for a search and rescue unit to try to retrieve Nigel from the cave. We told them in great detail about everything that happened, but I left out the part about the orb because I didn't want them to think I was crazy. Everything felt back to normal now that we were out among people and safe, far away from the cave. The guilt was swallowing me up about leaving Nigel behind and I was cursing myself for the crazy thought that some sort of monster had got him. Now that I was thinking rationally, I started to think that I must have had a mental breakdown. I was being irrational and possibly caused someone's death because of it.

■

When we were finally allowed to go back to the hospital room to see David, a police officer was taking his statement. We stopped outside the door silently to give them some space, and I quickly peeked in the doorway. The officer was looking down at his notebook, writing down what David was saying. He was talking normally, not sounding strange at all.

■

He immediately noticed I was there even though he couldn't see me. He looked in my direction and a chill swept over me, making me shudder. My breath caught in my throat as I watched his frown turn into a vicious smile.

■

Whatever that thing is, it isn't David anymore.

Fear of the Unknown

We have all heard of it, and we have all felt it. It's not the fear of the dark that keeps us up at night, hiding under our covers, or why we don't always go boldly down into the basement. It's what we believe might be hiding just out of sight, looming above the sheets or watching from below as we travel down those menacing steps.

So why is it we never look up in the sky with that same trepidation we feel as we look out into the sunlit sky? Why is it we can "rage against the dying of the light?" Why is it we feel so secure under the radiating light and heat of the sun? After all, the closest source of light Humanity knows of is the Centauri system, comprised of Alpha Centauri A and B and Proxima Centauri at least four light years away.

To put it into perspective, one light year is almost six trillion miles, six million million miles between us and the nearest neighbor and no that is not a typo. Comparatively, the sun is ninety-two million miles away, just enough space where the radiation is still present but also faint enough to be survived - though only barely, Earth's magnetic shield is all that protects us from the true intensity of those rays. As far as we know, we are completely isolated.

As far as we know, of course.

All life and matter is merely energy condensed to a slow vibration, and sometimes that matter is barely visible even under a microscope.

Who's to say that the space we see above us at night and during the day isn't filled with creatures, beings so awesome and grand yet invisible, untouchable and unfeasible? Who's to say that extraterrestrial civilizations rise and fall within our solar system yet remain unseen and unnoticeable by us and our sensors? Who's to say we are not alone but surrounded by invisible worlds so close they orbit our sun alongside us?

And who's to say we can't be seen, that we haven't been noticed or been studied? Who's to say that as you read this right now the void above us is gazing back at and making plans?

Astronomical technology is advancing, new rockets and satellites and telescopes are developing. One day a filter may develop and unveil the invisible. One day the tangible may be rendered tangible.

One day we may look out there beyond the horizon, through a new high-tech telescope or observatory lense and see the truth, and the truth may be more frightening than the fear of the unknown.

Or maybe, just maybe those stars in the Centauri system are the eyes of an unimaginably large being, set forth to devour our world as we know it. Or maybe the antimatter life forms are trying to reach us, yet unable to obtain a sample of our reality needed to make the right calculations for a portal just as we are spending millions on research in obtaining a single particle from them.

The fear of the unknown is subjective, but one day it may be unanimous.

The Farm My Family Bought Was Cursed

So when I was 7 years old my family purchased a farm. It was always a dream of my mom and dad to own a farm, but we were a middle-class family that could never afford the start-up cost. That was until my dad saw an ad in the paper for a beautiful farmhouse, barn and field for only \$20,000. It was only an hours drive too. He could barely contain his excitement, and rushed to the near by payphone to call the number listed in the ad. He was visibly relieved when the real-estate agent said it was still for sale.

On that day my dad got in his car and drove down there with my mom. I was an only child, so I was left in the care of a babysitter. I don't quite remember much about that day, but the day after when I woke up our bags were packed and a moving company was loading our furniture into a truck. My mom and dad were all smiles, and had a contagious joy that spread to me. When we pulled up to the farm I pressed my face up to the window to get a good view of the barn, it was huge and painted a wonderfully bright red.

As the movers loaded the furniture into the house I ran in after them. I sprinted through the house until I found a room with a window facing the barn. I yelled out to my parents "Please please please can I have my bedroom here?" My parents came and looked at me warmly then said "of course you can champ." I remember feeling like it was the best day of my life when my bed was placed in there, facing towards the window so I could always have a good view of the barn.

Once we were fully moved into the house my parents sat at the kitchen table and excitedly discussed their dreams and plans for this farm. I asked if I could go play outside and they allowed me to without a second glance. I ran towards the barn, and pushed the doors open to go inside. It was dark inside, the barn only had a single window on the second floor. I opened the doors as wide as they would go to let more light in, and spotted a ladder up to the second floor.

The bottom floor was unexciting, there wasn't even any hay on the ground, just dirt. I decided to climb the ladder and see what was on the second floor. I was halfway up the ladder when the doors to the barn slammed shut, and the ladder started shaking. The room got colder and there was a sense of dread in the air. I screamed and climbed up the ladder fast, I barely made it to the second floor when the ladder fell to the ground.

I scurried over to the window and opened it, then began shouting for my parents. Then, I heard a sound of something dropping onto the second floor, I turned my head to look and something began walking towards me. As it entered the light from the window I began to make it out, it was a pitch black humanoid figure, only it was very tall and it's head was turned 90 degrees to the right.

I was frozen in terror, unable to muster up the courage to even scream. The thing angled it's head towards me and I heard a sound like a rusty door flapping in the wind, a vile laugh. The laugh became a garbled cough, then it quickly lunged at me. I couldn't even move before it grabbed me, it firmly placed both it's hands on my head, it's fingers digging hard into my scalp as it began to twist my head to the right. I tried to resist but this thing was far stronger than me, and my neck would definitely have been broken if not for my father.

He burst through the farm doors suddenly and the thing vanished into thin air as soon as they opened. He looked at me up there, sobbing and screaming in fear, then saw the ladder on the floor and drew his conclusions of what happened. "Ahh you stupid kid, why the hell did you knock the ladder down?" He put the ladder back in place then ordered me to climb down. I was still too frightened to move from my

experiences, and I tried to tell my dad what happened but he wouldn't hear it.

"Holy shit quit being such a pussy, it's not a big deal. Get down here and get inside." I obeyed and shakily climbed down the ladder. My father and I walked back to the house and we sat together to eat dinner. It was tense for a bit, but the overall happiness of the day returned and we were in good spirits. I even forgot about the encounter for a few precious hours until it was time to go to bed.

As I entered my room I immediately felt the same freezing sense of dread that I did in the barn. My suspicions were confirmed when I looked out my window, and through the window in the barn I saw it, staring at me with no eyes. There were no curtains in my bedroom, so I ran into my bed and hid under the covers to try to avoid it. Still I felt it's gaze, and heard the faint sound of it's laugh.

After a while I couldn't take being in my bedroom anymore. After taking some time to muster my courage I ran to my parents bedroom across the hall. I tried to open the door but it was locked, I also heard moaning and the bed there creaking. I kept on knocking on the door and shouting but my pleas were ignored, I wasn't as important as sex. Defeated, I returned to my room.

Sleep eluded me for a long time that night, but even when it finally came it there was still no respite. In my dreams I was back in the barn, this thing less than an inch away from me. It's horrid wheezing laugh filled my ears until I woke up screaming. At least the light had purged the awful feeling from the room. I sauntered into the dining room to see if I could get some food.

My mother greeted me with a disinterested "Good morning." My father didn't even acknowledge me. I made myself a bowl of cereal for breakfast. I ate in silence, and sat myself down in front of the TV when I was done. That lasted until the afternoon, when my dad asked me to do something. He was going into the barn to build some stables for horses he was getting the next day. I was to go in and help him.

We brought the wood, nails, and tools in the barn then got down to work. Building the first two stables went without incident, but the third was the problem. The light from the doors to the barn didn't reach that far so I had to hold a flashlight. As my dad was nailing some planks together, I was shoved from behind into him. "FUCK!!!" My dad screamed as the nail went through his finger. He whipped around and hit me hard in the head with the hammer.

I was dazed on the ground, my dad storming out in a huff. As he left the thing materialized, it looked down at me and truly let loose with its laughter. It sounded like a man dying and a machine operating all at once, but it ceased when my dad came back. "Go into your room and stay there for the rest of the day, no fucking dinner." I agreed and left hastily, afraid to disobey.

The whole situation was terrible, but honestly, it wasn't so bad being sent to my bedroom in the day. It allowed me to catch up on some sleep without being tormented by nightmares. When I woke up it was already dark, and unfortunately, the energy had returned. I was too afraid to look out my window. That was until I heard a loud thump outside, near the barn. I fearfully peered out my window and saw that the thing wasn't looking at me through the window in the barn.

Relieved, I let out a sigh and was about to climb back into bed. Then, the thing rose from the ground near the barn, the sound I had heard was it jumping down. It began sprinting towards my bedroom window, it's laugh increasing in volume as it approached. I let out a scream as it slammed against the window, it cracked but didn't break. The thing backed up, ready to slam into the window again but then my door opened.

My dad walked in and looked at me in disgust, he grabbed me and threw me against the wall. "Why are you so fucking insistent on ruining this for us? Is this not good enough for you? How dare you wreck the windows in my goddamn home you ungrateful little shit?! I didn't raise you to be such an annoying fucking brat!" Each sentence was punctuated with a punch, thrown randomly in rage.

When he was done taking out his anger on me he left my room, I was left to drag my injured body back onto my bed. Too hurt to sleep but too afraid to cry, I lied on my bed shivering, the sun had been up for an hour before I finally fell back asleep. When I woke up in the afternoon my parents were both in the barn, tending to their new horses. I watched from far behind them, feeling unwelcome in the barn because of them and the thing.

I was treated coldly at dinner time, and when we watched TV together in the living room every time I spoke was met with my dad telling me to shut up. Going to my bedroom that night I felt awful, I didn't even want to live anymore because my family hated me. I was exhausted from my torment by the thing in the barn, and I dreaded what this night would bring.

But when I walked into the room the presence wasn't there, the air wasn't cold and I didn't feel the impending doom. I was relieved, but wasn't tired just yet because of my later waking time on the day. I laid in bed, and cried, it was cathartic to finally release some of my pent up suffering and angst. When I was done I was settled, almost ready for sleep. I was drifting off when I heard the horses loudly neighing.

The neighing was silenced quickly, and I heard my dad rush out of his bedroom to check on the barn. I knew what had happened to the horses in that barn, and as fucked up as it sounds I slept better knowing I wasn't the target of that thing in the barn. When I woke up the next day, our bags were packed and we were moving back into our old home. All of the horses in the barn had their necks snapped in the night.

My dad never apologized to me, but he never hit me again once we moved back. It was a short period of time in my life, but I never forgot. Recently I googled the farm and that's what inspired me to share this. Apparently the farm belonged to a man who had killed his whole family, with 5 kids, by breaking their necks. He was hanged in his own barn on the second floor, and he still hasn't left there.

I'm Going to Come Find You

Rules are what keep the people in line, to **obey** is to relish in the beauties of our society.

I followed those customs, and yet, I was still one of them to your "pure" eyes. I obeyed like any regular civilian, but you still marked me as a **rogue**, a **villain** towards the people. You and your buddies are found to be role models to the little kids, who feel **safe** and **shielded** by people like you, but no. Those kids now glance at all three of you, not to view you as **saints**, but as true, **corrupt** villains. You **brutes** have **disgraced** your families, your own people, and your own job. I thought that those who defend the law are the **truest** followers of them all. Oh, how I was so **mistaken**.

Mistakes not only I made, but that you have executed as well. You mistook me as **deceased**, **drowned** my calls of **help**, and for what? To please your immoral, wicked needs?

Then you told the public your **wretched** lies, said how painfully guilty you were about all of this. You put the **blame** towards imaginary figures, thinking they could help **save** you from **punishment**. I was watching you among the crowd. You did not even notice me. Was I just another blank canvas among the crowd?

But then both of your buddies started **disappearing**, with investigations you had to manage. I hid amidst those trees, watching you **quiver** in **panic**. Does this place look **familiar** to you? It sure was for me. Both of your partners came here with you not long ago, and I had to **remind** them of what they did. I made sure they **ended** up in your pleasurable methods, your repulsive peculiarities. I guess this **triggered** something in you, for I saw your every movement, you were diving deep down into that one dark blue **lake**, hoping to have found your **lost** treasure.

But I'm afraid that treasure has **vanished**, it's **somewhere** else, I guess you have to do this little treasure hunt all by yourself now. But before you begin following that map, let me ask you something **officer**: How does it feel? How does it feel to be **deconstructed**? To be the **victim**? To watch everything around you **crumble**?

It's all so **confusing**, believe me, I would understand too, especially if I were you. However, I am not you, nor will I ever be. Honestly, you should have seen this **arrival** sooner. Maybe not in the way you were anticipating - but did you really think you were going to emerge from this without **penalty**?

No. Just like what you did to me, I look at you with my own eyes, to view you a **criminal** as well. Believe me, for my eyes are the **purest** sights one can observe of the world. And just like what you did to me, I must **punish** thee. I will let you know one thing:

I should be **dead**, but I'm not. I have been living in the shadows... My body isn't as it was before, but I am thankful...

And because of this, I'm going to come find **you**.

Tick Tock Mr.Clock

"Tick tock goes Mr Clock waiting for the hour to end..." I sat there bored reading the old popup book. I had found it in a thrift shop and decided to but it seen as it was only a dollar.

Ever since I got laid off my life started going downhill. My fiancée left me and took almost everything from the tiny 1 bedroom apartment we had. I stopped buying new items and technology and resorted to buying used stuff from thrift shops and yard sales.

It was a very strange book. A very plain cover with the title "Mr. Clock" It was about a boy who finds a magical clock and goes on an adventure with it, the kind of bull you find in most stories nowadays. But there was something different about this book. It was strange how when the clock popped up and showed the time on it it matched the time on mine completely. Like when it was 12:00 PM in the story I would look over and it would be 12:00 PM on my clock. It was like the book was changing time to match mine.

I kept reading and kept singling out the ticking of my clock like it was the ticking in the book. It was strange how time in the book went by minutes each page. Each page the time on Mr Clock would only be changed by 3 minutes. Then I flipped to page 26, I thought it was quite a lock book for a very young child but something was off about this page. It was right after the boy and Mr Clock had escaped from the evil castle and it just showed the carnage. It showed the boys hands clean and then the clock's floating hands covered in blood. It showed dead guards and spines and throats on the floor. Guts and livers flowing out of the guards. This was way too bad for a children's book and I wanted to see what else would come up.

After page 46 it showed the Boy and The blood covered clock walking to a house. The book read "They walked to a friends place, to see his familiar face." But there was something off about the house. It was like an apartment. Many little houses in one. They went it and walked to the room. It matched my number. The clock in the hallway read the same as the one in my room. The book showed them knocking on the door. Then I heard a knock. I'm quickly typing this up and I still here the knocking and a loud ticking noise coming from the door. I looked through the peephole and it was just a little boy holding a clock. I will open the door. He does have a sharp knife. I will get stabbed many times. And I will most definitely die a horrible death. I should not have bought that book. What a sad end. And what a horrible clock.

Crickets

I've always contained a love for reading stories centering around the theme of thrilling me, and I've looked into lucid dreaming just to visualize a scale of the...things I visualize while reading. However, I've never even thought about what being in the presence of a being of such scale would be like. With the information I've saturated from my readings, I've attempted to formulate my own stories but just never could find the time. This time is an exception.

Last Saturday I was coming down with an extreme case of Strep Throat, only a single day after a fever of 103. Being bed-ridden the entire day, I had plenty of time to do any activities within the bounds of my situation. Of course, I didn't think of anything except to watch YouTube and eat cough drops all day, but I was completely fine with my choice. As dusk drew near, I knew falling asleep would be a challenge. Time didn't seem like a concept until I glanced at my alarm clock. It read 11:44. I crawled over to the outlet to charge my phone and laid my head on the pillow.

As I drifted off to sleep, I could hear the distinct sound of crickets coming from outside my window. Although I remembered my open window, I was reluctant to hobble over to close it. I turned my fan on a higher setting and tried once again to sleep. However, the crickets only became louder. In what seemed like an act of a supernatural being, my eyes suddenly opened at the exact same moment the motion sensing light turned on. In a matter of seconds, I heard a loud _chink_, which I could only presume was the light itself breaking. Whatever was out there was not messing around.

By this point, my entire body was trembling. In an attempt to see what..._who_ was out there, I turned my head towards the window and cracked opened the shutters, just enough to see what was outside. Expecting to see some sort of moth-man type figure staring back at me, I was reluctant to glance over, but fought for the courage to do so. I immediately heard the squeak of a window. _It wasn't mine_. I knew a new sliding door had recently replaced the hardly functional one serving as the entrance to the guest house, and would regularly squeak due to its lack of use. I connected the dots. Right as I figured it out, I heard a piercing screech. A friend of the family was using the guest house as a place to stay during a meeting near our residence and I immediately figured out it must be her. I knew it would be too late to save anyone in that position.

I heard another squeak. By this point, I knew it was best to not look, but I couldn't resist. I let my head hit the pillow but kept one eye open. I didn't care about sleeping at this point. Whatever was out there-whatever _who_ was out there-it consumed her. And I knew it wouldn't be afraid to consume me, too. Despite the traumatizing experiences, I managed to drift off to sleep.

The next morning, I crawled out of bed, still sick as ever. My throat felt worse. I checked my alarm clock. It read 8:11. I crawled out of bed to go make some tea and honey for my throat and fell to the ground with a hard _thump_. Letting out a small moan, I turned over, face up. I suddenly felt my stomach contract, but not in pain. I felt my mouth forced open, but only a small insect jumped out. It was a cricket.

Arhenehl- the Witch's Saga (final)

[Part one](https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/f0izvn/watching_waiting_witch/)

[Part two](https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/f110n7/photographs_the_witchs_saga_part_2/)

[Part three](https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/f2z1cw/memories_the_witchs_saga_part_3/)

It's finally over. She is gone. They all are.

I know it's been a long time since I posted, but so much happened and I just felt like I needed time to gather myself up before putting it down in writing.

Ever since the day I found out I was pregnant, my life had been hell. I would see the Witch everywhere. Across the street. On a car window's reflection. Always calling me, trying to get me to come to her. Her face was strange: her eyes were large and alert, with an almost panicked look to them that probably mirrored my own eyes.

I resisted her call every time.

Not even my dreams were safe. During the night, I would see the same dark man that my ancestors saw, dragging me to the woods and trying to kill me. I always woke up screaming right before he did it.

I got through two days before reaching my breaking point.

I knew I had to do something, and I had to do it fast. Going through my notes I noticed that the deaths happened earlier and earlier for each generation, which meant that I had to figure this out quick.

My starting point was to figure out where my great grandmother lived. I thought I might find some answers to what the witch was there, if that's where this whole thing started. A quick google search led me to a small village a few hours from where I live. As I drove into the village, it felt like traveling to a place frozen in time. The wooden houses, painted in the customary red color, seemed to be from a children's book. I left my bags at the hotel and went out for lunch. As I sat in the little pizzeria I glanced out of the window to the park across the street and almost jumped out of my chair.

There was a white deer at the park's entrance. Just like the one my mother mentioned. The few passersby seemed to pay it no notice. As I looked at it, something inside me told me to follow it. As if bound by a spell I left my half-eaten pizza and walked across the street.

The deer moved away as I approached it, clearly wanting me to follow it. After a while I felt ridiculous. Here I was, following a deer to God knows where because... my mother saw a white deer once? I noticed the deer was guiding me to a thicket. Well there, the deer stopped. I noticed something laying underneath the bushes and got to my knees to pick it up. When I finally managed to pull the object out, the deer was gone. In his place was the witch.

"Heed my call and be safe and content... leave and you will forever repent" Her voice was like a waterfall, full but with an underlying foreboding tone. I barely listened to her words as I broke into a run. I was not taking any chances here.

I didn't realize I was still holding the thing from under the thicket in my hands until I got to my room and closed the door. I decided to take a look at it. It was a yellowed book, the pages wrinkly, seemingly having been left for the elements for a while. The first pages seemed to show some kind of bestiary, with intricate drawings on the right and a description of the creature on the left. I browsed the pages for a bit, amazed by the pictures. Suddenly my heart started beating faster. I couldn't believe it: there was the witch! But then again, she was probably the one that guided me to the book. Was she trying to give me a message? The text beside her picture said:

"Arehnehl. This spirit keeps the balance between life and death. It is believed that whenever the Venir Ritual is performed, Arehnehl will be summoned. She disapproves of the imbalance created by the ritual, and will therefore not rest until the one responsible for the ritual is destroyed."

I made some notes of this page and continued on, keeping an eye out for any mentions of the Venir Ritual. After some pages, the book's style changed. It was now more of a grimoire, explaining how to perform certain spells and rituals. The pages here were accompanied by horrible illustrations, depicting bodies and murder and... well, worse things. Some pages later, I found the Ritual had been looking for. It had a picture of a man stabbing a person lying down. Underneath the beautifully written header came the explanation.

The ritual seemed to be a way of attaining eternal life, albeit a very dangerous one. The gist of it was that to perform the ritual, one needed to kill a victim after performing certain tasks, like many other rituals. This was believed to be a "life for a life" trade with Vanir, some sort of god of death. If Vanir accepted it, the ritual performer would be granted eternal life. If not, the person would turn into something the book called a Gimid. This section ended with a warning: After you perform the ritual, Arehnehl will be after you forever. Browsing back to the bestiary, I quickly found the entry for the Gimid. It was depicted as a man laying down with a shadow rising from it.

"Gimid. A creature created when the Vimir ritual fails. The creature can live an indeterminate amount of time, as long as it is able to kill at least once during a 40 year span. The Gimid's victims always have some characteristics of its first victim. The Gimid will become attached to a single family, usually that of its first victim, and will only kill within the family."

I closed my eyes, trying to come to terms with all I had discovered. Did my mother also read this book? Is this why she was so confident that the Wi- Arehnehl would protect her? Did she also follow the white deer to a yellowed book under a thicket? I would probably never know. My thoughts moved on to the Gimid. Was that the dark man in our dreams? At least I now understood how it killed... And I knew that it would kill me soon.

I had to go and find Arhenehl. She was my only chance against the Gimid. I realized this Gimid was created one night in 1955, when my grandmother's little village was shaken by the murder of one of my grandmother's friend's neighbour. The first time Arehnehl was too late. Was the Gimid the victim's husband? A stranger? Sadly those answers were probably lost to time. I thought about this as I passed the park's gate.

Everything felt eerily quiet. I started wondering how to get to the thicket from that morning when

suddenly something hit me on the side, sending me flying into the nearest tree. I heard a bone crack.

Through my blurry vision I could see a fast approaching shadow, much taller than Arehnehl. I could only think about one thing: this was what my ancestors last saw when they died. I felt abandoned,

alone. The shadow was only a few meters away from me now. I wondered if this was how my ancestors felt right before they died. I closed my eyes, ready to find out the answers in the afterlife.

But the fatal blow never came.

I opened my eyes a little and saw a smaller shadow in front of me. Her ragged cloth flying in the wind. I could still see the Gimid behind her. They were both completely still. I heard a noise to my side, the white deer coming out of the woods. A crow, perched on the branches. A fox, its fur as white as the crows feathers. Their eyes all trained on the two figures in front of me.

The Gimid took a decision and lunged at Arhenehl.

She raised her staff. A light brighter than anything I had ever seen before came out of it and I shielded my eyes. When the light dimmed and I felt like I could look again, the Gimid was gone. A second later, the animals standing beside me were also engulfed by light and disappeared as well. It was just me and her left.

"Thank you", I managed to say.

"The balance is restored, your ancestors are free. My warning you heeded, and now you may live", she said, and disappeared, leaving a faint smell of wood in the air.

With some difficulty I raised myself up. They were all gone. I felt like a weight had been lifted from my shoulders. I was finally going to be able to have my baby safely.

After this, there is not much left to say. I went to the hospital to have my arm looked at and a few days later I went back home to my family. We are now excitedly preparing for our second child. I took the book home with me, but one day it was just gone, a faint smell of wood left behind. I smiled. It was good to know she was still watching.

It Touched Me

This happened to me a year ago.

It was a dark quiet night, I was in the middle of a dream when I felt like I needed to wake up. I started to force myself to open my eyes but I couldn't, at that moment I felt two hands coming from beneath me and then I just felt a strong push. All I remember afterwards was the loud sound of my head hitting against the closed door of my room.

"Ouch." I said as I started to open my eyes slowly, realising I was laying on the floor, above me I noticed a dark silhouette.

"Dad?" I asked confusingly as I could barely make out a male figure standing next to me, but I felt my eyelids heavy like rocks so I closed them again.

"What happened?" I felt hands on my shoulders after a few minutes, gently shaking me as I recognised my dad's voice calling me.

"I'm sleeping, I didn't do anything." I said as I drifted off to sleep again.

That morning I was drinking coffee with my dad, when he asked me how my head was and if it hurts. I remembered what happened so I said no and thanked him for helping me get off the ground.

He looked at me confused and started explaining the events of that night. As he told me apparently him and my mom heard a loud thud from my room so they rushed to see what was going on and found me sitting on the edge of my bed barely awake. As he tried to talk to me and ask me what had happened I fell right back to sleep.

So if my dad didn't help me get up from the ground and up on the bed then who did?

I decided not to tell him what had happened previously with the hands and the shadowed man so I changed the subject.

I've been seeing it in my room for a while now, it always takes on a different form when appearing. Once it came as a skinny, pale, tall figure with long black wet hair, big bulging, round, white eyes and a freakishly wide smile that showed off its sharp teeth. Then it came as a woman dressed in a big black dress and had her head covered with a black scarf holding what seemed like a baby wrapped in white. After that it came as something similar as the girl from the well in the movie "The Ring". It always stood at a different spot in my room never in the same one twice.

The fact that it visited again doesn't really surprise me but it does freak me out that this time it touched me.

Before it would just speak to me or stare at me but now it touched me, I haven't seen it for a while but almost every night I get a sudden feeling that I must wake up at either 3 am or 03:33 am. But when I open my eyes nothing and no one is there.

This is a true story that happened to me. If someone has explanations for what it is please let me know I can't sleep peacefully at night out of fear of it coming back again.

Thank you for taking the time to read my story.

I stumbled upon a wicked guide for my peculiar new hometown

I moved to Clonesburg two weeks ago for a new job. I had never lived in a place this big and crowded before so I honestly felt a little overwhelmed at first with all the options I suddenly had. A small café on every corner, restaurants with all sorts of cuisine, museums, a beautiful river... the list went on and on. Not only the many options but also the fact that I was kind of alone made it difficult for me to go and explore just yet though. As a web developer that works from home, I don't find many reasons to go outside and I'm the kind of person that always needs a reason to do something. Mindlessly going anywhere, especially alone, was my biggest pet peeve.

The tour guide I would find, however, would change all of that.

My apartment is on the highest floor of a flat building and I have crooked walls. For extra storage there are cabinets built into the walls that I could climb into completely and even move around. When I was packing out the last of my things, I crawled in and was surprised to find a lot of leftover stuff from former residents. Probably things they were too lazy to get rid of. Old buckets, cleaning supplies, broken parts of furniture. But in the very back, I spotted something different. It was hidden behind a wall of clutter but being small enough, I was able to crawl to the very back of the cabinet and pull it out.

It was an old wooden box, with layers of dust on top. Excitedly I crawled back out to inspect it in the light.

****Clonesburg 1947**** was engraved on the top of the box.

Inside I found a note, a little diary, pens and something that looked like a small stone figure as well as a bracelet. On the very top was a note, explaining the intentions of the box.



Congratulations on whoever had the luck of finding this peculiar box of wonders. It took years to assemble this astonishing list full of exciting activities and tasks for anyone to enjoy.

Now, you are probably wondering who I am and what this box is all about. Years ago I came to this town all by myself, being scared of my future and of the past that we had just endured. After the war, a dark shadow was casted over our city. To help myself and others to get through the time of darkness, I made up a game. A scavenger hunt which would last over decades and maybe even centuries.

In this box, you will find a map of the city of Clonesburg. You might notice that some places are crossed out already in different colours. These indicate explorers who have visited and succeeded in hunting down the treasures and experiences. When joining in this astonishing assignment, make sure to cross out the places you have visited in a new colour of your choosing. In the diary, you will find the first assignment together with information other players write down throughout the years. When you make it to your first location, you should be able to find the first wondrous object as well as new clues. Take the item with you and replace it with the one you have found in this box. Continue to do so until the very last point, so that there will always be something waiting for whoever explores next. The last object in the box is a metal bracelet. Wear it all throughout the game until the very end.

Make sure to follow all instructions closely. When you start the hunt, there is no way to get out until you finish it. At the end, the most precious treasure will be awaiting you. Leave the box hidden in a place for someone else to find and enjoy.

May Clonesburg treat you well.

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I couldn't believe my eyes when I read through the letter. Never in my whole life had I found something as exciting as this and while I was surprised to find it in my cabinet, I simply assumed that someone who lived here before me, must have left the box here for the next person to find. And that person was me.

I texted Spencer, an old friend of mine who happened to live in Clonesburg as well and who at the moment was my only friend here. He seemed almost as excited as me about this little gem I found and the following days we made it our mission to follow all the clues and instructions that would bring us to the treasure.

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The following parts mark the assignments we followed for each day.

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Day 1: The church.

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First of all: Now that you have begun, the game must be completed until the very last assignment. This might sound like a suggestion but, new explorer, be aware that stopping this game like a coward will be revenged thoroughly by the spirits of Clonesburg. When starting the scavenger hunt, it is of utter importance that you follow all instructions closely. Only start on a new assignment when the former one has been completed and the item has been collected and exchanged. Now to the first clue:

Follow the tracks that will guide you to the old cathedral in the center of town. Make sure to not touch any walls or other objects that could be connected to the church. As a player of the game, religious parts of Clonesburg will now harm you. When in front of the church you have to find the cursed being that had been shunned from the place a long time ago. It will guide you to the point where you will find a new box.

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"What the hell" Spencer laughed out loud "we will be punished if we stop playing?"

"Well, I will be punished. I don't think you qualify as a player of the game without this shiny bracelet" I said and held my arm in his face.

"Yeah man I'm not too sure about this strange game yet" he responded.

"Oh come on. I think it's fun. Imagine someone actually took the time to plan out all of these clues and items just to bring a smile on strangers faces. Worst that can happen is that we won't find anything."

I continued looking through the diary. On the following pages were things written in different colours with different handwriting. I assume those were former players that left clues and hints.



The cathedral is an ancient and sinful place. The devil himself tried to visit it. When visiting, do not forget to show the right amount of respect for our ancestors. P.F. 1949

The devil takes seven steps before he melts into the ground. O.Z. 1958

There is no going back. I pity you for finding this cursed box. We all should be pitied. -R.L. 1967

Follow all instructions CLOSELY. The punishments are real. T.F. 1984

Take a closer look at the devil. He will guide you. J.P. - 1995

Run while you can. Don't play this game. Don't touch any of it. Hide it and disappear from Clonesburg if you can. It might be your only chance. This is no joke. -I.G. 2012



"Well sounds like a fun game you found there dude."

"This is so strange" I whispered.

"Probably just people fucking around. We don't even know if those dates are real."

"Yeah.." I took a closer look at the figurine that I had found in the box "do you think that's what they mean by devil?" It did have small horns which were partly broken off. While it looked more like a little troll, I assume it was supposed to be the devil.

Spencer's eyes opened wide. "I've seen this before!" He grabbed his phone and started looking for something. He opened Google street view and started scrolling around.

"Hey! No Google! I doubt the people that played before had that advantage."

Spencer rolled his eyes and let his phone disappear again.

"This little devil is a miniature version of a statue in the park near the cathedral. I cycle by it all the time. I knew this creepy little face looked familiar."

My lips formed into a big smile.

"What are we waiting for then?"

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It was already dark by then but we were both determined and curious so we got on our bikes and cycled to the city cathedral. The ancient church is surrounded by a big park where people have picnics or play sports all the time. Now during night, we seemed to be the only ones around. It was eerily quiet. I looked up at the old church which was lit up with big spotlights.

"There!" Spencer ran towards the statue we had come for. It really looked like a bigger version of my figurine.

We looked around but there was nothing we could find.

"What now?"

"Maybe we have to check the church after all? I mean maybe the devil was just supposed to guide us here or something."

We walked around the building and the surrounding area. With only a few street lamps lighting up the park it was hard to spot much.

I walked up the stairs of the church and put my hand on the door to see if it was open. It wasn't.

"Wait, I think I have an idea." Spencer shouted. He was still standing next to the statue, looking through the diary.

"*The devil takes seven steps before he melts into the ground"*

He started walking towards the church. After seven steps he stopped.

We grinned at each other. The dirt at this spot looked fresher. As if someone had dug it up. Together we started digging in with our hands but it was harder than we imagined. Finally we decided to call it a day and come back tomorrow with shovels.

When I got home I felt strange. Like I was going to get ill. I thought I would throw up any minute. Finally I decided to just go to bed and hope I would be better tomorrow. I didn't want to get sick right now. I was too excited about the game. Sometime really early in the morning I got up and couldn't hold it in anymore. I ran to my bathroom and started throwing up until there was nothing left inside of me. My head was aching like crazy.

Hunching in my bathroom, I buried my face in my hands. Only then did I notice the stinging pain in my right hand. The hand I tried to push the church door open with.

There were burn marks all over it.

[Part 2](https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/ffjqp9/i_stumbled_upon_a_wicked_guide_for_my_peculiar/)

The Forest With The "Taker" [Part 1]

Hello, I haven't posted here before, excuse me with my English, it is not my first language, but I live near a forest, nothing strange with it until recently, legends have it that a person, kidnapper to be exact, died in there and was damned there by the people on purpose, this is illegal in my village and in the city itself, however, it was assumed to be false for the ridiculous claim, many of us are not ghost believers and we despise any who believes ghost.

I am scared to tell my parents this and scared to tell anyone this, not just because I can be arrested for this, but what happened in the forest after this, but I know there are believers outside this internet world, that believe and can help me, I need someone to believe me with this and I am scared to tell my parents because that could result in me being arrested, for what

I don't really know what it is called, but yes, you can be arrested for that, I will not be saying who I am and where I live, I also want to tell you what happened after this, and during this, now, I want to go on with the story now.

The Forest has strange noises, not that something in the Forest, but the Forest itself, thing of trees swaying as if they really were moving, moving, looking around the world their in, the world that they feed, the world that they see, I swear I always hear at least one noise each night no matter what, no matter if I was fully asleep, no matter if I had the most protected headphones in my ears blasting music, not even if I was deaf, I can still hear the noise of the Forest.

Something tells me, though, that it wants me to come home, that it wants me to come here, that I am the lost child, I feel the speaking soul of the Forest but refuse to hear it, but still can't look away from the thought. I want to not be here after what happened, I feel like someone is here, no, not someone, I mean the Forest, I need to leave but I have to stay or else he'll follow me.

Sorry, I kind of kept going there, anyways, me and my 5 friends went into the forest, so 6 people, we played man haunt, I think that's what it is called in the English, kind of like Hide and Seek but changed rules, I don't want to explain it, it was 5:39PM during close to Winter so it was about to be dark, the sun was up but about to be in the "Sunset" type pose, maybe a hour later of something, we made these types of rules :

1 : Going past 50 Yards away from the River (Far down River is what it's nickname is) is all you can go from the River.

2 : The Base is the Neighbor's House (Back of it)

3 : If you see a Cabin, you can't go into it (There were multiple cabins and lost/abandoned buildings there)

4 : You must wait until 3 minutes to go for the base (We did this because many of us would hide and immediately go for the base and win)

5 : All seekers get flashlights and hidere do not get flashlights (We did this to see easily)

We remembered these rules and always played with them and had a good time, but today on a, close-to-winter night, was different, we wanted to expand the range you could hide in, since we had

more friends over, beyond 50 yards of the River, and now 80 yards limit, so a 80x80x80 platform (I think), and it was the biggest mistake we made.

I will make shorts of our names, Mi (Michael), Ja (Jake), Br (Brad), Lu (Luke), Dy (Dylan), Mi, and Ja were seekers, and Br, Lu, Dy, and me are Hiders.

We said our "good lucks", our "I will win", and our "try to catch me", and went to go hide, we had to come home at least 6:40PM at this point (5:54PM).

Br decided to hide under a train hole station type thing, where a train would go through, a big, empty, and full of space place perfect for a hide and seek contest, however, and part of it was blocked off because the upper part of the concrete on the top (Overhanging the rest of the floor) fell and it brought trees and dirt with it and caved in that part, so only a small part of it is available, and it was not much but there was a boulder that was out of place and behind it was a door with a room with a chair, desk, and small backpack, nothing else.

Lu Hid on top of a big tree with a ladder next to it, it had a cabin next to it so you could jump on it and escape that way, he had a large coat that seemed like the skin of the tree, so if you looked at him via a light, you might not even notice him and it might of take a few minutes to notice it is him, the way he would escape is he would jump at the top of the ladder, jump on the roof of the cabin, run to the side or end, and jump into the ground into the path where the neighbor's were.

Dy Hid under stairs of a Cabin, this does not break rule 3 by the way, and it had walls next of the stairs so if you were under it, you couldn't be seen unless you were seen at the front of the stairs, not even the top of the stairs you can see the bottom, it had a stone platform at the bottom so it wasn't dirt, under there was a kind of vent where you could climb in and hide in, however it was blocked with a big boulder and it would be too loud for it to move it and would be too heavy.

I hid in a train, with Br, Br did know I was there, the train had the roof caved in but it had a kind of stair style so I could get on the roof, the roof had a fire alarm trapdoor on it, it was broken so it didn't make a beep or any noise. I had a idea that if I was caught, I would hide right next to the stair case and run up into the trapdoor as a escape into the other trains out in the outside.

The seekers started coming, the night shined brighter than the day, the forest sang it's windy song as we hid in our places, the places become colder by the minute, the clouds disappeared into the air it once was, the dread came back and the noises became louder, and finally, the game began.

(5:40, Game begins) Mi : "You should probably go hide now, we might only play one game."

Ja : "Yeah, good luck."

Lu : "I will win, just you watch!"

Dy : "I'll will be so fast, good luck catching me."

Br : "Let's just go, remember! 3 Minutes!"

Mi : "We remember! Hurry up now!"

And then, all of us in our hidings spots, trapped until one of them found us, or gave up and we would win, only time could time tell.

I swear when I ran, the more I ran, the more noises I heard. I swear when I ran, the more closer I got to my hiding spot, the more people I saw. I swear when I ran, the more I got farther from my house, the more I got scared. I swear when I ran, the more I got farther from my friend, the moment I realized, this was my last day, but I was too dumb at the time, I wish I just stopped or lied and said I saw something.

Everyone at their spots, the seekers coming near, and the dread coming and becoming more dreadful. I remember this conversation like it was a minute ago, right before stuff went down.

Mi : "Think someone is in that train?"

Ja : "Probably not, \[UNINTELLIGIBLE\]."

Mi : "Yeah, you're right, \[UNINTELLIGIBLE\] wouldn't be here, nor Dy. He hates disgusting places."

The Noises started, I saw it, I felt it coming toward me, but it jumped on the room and ran outside. I hear this conversation.

Mi : "Woah! What was that?"

Ja : "Stop bullshiting with me! I heard nothing."

Mi : "But who wou-"

Mi stopped, in fear, and instinct, but Ja didn't understand, I think he was just walking around. I felt the footsteps of both Ja and the thing, I hear the wind the forest is making to trick the foolish into thinking it was a normal day.

Ja : "Dude! Stop for real!"

Mi : "..."

Ja : "Mi! You asleep?"

Mi : "I am going in there for a second, go somewhere else to cover more ground..."

The voice didn't even sound like Mi, it sounded like something that you would make while trying to impersonate a witch but it's a man.

Ja : "Alright, be careful then."

Mi : "...Good luck..."

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Chapter 9

Previous chapter:

https://www.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/f4hsvu/jab768428/?utm_source=reddit-android

So I just woke up on what I consider the right side of the bed, surrounded by like 5 women I don't know who have yet to leave, hung the fuck over with absolutely no memory of what transpired last night.

I dont think Alchohol is good for me, but it gets me drunk, so whatever.

Anyway, enough with my bachelor's worries, On with the pain!

"I didn't think you would be so hard to get rid of, by all accounts your neck was broken!"

The Dean was seething, crushing the papers in his hand as he looked at us, all standing in the doorway, "take care of them." He Growls, looking at the all too familiar blob of inky goop.

Everyone was trembling with rage and anticipation as the Dean walked back towards what I saw was an elevator, the blob creature flaring with bubbles as he chuckled, it's immaculate grin parting to address me, "You thought you'd gotten rid of me, didn't you, Green?"

His voice still sandpaper to my ears, horrid and dry, clogged by miscellaneous fluid, dribbling, popping, seeping, choking, "wanna see what I learned how to do since you last saw me?"

As the creature spoke, I saw the Dean, who had paused long enough to look back, give back and get into the elevator as the creatute advanced, snail trails of black ooze left behind as he slid towards us, "I have such sights to show you..."

He reached for us only for Love to kick the floor directly in front of him, the floor under him flipping up like a pan flipping a pancake! The creature stuck to the ceiling like a sticky hand and slowly melted through, not really harming the ceiling so much as phasing through it, leaving a black smudge, a general exclamation made us all turn around, the noise had gotten the attention of team Omega.

"Holy shit you're alive!" Gray was wide eyed as he looked at me, "how?"

Ignoring him, I look to Love's leg to see if she needed to sit the fight out but, miraculously she was unharmed!

"Love...your leg!" I shouted more out of surprise than worry, She looked at me with a serious expression, "yea, yea, I know, I don't break so easily anymore, its pretty sweet, moving on to more important things, Babe." She nodded her head at the other team.

I looked at them, they had all lined up as if they were sizing us up, Omega was poised to strike, "Yea." Gray said, "Like actually dying."

I look at my team, already prepared to strike and juiced with adrenaline, nobody was standing still as Omega was squaring up as well, i drew my sword, "Guys. Get topside."

My team looked at me confusedly, I looked at them as Omega collectively groaned, "is it really the time for this? We have a deadline." Asked Dodger, I spared them an annoyed look as I turned back to my team, , "For real guys, fuck off up that elevator shaft, that call is more valuable than these idiots."

"Hey!" Shouts Grey, "We're going to be kicking your ass here in a minute!"

Edge smirked, "Finally thinking about someone other than yourself...here." he tossed me his saliva gun, "Its fully loaded."

And like that, my team left me to the tender mercies of Team Omega which was regarding this exchange with a mixture of incredulity and mirth.

"Need a bit to pump up your squirt gun? Go ahead, we'll wait." Thalo chuckled, "meanwhile I've got the running dumbshits, be right back." And like that, Thalo was gone, never to return.

"This almost seems unfair." Giggles Dodger, striking a team rocket pose as she strutted towards me, "how the hell do you think this is going to go down?"

After a few pumps I cock the saliva gun, "With all of you either dead or too hurt to hurt me."

Cicada started climbing the wall only to scream in agony as a hole opened in the wall, sucking her inside! The sound of crunching bones and shrill buglike shrieks were deafening!

Gray gasped, "Cicada! Where'd she go!?" i blinked in confusion as I saw the black splotch where she had been, was that who I thought it was?

Croatoan lunged at me with an angry yell! I tried to have a good aim, but shooting the saliva gun with only one hand, I shot a glob of super adhesive directly into his face! Forming a hard shell over his eyes and nose. He lept back, clawing at his face as Dodger rushed forward and punched me in the gut!

I took the punch, then dropped the gun, grabbing her arm, pulling her in so I could run her through! She tried to stop me but Blasphemy pierced her hands she had put in the way, then her reinforced outfit!

She screamed in pain as the blade travelled through her like a hot knife through butter! Flesh, bone and viscera giving way as I slowly impaled her! She fell forward on to me! Trying to make more noise only to have blood clog her airway! She coughed blood and the stuff splattered on my face and clothes!

As I saw the fear and uncertainty of a short life full of regret flash before her eyes, the emotion of someone about to die, I was suddenly back there, kneeling next to that poor girl in my nightmare, crying for her mother as she bled her way into an early grave, my fault, this was my fault!

"I'm sorry..."

I felt a pain in my wrist, Gray had seized hold of me, I twisted away and while doing so, halved Dodger! The only thing keeping her two halves together was her spinal chord as Her body fell to the floor.

When Croatoan finally pulled the glue from his face, He looked to Dodger, then he saw Dodger.

something broke in his eyes. He fell to his knees next to the two halves, clutching at her with his massive hands. A deep sob escaped his throat as he held her to his chest like a baby, intestines spilling on to his uniform. Gray looking at his hands which were now covered in Dodger's blood.

I had never seen anything like this from the outside before, being the way we are, JABs are like family, I had just killed their sister, I had destroyed a family, like that ooze beast before me, I had passed on my pain to them. I grip Blasphemy tight with both hands as the blood all over me began to flow into the blade, the runes that had previously been covered up by the silvered angel blood glowing through once more as the hungry blade feasted. I wanted to apologize, but Green was unrepentant, "what was that about kicking my ass?"

Gray wordlessly touched the floor, after a time, he stepped away and punched the space he had touched, the concrete shredding like flesh as his stone hard fist parted it like it was nothing!

Green rolled his eyes as he tensed up, ready for what was going to happen next, "You tried to kill my family, this is what happens when you mess with a bigger predator." As Green monologued, I noticed that Croatoan had stopped crying.

Croatoan had stood up, holding Dodger's bloodied corpse as he walked back towards the massive lizard carcass, now bleeding from sparse muscle tissue as it's lungs inhaled and exhaled ragged breaths.

Gray stopped and followed my gaze, "NO! what are you doing!" He turned to walk towards them but Croatoan held up a hand as the sinew began to creep up his legs. "We belong to the Dragon." He said for the first time since I met him, his voice was flat and quiet, the voice of an introvert. He fell on to his back as his legs gave way, "we...all...return..." his voice was silenced by more sinew as they dragged him and Dodger into the cavity of the massive carcass.

Gray's look was one of pure rage as he pulled a fist back to punch me, only to have a pool of black ooze form around his feet, he let out a shuddering cry as the creature's two overlong arms extended up from the puddle, forcing him into it as he screamed in pain, "NO! NO! YOU CAN'T!"

I watched in abject terror as the oozing black monstrosity slithered out of the black pit, smoke rising off of Gray's concrete hard skin as he slowly slipped further and further into the void, "Did you think I'd let you kill him? He belongs to me! All of them do, you were told."

Gray clutched at the creature's face only to have his fingers vanish into it, the skin parting like a corrosive membrane to graciously accept his fingers! Finally he let out a choked yell as his waist passed the boundary of the floor, that was when the creature stepped out of the morass and smiled at me again.

"Hey Green, that was pretty nuts huh?"

The rest of Gray's body slowly sunk beneath the black mass as the creature approached me.

I stepped back, "Why did you just help me?" I was desperately trying to grasp why something that wanted me dead had helped me. The creature chuckled, "Well, I wanted you! Simple as that, oh! So rude of me, we never got acquainted, I'm Agent Onyx."

Green groaned, "Of course you are...I'm getting sick of these color coded names...I'm gonna call you Larry."

Onyx shrugged, "whatever you want man, I'm literally about to eat you, so I'd defend myself if I were you."

Blasphemy whispered something to me, I could barely hear something about keeping my distance.

That's when I suddenly get an idea, as Onyx advanced I pointed my sword, "Blasphemy?"

Onyx's look of confusion was only visible for a second before a column of white light blinded me!

I opened my eyes and I was sitting at the back end of the hallway next to the elevator, the only way out that wasn't the stairs! Which were directly next to the elevator.

I look back at the chamber and see a massive hole blown in the ceiling! As I continued to look, the ceiling gave way and the tank holding the female Dragon fell through! The massive cylindrical tank holding glutinous brown liquid falling and Shattering upon the Dragon's corpse, flooding the whole sub basement with dark brown fluid!

Choosing the safer way, I stand, pulling open the door to the stairs and rushing up them just in time to get away from the flood of disgusting.

Seeing that the flood was mainly contained on the first level, I began to climb upwards.

It was then that I heard the two roars, angry and bestial, I could tell that The original dragon had fed enough, it was awake now, and worse than last time, now there was two of them.

"fuck...ME!" I shouted as I began sprinting upstairs, throwing off my stupid Prefect's Jacket as I ascended, I wasn't sure how they were going to get to the surface, but I didn't want to be in the staircase when they tried it, you see I'd seen how easy it is for them to smash through things like stone and steel and things like that.

Finally I reached the ground floor of whatever building we were in when I heard a massive crunching CRASH directly below me, a haggard but familiar booming voice calling up to me, "BOY! YOU AND I HAVE UNFINISHED BUSINESS!"

Aint gonna lie, I kinda shat myself, and it wasn't just metaphorically.

There was real fear poop in my pants, not a whole lot, not a case of debilitating poo pants, just like a single nugget stuck between my ass cheeks is all.

Anyway, as I rushed out of the staircase I saw Organization uniforms escorting terrified students and teachers alike off campus at gunpoint, I rushed over, "Guys oh my fucking god...where's my team?"

The uniformed soldier I ran into looked me up and down, then pointed his gun, "JESUS, your eye! Who're you? Are you ok? You need to get to the medical-"

I grumbled, remembering the fact that Crystal had gouged out one of my eyes, "Look, man! The name's Agent Green! I work for you assholes now tell me where the hell Team Sigma is!"

The soldier's eyes blinked and he gasped, "Oh my god, I'm so sorry! I knew you guys were here I just didn't-" i interrupted his ramblings, "SIGMA!?" he sprang to attention, "Oh! Um...they were at the Forward Operating Base camp last I saw, with Bibs, MAL and commander Pillum."

I started that way, the soldier following me, "Benz couldn't be fucked to show up?"

The soldier shook his head as he followed me, "no he's directing affairs from HQ, he IS the Grandmaster after all."

I shrug, that made sense, my fear was subsiding and giving me the knowledge that I did indeed have poop in my pants as I walked towards the FOB which was on school grounds, it was a massive segmented tan tent full to bursting with equipment and men in uniforms.

Rural France never looked so terrifying.

Finally I reached the FOB and Love came careening towards me as I opened the entrance flap, she embraced me with a happy squeal and I sighed and just walked a few feet with her attached like a barnacle, "whats wrong?" She asked after a few steps, "Love the Dragons are awake and I dont know how long it'll be before they're able to break free."

She leaps off me, "MAL wants to talk to you, she says we'll deal with that as the situation presents itself."

I follow her deeper into the FOB to where MAL is sitting at a computer with Bibs standing behind her, "How the hell is this even possible?" He asks her as I walk in,

"MAL, Bibs."

They turn towards me and smile, "Good god, Green, it's been forever!" Bibs walks up to me and I notice the ring on his finger, he had also grown a beard, we shake hands, "So, the situation is more dire than you might originally assume."

I tilt my head in genuine curiosity, "how the hell can it be worse than two dragons?"

Mal scoots away from the screen and I see a picture of the sky but with a light bright as the sun shining at a central location, several other lights all around it.

"This is...complicated." MAL puts a hand on his shoulder and sighs, I also take the time to notice her ring as well, surprisingly just as downplayed as Bib's ring.

"no, its not, it seems to be a gateway to some alternate dimension, through it, several armored winged humanoids are coming, every drone we've sent so far has been destroyed, we've shot missiles...but had the same luck."

I look at the screen, recognizing this for what it was, "Missiles won't work, these creatures are Angels, well...Archangels, or Auroras as they call themselves."

MAL nodded, "I read your report on Le Ange De Lumiere...so this is the war that The Archangel you fought promised you huh? Seems more like a skirmish, they haven't attacked yet."

A horrid idea occurs to me, "where are they right now?"

MAL pointed directly above her head, "Up there, you can see it if you look out the window."

I peek out a clear window flap and lo and behold there it fucking is, glowing in the sky like a 2nd sun, the armored Auroras troops gravitating around it, "Maybe they're here for the Dragons."

"They're not here for the Dragons." Says a familiar voice, I wheel about only to be confronted with the sheer forgettability of Nobody, standing next to him is a very well dressed and made up Noir.

"NOIR!"

"Hello mr. Green." She smiles, now in perfect english, it was almost off putting.

MAL threw up her hands, "Well fuck me come right on in! It's obviously no secret whats going on here!"

Bibs put a hand on her shoulder, "Hun I think this...it IS nobody!"

Love watched me with raised eyebrows as I hugged her, "I thought they were going to do an autopsy on you or something..."

Nobody gave me a knowing smile, "You assume too much, Agent Green, I'd never kill my own daughter."

My eyes shot wide open in shock as I looked from the generic man to the very not generic and still very (one could argue even more now than before) cute Angel halfbreed who was giving me bedroom eyes, "I'm sorry he shot you, but I didn't know then what I know now."

I put my hands on my hips as Love clings to my arm with a huff, "And what do you know?"

She looks at Nobody, "The Auroras are planning to use my kidnapping as a reason to bring about the apocalypse early, the only problem is that the Aradan Delegation has refused to take part, whatever the verdict."

I look at the picture on MAL's screen, "So they're gonna just...try and kill everyone?" I had trouble with Angels and Demons back before I had been shot in the head, honestly this felt worse, "I beat one, I don't think I can beat them all."

Noir put a hand on my shoulder, "thats sweet of you to offer, but we need you to do something much more important."

Her eyes were dead serious, "I need you to take me through that portal and give me to the Lord of Angels, it's the only way we can get out of this."

I point out the window, desperate to find an alternative, as I had sacrificed a whole part of my life to make sure that didn't happen, "What about the Dragons? I heard something about them protecting the planet!"

Nobody sighed, "an ill advised attempt by the Agency and the Institute at a contingency plan, and I am sure the Son of Apophis and his female counterpart would be good at their job, except that they themselves are evil of mind and abhorrent of body, being unable to fully die flies directly into the face of the creator...and it means that they are descendants of Leviathan, the first Dragon."

I put a hand over his mouth, "ok, shut the fuck up ok? Look, you need through the portal? I'll do it, but we need to get rid of these two fucking giant lizards."

Nobody nodded, "Oh I know, during the time you drive to the rendezvous with a VTOL aircraft at the nearby air force base, you'll be luring one or both of them into a trap of our making, to seal them away."

I look at Noir, then back at MAL who looked just as confused as I was, "And you've collabed with both the Agency and the Institute, but not the organization?"

For the first time, I saw he was at a loss, as if I'd put him on the spot with a question he hadn't anticipated, "Because...uh...because erhm..."

Suddenly Noir threw herself behind me, "He's not Nobody, he's an Auroras spy!"

Guns are pointed from all around and Nobody held up his hands, "You people are so stupid, don't you understand!? This is the only way to stop your annihilation! My Lord is giving you an out, you STUPID apes!"

I drew Blasphemy and the spy evaporated into golden mist, "You've sealed your fate!" He cackled as he slowly fled towards the window.

"No you fucking don't." I growl as I hold out Blasphemy, "can you absorb that?"

Blasphemy murmured some more and the gold dust flew out the window, "FUCK!" I shout just as the ground around the school begins to swell, "fuck they're breaking through..."

Noir follows my gaze, "The Auroras really are seeking vengeance for you attacking their crown prince and permanently crippling him, they made me say the rest...I've only ever wanted you..."

I blink, looking away as Love crosses her arms with an angry look, glaring at the two of us, "So do you have ANY clue about the portal?"

Noir nods, looking at Love in direct response to her question, "To my knowledge they can only close it from the other side...the Dragons seem to frighten them but they're convinced that they can't fly so they think it's a non issue."

Suddenly an idea hit me, I turned to MAL, "we need to lead the Dragons towards the Auroras portal! I'm going to need a fast transport."

As if on cue, there was a honk from outside the FOB, Edge and Wolf were outside sitting in a massive Jeep with a mounted Vulcan minigun in the back, they themselves were in full uniform, wearing Visored SWAT helmets and all, we all walk outside, Edge stands in his seat looking nervously at the churning turf just a few hundred feet away, "either we need to scam or we need to get up on that shit, What's the

plan?"

He tosses Love and I our uniforms respectively as I fill him in, "the Angels have the phone box and we have to make sure the Dragons get to that portal so the Angels will be forced to close it, however we have to find ourselves an air vehicle still..."

Edge groans, handing me a large handgun, "Does everything you say have to be a meme of some kind?"

I squint at him, "How could you ask such a stupid question?"

MAL shrugged as we were dressing up, "Well, memes aside, the spy wasn't lying, there IS an Air Force base we used to land here, but it's nearer to Calais than here."

I mount the vehicle once I'm done dressing, "Then we'll go to Calais to lure them away from here, come on Love."

"Babe my shirt is having issues, I think I may have grown a cup size since we got here..." She fiddled with her shirt as she strained to button it over her bodyglove, "Just leave it we have to go."

She leaves the buttons alone and hops up on to the gunners seat, "Alright, I'm ready!"

"What about me?" Asks Noir, looking slightly hurt we hadn't invited her, Love pushes her away with the toe of her boot, "I said im ready, lets go!" And Edge sped off in the general direction of the school.

I tap the top of his helmet, "Edge, get me close so I can get their attention."

Edge chuckled as he obliged, "This is what we fucking missed last time, lets see if we all end up in some backwater nunnery in Romania."

I laugh as Love hugs my arm, her prodigious chest giving my arm a second, warmer hug from inside her unbuttoned dress shirt, though it was covered by her body glove, it was still very nice, "I'd love to go to Romania! Babe you owe us all a trip now."

I kiss her forehead and Edge finally steers towards one of the massive piles of churning earth closer to the school as one of the two beasts was clawing their way to the surface!

It was the smaller Female and she snarled wordlessly at me, I took my cue to stand in my seat, "HEY THERE YOU BIG, SEXY WOMAN!"

She began to growl as she more frantically tilled up the earth in order to get out, that's when the Dragon smashed through the ground almost right next to her.

he flew upwards with wings she didn't have and she lost her grip, falling backwards into whatever sub facility they'd dug out, "I am going to enjoy this." It rumbled from on high as Edge kicked it into high gear, "TO CALAIS!" He shouted before tearing off down the dirt road.

we passed the FOB on the way with the Dragon in hot pursuit! I wasn't sure if the Organization could handle the she-Dragon by themselves, but we had bigger problems and they were bearing down on us with massive wings!

The chase was one that haunts my nightmares to this day, it was an hour to Calais and for that whole time we were dodging constant attempts at murdering us! The dragon would try and swipe at us only for Edge to accelerate or decelerate before he got us.

He eventually started trying to block our path but when the Vulcan directed at his eyes, he had to close them, and when that happened we'd make a maneuver that would force him to take flight again.

Eventually we got to Calais to see that MAL had called ahead, the populace of Calais had ALL left and the streets were now vacant.

We led a brilliant game of cat and mouse as we careened around corners and made sharp turns in order to lose our flying foe who eventually resorted to running after us at a full gallop! All the while shouting profanities and snapping at us as we screamed bloody murder!

Finally we had the air force base in sight! We were almost there, but that's when the Dragon finally caught up with us! Love shoved me out of the Jeep as it lunged and seized her in it's jaws!

I screamed and the Jeep came to a halt, Edge and Wolf looking terrified as the Dragon opened its mouth, obviously intent on crushing her, only to have her stand up and place her hands firmly against the roof of it's mouth!

The creature roared angrily as it was suddenly unable to close it's mouth, it began thrashing it's head, gargling as it's tongue attempted to flex with both of Love's heavy boots planted firmly on top of it, "GO! get to the base! Come pick us up!" Love shouted as I scrambled to my feet.

Edge nodded and peeled out, heading the way we'd been going the whole time. Meanwhile I drew Blasphemy, "Love can you move?"

She opened her mouth and was immediately silenced by an angry roar from the Dragon before it slammed it's head through a building! It withdrew it's head and I saw that Love was still there, but badly hurt! Bleeding from several cuts on her face and from under her hair.

"Hang on I'm coming!"

I rush up only for the creature to scream in agony as Love made a desperate attempt, SNAPPING the Dragon's jaws at both ends with a savage push!

The creature gave back with a pained scream and Love fell out of it's now loose hanging mouth! The bottom jaw hanging, dangling from loose sinew, the top jaw flipped up over the thing's eyes only attached via a flap of skin!

I rushed over to her and her suit was rigid under her uniform, holding her legs and arms in resting positions, this new Bodyglove must have been designed to set the bones as well as it's original purpose, "I did it again, I broke ALL my limbs...fuck me..."

I hold her close as the Dragon angrily slams it's head into the ground, roaring shrill and pained as it tried to kill someone who wasn't near it anymore.

Then it sat down, obviously not able to see or hear us as it's top jaw was broken up over its eyes, to let it's wounds Heal as the familiar sound of aircraft got closer and closer.

I looked up to see the Organization VTOL fly over, it looked like a mix between a Helicopter and a Harrier plane, landing next to us in the road as the side door opened to reveal Wolf, "Get in!"

That was when we heard the noises of bones loudly knitting themselves over even the VTOL's cacophonous engines, I picked up Love and rushed to the Vtol. I handed her to Wolf, hoisting myself up as the Vtol took off back towards where we had come.

We reached the portal without much resistance, except from the Dragon, who was also hot on our tail! The first Angel to approach the VTOL was wearing a golden helmet, concealing his face.

I opened the side door and shot the angel in the head with the huge handgun that Edge had given me! The metal of his helmet folded inward, the angel dropped out of the sky immediately and we continued our flight towards the portal, the other Angels rushing to intercept until the Dragon rammed into us! Sending both us and the Dragon into the fucking portal! A haze of metal, scales, rage and pain.

I woke up restrained inside an old interrogation room, sitting in a chair, in front of me sat a man, an old man, nondescript and smiling, "Hello Agent Green."

I slam my head into the table in exasperation, "ok look I don't buy it, I'm done with the disguises, who the hell are you really?"

The man I thought was an impostor shrugged, "I'm Nobody, THE Nobody, the one you met when you first fought that creature you call the Dragon, your enthusiasm to end the impending threat is inspiring, it delivered me home."

I blink, "Home?" Nobody nodded serenely, "I have been among mortals for too long, I'd forgotten my own name."

I roll my eyes, "who are you? God?"

After a little bit of nervous fidgeting by Nobody I stood up, "no, no no nope, no. NO!"

Nobody laughed as I began swinging my hands, "no, that's enough, stop making fun of me, it's not funny."

The being, I had previously known as Nobody stood up as well and smiled, "I am that I am."

I summoned Blasphemy, putting the blade to the old man's throat, "enough! Where the FUCK were you when I was being burned? While there were CHILDREN DYING!?"

Nobody sighed as he looked at me, his eyes somber as he looked at the blade I held, "I haven't been in power for so long...there was a coup at the beginning...They got the best of me."

I had heard enough and I was about done with his crap, I was done with all of it, the confusion, the uncertainty, my brain felt like there was a fist squeezing it, I struck at Nobody with all my strength! Only for him to take my blade in his hands, as if I hadn't swung it at all, but had handed it to him.

"What?"

He looked at me somberly, holding the blade in his hands, "So many, there are so Many suffering inside here...what would you ask in return for their safety?" I blink, "What do you mean?"

He held out the sword, "these souls grant you power, but they are imprisoned, if you let me have them, I'll grant you any boon, anything."

I pondered, I could ask anything of a literal god, I could fix world hunger, I could make sure none of this ever happened! I could have my family back...but before I could say anything, Green spoke up.

"Maybe you suck my balls, then You have a deal."

It was then that I snapped out of what apparently had been an illusion, I looked down and saw the twitching corpse of Nobody, he had my sword through his chest, inside a wound that was leaking more silver blood that was seeping into Blasphemy's blade, turns out I HAD made that swing, "Okay..." I thought, this means I get to add mental powers to the list of abilities those Auroras have, telepathic, light generating bird people with a love of the name "Nobody."

"I guess you just got PLUCKED up, bird man!" I said to nobody in particular. If I had sunglasses I would have used them to emphasize my status as a god tier shitlord.

The interrogation room around me began to dissolve and the crashed VTOL was brought into view, about 20 feet from me, it looks like we crashed through a wall into the area we were in now, the damaged building we were in (resembled a colloseum) had no ceiling, and so I could see the Dragon's bloody rampage through the Auroras ranks, plucking them out of the sky like a farmer plucking fruit as it devoured its way through this new world.

Love, Edge and Wolf were all sitting in a corner next to the crash sight, injured but quiet with their eyes glazed over.

I started shaking them awake, each of them coming to in turn as the chaos continued.

"What happened? Where are we?" Asks Wolf

Edge looks around, "Definitely on the other side of the portal...that's for sure."

Love simply quivered as her bones were still broken, looking at me tearfully, "We need to get out of here, I don't know how much longer these things'll ignore us." I say.

"Is this HEAVEN!?" Love gasped, Edge put a hand on her shoulder, "Don't think so." In a vague attempt to comfort her as we tried to look for the exit, it was during this time I had a good opportunity to look around.

The architecture of the Angel's realm was very interesting, resembling ancient Greek architecture, in form but gilded with gold and silver, we seemed to be on a floating island in a void of light that hurt to look at, in the distance I could see more islands floating along, we were the only one with a portal, which was still very open, it looked like night time on the other side.

"We've been here too long." I comment, "we need to get going before they shut this."

Everyone nodded and I shouldered Love, "Tell me someone brought a parachute..."

There were no parachutes, That put a huge wrench in our plans. Edge shrugged, "figured we'd be able to fly out of here on the VTOL."

I looked left and right, scanning the chaotic golden cityscape for anything that could help us.

The only thing I could see that would be of any use was an injured Auroras sitting in the corner clutching a bloody wing, "You!" I point, he immediately spread his wings as far apart as he could, "come and get it you mortal fuck!"

Green groaned, "Don't make me feed you to my pet." I point up at the Dragon still tearing the ranks of the Auroras to shreds, "show me how to work the Portal."

The Angel shrugged, "I do not know, throw yourselves out of it and see if that works."

I unshoulder Love, putting her down as I pop my knuckles, "you asked for this." But just as I draw back my fist, a thought occurs to me, maybe it isn't such a bad idea, for ME.

I turn back to Edge who is trying to tend to the many scrapes and cuts we all have, "Hey Edge...can you hold this location? I have a plan."

He looks at me with utter confusion as I walk over past the VTOL and out the hole it made, I was going to hop out of the portal and then I was going to hop back into another VTOL and get back, THAT was my plan as I did a swan dive out of the portal.

As I fell, I saw, to my chagrin that there was a small armada of Organization VTOLs headed for the portal already, and as I neared the ground, wind and Gforce pushing my mouth open, I could only think of how Ill advised the idea was In and of itself.

Just yeet myself however many hundreds of feet from the sky to the ground? What the hell was I thinking?

Then I hit the ground and was once bludgeoned into unconsciousness.

While unconscious I had a vivid dream that I was trying to find a woman at a Men at Work concert, they were playing my subconscious' version of Land down under and as the music played over the roaring crowd, I kept losing the girl in the crowd.

She was beautiful (surprise surprise) and native American with purple eyes and a bright green streak going through her black hair, she wore a tank top and jean shorts, she kept beckoning me as the band continued.

"Traveling in a vegemite Sandwich...on a hippy trail head full of sandwich...i met a strange lady, she made me sandwich, she took me in and gave me sandwich...and she said-"

As I finally got free of the crowd I saw the girl leaning against a lamp post by the back, I walked over to her and as I opened my mouth, the dream began to turn fuzzy.

I woke up in pain, it was a dull pain, as if the injuries had been long ago, however, similar to the dullness of the pain was the dullness of my other senses, it was as if I was inside a wall of almost transparent fuzz.

I felt a soft hand caress my face and immediately thought it was Love or Wolf, "Oh god please tell me I'm not dying...I think this is what it feels like..."

A soft, yet entirely recognizable female voice carrying a thick french accent greeted my bleary ears, "no, My love, you are not dying, you are healing, and as with all things, it takes time...sleep now..."

And with most of my senses unable to tell me much more,

I passed out once again.

Thank you for reading, I'll be writing more about this, because believe it or not I'm not done with the odd shit in my life, it never gets this weird ever again, I promise,

(up until the events of last year which I've already written all about)

Stay safe you guys.

The Plague Burden Part 1

"The delivery guy must be on his way , I have to make sure that everything is properly sanitised before he arrives" I thought as I tightened my gloves. I have to make sure every groove is thoroughly cleaned , its my responsibility after all.

I started spraying it all along the entrance , the door , the ridges on the door , carpet , below it , even the garbage. "I've cleaned every bit , what could go wrong now? "

I assured myself as I went inside and locked the door to make sure no one could come in. I took a sigh of relief.

Whatever I live in , I can't call it a house. It just has one room with a bed and a small partition in which the whole bathroom is compressed , no kitchen , no dining room , no hall. The more small it is, the more clean it would be. That's what I was instructed very strictly. So basically I have to order food and stuff online but being extremely careful of germs.

After a few minutes I heard a knock on my door.

"Who's there?" I asked nervously

"Sir it's your order , 20 pieces of chic..."

"Okay got it , leave the food on the doorstep" that was the procedure actually , I can't let them come inside and take the risk.

"Sir , but we have been instructed to give the food to the owners , you need to open the door" he said in a lunatic tone

"I SAID PLACE THE FRICKIN ORDER ON THE DOORSTEP!!" I yelled with all the rage I had. Why don't they listen to me at once? It's not my fault afterall , I don't even know why it is happening to me.

My name is Cooper , and no I am not a germaphobe. It's a lot more complicated than you think. It started with a severe pain in my stomach , I lived alone so nobody but Siri called the ambulance , I almost passed out while the doctors took me into the ambulance.

I woke up being surrounded to some masked men , my vision was still blurry and I was exposed to bright light , it took my eyes few minutes to adjust to the light. As I focused on one of the faces I realised that they were doctors , wearing gas masks.

"We still don't know the symptoms" , one of them mumbled

"Then what about observing , Sherlock?" , the other replied in what seemed like a sarcastic tone.

As I regained my memory , I tried to get up on my bed , confused as I asked in a loud and concerning tone "Where Am I? What the hell is going on here?" , only to find out that my limbs were tied as if I was possessed and they were gonna do some kind of exorcism on me. "Quick , give him the anesthesia , we need to buy more time" , one of them yelled as they injected me , I was too weak to resist.

The next thing I remember that I woke up next to a team of doctors watching me through a glass door. Now I was told everything that was happening to me. It was a disease , rare , no not rare , it was the first time anyone was diagnosed with it , so it was worse than rare. They told me it would give me 5 hours of regular muscle contractions periodically , and a severe cyst that is meant to consume me has begun. They didn't knew how it came to me but I was the only one so they were relieved. Relieved that it was just one case and not becoming an epidemic or worse.

Unfortunately , it wasn't a relief for me. They told me it can't be cured , I couldn't understand the reason , I wasn't a doctor. The thing that I understood was that the infection spreads from touch due to cyst and from air too. I was meant to be completely isolated from others , my life was going to become hell and I saw it coming.

They told me that they couldn't kill me , so I have to live this way now. I have a responsibility , I have to carry this burden throughout my whole. I couldn't tell this even to my close ones to not cause any panic , I broke my ties with all my friends , my love , my family living in a completely different city. For them I was dead now.

I have to take certain measures so that it doesn't becomes a Pandemic and ends the human race. The government is with me but they can only provide me a safe place with some equipments that I need to use like air filter masks and gloves. I have to properly spray and clean whole house , the garbage I have to throw , my excretions , and avoiding human contact.

My life has become hell , sometimes I curse those doctors for not killing. The painful muscle contraction kills me slowly every night. The cysts covering my entire genitals , legs and stomach. This is my lifestyle now. I have to live this way for the sake of the world , I have to carry this burden.

I moved towards the door to grab my food wishing that the delivery guy did not mind me yelling at him, as I opened the door , the guy was still standing there.....

I get stuck in time every 2 months for days.

Hello, everyone. For some background, I was playing baseball when a ball hit my head, hard. And since then every 2 months, for some days, I get stuck in time, when in reality, its only been some hours.

So, I was home one day, doing some work as usual, until everything stopped, my vision went black, and one second after, which felt like minutes, I woke up, dizzy, not knowing what had happened, I cheked the time, my phone said 2:25 PM

"Weird," I thought, it was only 1:30.

What came to mind that I must have blacked out for an hour, but I was in a completly different room, I was in my living room. I had a small panic attack, my brain started to have anxiety, I looked at my living room clock. 2:25 PM

My body was as light as a feather, like I was, dead.

I tried to pinch myself, it was reality, or so I thought.

I tried to pass the time, thinking that it was still a dream, My light weight body, now was almost ready to float from the ground, if a little wind blew, I would be blown away.

Hours after, I cheked the clock. 2:25 PM.

"No no no, this isn't real.. How is this possible?"

I cheked my phone, 2:25 Pm

I was going into a stage of psychosis, What felt like hours, but every thing related with time, kept flashing 2:25 PM.

Everything stared to move, Coming close too me, starting to crush me.. Until they went back, I could see blood pouring out of my skin, rash and blisters everywhere.

I started to cry, pain was felt everywhere, legs, arms, head,chest.

I was screaming, but no word came out. Only vibrations, nothing else, my ears had failed me, my vision every hour kept getting worse, I was scared for my life, trying to scream for help, but no one could hear.

I went out to my balcony, to my suprise, nothing moved, the birds that were flying were seeminglylessly syoped by nothing, like a transparent wall.

I kept shouting, or more or less trying too shout, every person that I saw outside had stopped. I was scared to go outside, fearing I could not get back in. I had forgot that I had my keys, but all the fear made me forget.

"NOO, STOP IT, PLEASE!" I kept shouting, until a black, figure of a man showed up. Unlike anything else, every 30 minutes he takes a step, I glanced to take a sight at the clock, which was mocking me with the same 2:25 PM. I was scared of him, But I could not do nothing, he came closer, closer and

closer, everytime he reaches me, he whispers something into my ear, A letter, Or 2. And then I would wake up, right where I had "blacked out"

Right until now, I've captured These letters,

G,E,T, H,E,L

I'm thinking that hes going to say "Get help" but we will see what he will say, Thats all for now, I will edit this post when it happens again, And I will answer any questions. One more thing, sometimes it happens when I sleep, So I cant really sleep.

Goodbye, everyone.

My sleep Paralysis Demon came alive.

Most creepiest shit that happened to me was a 9-foot tall dark creature. He didn't have fingers, he had 3 Razor sharp claws and every 2 weeks I would get sleep Paralysis of him coming in my room and just looking at me. I couldn't see his face but he had horns and shit. At some point I got paranoid and almost got heart attacks. I think he knew i was scared, he started to shriek at me. The noise was so terrifying. It was like a little girl crying but 10x louder.

At this point I would get dreams instead of sleep Paralysis. I knew he was in my room. I could feel him. It was like he was challenging me. I felt like i was in a minigame. Everytime he'd come to me i would have to run. Usually I'd jump down the stairs and I'd snap my neck to wake up. One time I went on a holiday and he was there too. But this time it was different. He caught me. I fell down and he crawled onto me. He started eating me. Worst thing is I felt it. He ate my arm off and started shrieking at me. It was so loud. I woke up and I was shitting bricks.

I became paranoid after these dreams. I wouldn't sleep. I'd usually get 2-3 hours sleep everyday. I would see the Creature in real life. I saw him in the mirror, when I'd go to work, when I'd wake up he would look at me through the door and quickly disappear.

I saw a doctor and he told me to have these prescription pills for hallucinations. They worked really well. I stopped seeing him for a while. But the scariest shit was he knew it too. I was having sleep Paralysis everyday now. He would come up to me and say, "I know what you're doing, you won't get rid of me, you can't abolish me, you can only kill me..." Then he said some weird shit, it didn't sound English, it sounded like a different language.

The pills got rid of the creature in real life, but I still had him in dreams.

One day I had a dream. I was at home and the stairs I usually jump from to kill myself were gone. There were no light switches. I had this badass sword too. I heard his shriek from the living room. I came in and saw him with my dog in his mouth crunching on his bones, terrifying shit.

I used common sense and tried to stab him with the sword. I stabbed him in the stomach and he didn't bleed but my blood and all the blood of everyone he ate.

He looked at me and said, "You know who I am...Right?"

I woke up and i never got sleep Paralysis or nightmares again. But this shit came up next. I stopped taking the pills and thought I was good. But one morning I woke up and went go brush my teeth and looked in the mirror.

I was the creature.

Then I woke up again. Most horrifying 5 years of my life.

I spent seven days on North Sentinel Island, and I lived to tell the tale. (Part 2)

[Part 1](https://old.reddit.com/r/nosleep/comments/fenc10/i_spent_seven_days_on_north_sentinel_island_and_i/)

I felt my blood start to boil and pressed the transmit button on the microphone on my lapel. Then I started whispering furiously into the mouthpiece.

"Dirk what kind of sick games are you guys playing here? Those two poor kids will be dead before the top of the hour if you don't turn that Zodiac around and pick them up!"

I let go of the button, and listened to the static in my ear.

"For fuck's sake, answer me Dirk."

Another few moments passed, and I was about to press it again when I heard Dirk's voice in my ear, calm and collected.

"Listen Mike, I know I didn't tell you about this, but rest assured it wasn't my decision. I'm just an employee like yourself."

"They are going to get killed, Dirk! When the locals see them, they'll chop them to pieces. Jesus Christ, they're only kids. You can't allow that to happen."

There was some more static on the line, and for a moment or two, I thought that Dirk had gone away, but then he started talking again.

"Would it make you feel any better Mike if I told you about why they are here, and give you a lowdown on the crimes they have committed?"

"What do you mean, crimes they have committed?" I could hear him sigh on the other end and then clear his throat.

"They're methheads, Mike. Two weeks ago in Bangkok in a drug induced psychosis, they cut up the stomach of their three year old daughter. After they'd finished doing that, they cut her head off and placed it on the windowsill in their living room. Trust me Mike, these are some truly horrendous people and they deserve everything that's coming to them."

I didn't answer and Dirk continued, his voice all of a sudden more matter-of-factly.

"Your job is to keep an eye on them 24/7 from now on. You're not allowed to contact them, or try to warn them about the natives. And if they are discovered, you are to record the entire thing. I don't believe I have to remind you of your obligations to the organisation, Mike. That's it, good luck and over and out."

And thus my real mission on North Sentinel Island began. I was the director and sole member of the team that had been tasked with documenting a real life snuff movie, involving two kids barely out of

high school. I closed my eyes and took half a dozen deep breaths, before I picked up the binoculars again and started on my new assignment.

Nothing happened on that first day other than me getting bored out of my brains having to spend thirty hours straight keeping an eye on a young couple hanging out on a beach. But I was a professional, and I had spent more time than that doing surveillance work, so I managed to stick it out. It also gave me ample opportunity to think about what Dirk had told me, about the crime that the couple were supposed to have carried out. If it was true, and I didn't have any reason to doubt that it wasn't, I didn't really care what happened to the two of them.

I can tolerate a lot of things as far as violence and crimes are concerned, but I absolutely cannot stand people who harm young children, period. In that regard, my mission became slightly easier to accept. And things certainly started to become more interesting the following day. I have since asked Dirk if the couple had been given any instructions before they were set ashore, but he has always denied this. He simply said that the couple took it upon themselves.

What they did was to make their way into the forest, toward the centre of the island, toward the area where the natives were hanging out. And as I had been instructed to do, I followed behind them, observing their every move. It was quite easy to do, given how loud they were. Ever seen Hollywood movies depicting young American backpackers in Southeast Asia? They're always loud and rowdy, and they stand out like a cat in a swimming pool. And this young couple played the role very well.

Both of them were what I would describe as laid back, pot smoking, hippie types. The guy, who the woman only ever referred to as Chase had long blonde hair tied back into a ponytail and wore a dirty old sweatband around his head. Every second word coming out of his mouth seemed to be take it easy, cool and awesome. And after having to spend twelve hours listening to it the first day, I guess you could say that it was starting to rub me the wrong way.

The young woman was slightly less annoying, and I'm not quite sure if that was because she talked a whole lot less than Chase. I guess I'll never really know the answer to that question. She had the same long hair as her partner, and she was quite attractive.

I've often wondered since, how long they would have survived if they'd just stayed on that beach, going for the occasional swim and just dozing off under their makeshift shelter, which was a piece of tarpaulin stretched out in a forty five degree angle from a rope strung between two poles. If luck had been on their side, then maybe they would have lasted a few extra days, maybe even a week. It's impossible to tell. And given that they didn't, it's an exercise in futility to go on about it. The truth of the matter is that they had only been walking inland for less than an hour before things started to go downhill.

It started with the strange noises. To me it sounded like someone was regurgitating their own vocal cords. My heart skipped a beat, and straight away I felt the adrenaline rush into my bloodstream. These were not noises made by any of the animals. These were human made sounds, something that was confirmed a few moments later when the birds in the trees above us all of a sudden took off.

I froze and stood absolutely still, fearing that we were very close to the natives. The young duo however seemed oblivious to it all, and they kept on walking, talking just as loudly as they had before.

Oh my god, I thought, they are going to walk straight into them. Then I immediately realised that the same thing applied to me. I had no idea where the natives were. I suspected that they were somewhere ahead of us, but trying to pinpoint the exact location of a sound in the jungle is extremely difficult, and

for all I knew, they could be behind us. It was also a real possibility that they already had a visual on us, and that they were getting ready to strike.

'Fuck!' Why did I get tricked into spying on these kids? I should have insisted on sticking to the original mission and moved around in my own pace. This was crazy, and it could very well get me killed.

I quickly scanned my surroundings, but was unable to see anyone apart from the young couple, who were walking ahead of me without the slightest idea of the precarious situation they were in. My heart was hammering away now, and I was wound taut as a piano wire. And for the first time since I'd set foot on the island, I started to feel scared.

The strange sounds continued and I could tell that whoever caused them were approaching. I kneeled down and rested on my haunches. Then I reached down and grabbed the knife from the sheath attached to my leg. I clutched it tightly and held it in front of my chest, the hand holding it shaking badly. And there and then it dawned on me that I might have to use it before too long.

There was a big tree about twenty yards up ahead, and I decided to make a dash for it. I took a deep breath, stepped away from the bush I was hiding behind and made my way toward it.

The strange sounds were very close now, and I was finally able to pinpoint where they were coming from. They were coming from directly ahead of us, from the top of the slight hill. I made it safely over to the tree, and carefully stuck my head out to have a look and that's when it started.

There was a whooshing sound, and then the familiar thump that an arrow makes whenever it imbeds itself in a tree trunk.

I couldn't see where it hit, but I could see Chase turn toward the right and stare at something, so I suspected that the arrow had hit the tree next to him. I was about forty yards behind the young couple, slightly to the left and at a slightly lower elevation.

It took a second or two before they reacted to the arrow, but when they did it was with a loud, "Holy Fuck!" A few more seconds passed, and I could hear the whooshing sounds of a few more arrows. But still they were not hitting their targets.

But this time, the arrows did jolt the young couple out of their paralysis, and they did what most normal people would have done in their situation. They threw themselves around and bolted back in the direction they'd come from. A few moments later I got my second glimpse of the natives since arriving on the island, and this time they were a lot more agitated. There were four of them, probably hunters out looking for food who had accidentally come across the young couple.

I stayed where I was, not moving a single muscle. The key to avoid getting spotted in any environment, apart from using the right camouflage, is not to make any sudden movements. Instead I followed them with the tiny camera attached to my hat. I turned my head very slowly, doing my upmost to do it as smoothly as possible.

This was what the members of Fear Inc. wanted to see, and this was what they paid their premium memberships for. This and the scenes that would play out when the hunters finally caught up with the young couple and killed them. What a fucking sick and messed up world this was, I thought to myself.

I waited until the natives had passed me, and was relieved to discover that they hadn't noticed me. Then I counted to three and pushed myself away from the tree. And this time, I was running too. Not that there was any real danger of losing track of them, the young woman was screaming hysterically and the natives were making their loud regurgitating sounds. At the same time they were sending off more arrows, and I could see one of them throwing a spear.

I stepped out of the vegetation and found a natural path that I could follow, about forty yards or thereabouts behind the natives and slightly to their right. We were making our way back toward the beach.

Millions of thoughts were racing through my head at that very moment. But the one that kept repeating itself was whether the young couple was going to make it out of the forest or not. I also wondered if they realised the futility of their actions. That it didn't matter how long they ran for, that in the end, the natives would catch up with them and this whole thing would come to an abrupt end. Their fates had been sealed the moment they jumped out of that Zodiac.

I kept on running for another minute, and then I stopped and took cover behind a tree. I could see the woman lying on the ground, her hands pressed against her thigh. There was an arrow there and blood was seeping out through the wound. I didn't see when it struck her. But I did see the moment when the natives caught up with her.

She was screaming frantically, and when they stopped in front of her, her arms shot out to protect herself. In addition to this, she was kicking with her good leg, as if she believed that this would somehow keep them at bay. But she was no match for the guy with the spear, who ran forward, holding it high above his head with both hands and then thrusting it in a quick downward motion.

The weapon hit her lower abdomen, and I was able to see the wooden weapon bury itself into her body. Her face contorted in pain, and the screams intensified. I was only thirty yards away and I could see everything that was going on.

Then the others joined in. They were shooting arrows at her and hitting her with what looked like mattocks and scythes. And the only words that can truly describe what I was witnessing were barbaric savagery. They were attacking her like she was a worthless rodent. The regurgitating sounds were interspersed with the sick slashing sounds of the sharp implements piercing her skin and the hard wooden clubs hitting her bones, shattering them.

I felt physically ill and I twitched uncontrollably. This was on par with the incident I had witnessed in the Congo some years earlier.

The woman had by this stage realised that facing them with her arms stretched out was not a good strategy, and against all odds she had managed to turn over onto her side and was now attempting to drag herself away. But it was no use, the injuries she had sustained had tapped her of all her strength, and it was only a matter of time before it would be all over.

And as it turned out, I didn't have to wait for that long. A few moments later it came to a quick end when the native with the spear rammed it through the back of her neck and plunged the sharp tip through her throat. At that point everything stopped. Her attempts at getting away, the hysterical screams, and I guess, her will to live.

It had taken less than four minutes from the time the natives had first discovered the young couple until the time the woman was lying motionlessly on the ground, blood covering most of her body. I looked around, but her boyfriend was nowhere to be seen. He was probably still running toward the beach, trying to save his own hide.

I remember having ambivalent feelings about his actions. On one hand he was a coward for leaving his girlfriend behind, but on the other hand, he was doing what most people do when they're in full blown panic mode. Trying to get away from the imminent threat. I also reminded myself of what they had done to their little girl. Her treatment had been just as bad as the one I had just witnessed. I held on to that thought in order to better deal mentally with what I had just seen.

They didn't pursue her boyfriend, at least not straight away. There were other things to take care of, such as tying vines around the young woman's head and hoisting her up from the forest floor. They used a thick branch to achieve this, and when her legs were about two feet off the ground, they tied vines around her ankles and secured those to trees nearby, ensuring that her body remained still.

That's when they literally started to gut her. One of the hunters stepped forward and removed a sharp metal like object from a rope slung over his shoulder. He then proceeded to push the object against the woman's lower abdomen, really ramming it in there. With a quick upward movement, the metal object sliced its way up to the solar plexus region and all the innards came pouring out like a bucketful of gore.

I forced myself to look at it, careful not to move the camera away from the action. The organisation would no doubt zoom in on the gruesome scene, quite possibly even slow it down so that the members wouldn't miss a thing.

They spent an hour mutilating the body before they finally moved on, walking in the direction of the beach and the boyfriend that had managed to escape. And I followed after them, very mindful of what would happen if they ever caught a glimpse of me.

For the next seven hours, I was tailing the hunters around the southern tip of the island. They split up into two groups, which made my job considerably more complicated. Two of them were patrolling the tree line closest to the beach, while the other two focused on the area further inland.

They spent half an hour or thereabouts studying the campsite when they eventually found it, going through the contents of the backpacks. But as far as I could tell, they didn't take anything with them. Maybe they intended to return the following day and grab it then. Apparently catching the guy was more important for the time being. Besides, who was going to take off with their newly acquired stuff anyway?

They then resumed their search. I don't know if they were able to follow the guy's spoor, but if they were, they certainly didn't do a very good job at it because they weren't able to locate him that day.

A few hours before sundown, they left the area and I was able to take a quick break to get something to eat and notify Dirk of what had happened. Then I spent the remaining hours of daylight trying to pick up the trail of the guy, which I found just before the sun dipped below the horizon. I couldn't actually see him, but I could see the faint footprints leading to his hiding spot. He had done the right thing and tried to cover his tracks as best as he could by smoothing the sand behind him. But seeing the arrows sink

into the tree next to him when he had first crossed path with the natives, and knowing that his girlfriend had been captured, not to mention having to listen to the horrific cries as he ran away, must have shaken him to the bone. And thus he had been sloppy when he made his way across the beach and not taken enough time to do a thorough job. But I knew he was there and I intended to get a visual on him later that evening while wearing my night vision goggles.

The place he had chosen was behind a cluster of boulders right next to the ocean, where he wasn't visible from the forest. If you only had to hide for a few hours, the spot would have been perfect. But if you had to spend a prolonged period there, it wouldn't do you any good. There was no natural cover, and after a few hours in the hot daytime sun without any water your brain would start to fry. A good strategy would have been to move to another location after the sun went down, then head back to the campsite, get some water and provisions and find a new location to lay low. But the guy was not an experienced soldier, and he had just witnessed a very traumatic episode, so he remained where he was.

I did get a visual on him, a few hours after sundown, and he was literally hanging onto the boulder for dear life, his face pressed into the rock as if it would somehow make it harder for the natives to spot him.

That night as I settled into my new hiding spot overlooking the cluster of boulders, I knew that he wouldn't see another sunset. The natives would resume their search the following morning, and they would give him the same treatment that his girlfriend had received. A brutal and very painful death. One part of me felt a tiny bit of sympathy for him, but the other and much more dominant part of my brain felt that he was getting his just dessert. In my opinion child killers deserves no mercy.

I was right about the natives resuming their search the following day. I saw them approach the section of boulders just after nine thirty in the morning. And this time there were a whole lot more of them. I counted seven men on the beach, and I guessed that there were probably more of them scouring the forest. The sight made me slightly apprehensive. At that point I had no idea how good they were at reading spoor and how thorough they would be. If they decided to do a proper search of the entire island, I could find myself in a whole lot of trouble, and I could quite possibly be their third victim.

I tried to brush aside the thoughts and worry about that later on should my fears turn into reality. For now, the only thing I had to focus on was the child killer hiding behind the boulder and his rendezvous with death.

The natives grew in size in my binoculars, and they were now less than a hundred yards away. Very carefully, I pushed the record button on the camera and put the binoculars aside, and prepared myself for what was about to happen next.

They discovered him less than half a minute later, when one of the hunters went behind the big stone. I couldn't see what happened at that exact moment, but I could see the guy a few seconds later when he jumped into the water, and I could see the spear that came flying after him moments later. The water immediately turned red, and the hunter that had thrown the spear jumped out after him. A struggle ensued, and some of the other hunters joined the fray.

One of them pushed the guy's head under water and held it there until he stopped moving. I guess the whole thing took less than a minute. Then they dragged the guy ashore and started stabbing him with

their scythe like weapons up on the beach. The bright sand turned red and the body jerked and twisted every time it was hit.

They were going at it with an aggressiveness that I found hard to fathom. They really hated the guy, and they really wanted to kill him. And the only crime he was guilty of in their eyes was coming ashore on their island. They continued for another couple of minutes, and by that stage the guy was truly dead. His body looked like a big piece of flesh that had been dipped in a tub of red dye. Parts of the skin had been peeled away from his muscles, and I could see right down to the bone.

When they were done, another very unnerving thing happened. One of the hunters all of a sudden ran toward my hiding spot. I felt my blood go cold, and I had to will myself to lay still. There was no way that he could have seen me. Then when he was about twenty yards away, he came to an abrupt stop and raised his hands in the air. His upper body was covered in the victim's blood, and he had a feral look on his face, as if he had ingested some very potent drugs. The bow in his hand was looking extremely menacing, and I hoped that he wasn't about to fire one of those arrows in my direction.

Luckily he didn't, but he started shouting and screaming and hopping up and down. I've often thought later on that he must have suspected that there were other unwanted people on the island, and that it was his way of letting them know that they were next. This routine went on for another few minutes, before he turned around and walked back to the others.

The episode had really shaken me up and I closed my eyes and focused on my breathing. When I opened them again, I could see the natives were in the process of dragging the guy by the legs further up on the beach. Unfortunately his head was turned in my direction and I was able to see his face. His mouth was wide open, as were his eyes, and he reminded me of a dead fish, staring stupidly into the distance. It was a horrendous way to die, even though he himself had committed a horrendous crime. Maybe god, that is if he actually exists, would have mercy on his soul and take him into his fold. But even if that didn't happen and he was sent straight down to hell, it couldn't be much worse than what he had gone through for the last minute of his life.

I spent another five days on the island after that. And as I had expected the natives did a thorough search of the place. For the next three days they went over the southern and western part of the island. And a few times, I was very close to getting discovered. One of the natives passed less than three feet away from the ditch where I was lying under a thick cover of leaves and branches. I could see the scars on his legs and the thick soles of his feet. I could also see the bottom part of his spear that he used as a walking stick. But thankfully, he didn't notice me and seven days after I first set foot on the island, I left the place.

I swam out of the lagoon, attached my aqua lung, flippers and weight belt, and continued another mile out from the shore. There I signalled with my flashlight and guided the Zodiac to my position. I had survived my mission yet again and earned my completion fee. Now all I wanted to do was to relax for a few weeks, recharge my batteries and try to get the terrible things I'd seen on that Island out of my system. I couldn't wait to return to civilisation and live like a normal person for a while.

I promised that I'd tell you about two of the missions I went on during my time in Fear Inc, and that's a promise I intend to keep. This second mission was literally the polar opposite of the first one. It took place in Grozny in Chechnya during the height of the winter, and thus it was a bitterly cold experience. On one day the temperature actually dipped down to fifteen degrees below zero. And unlike on North Sentinel Island which was sparsely populated, in Grozny there were people all over the place. Civilians trying to flee, Russian troops and Chechen paramilitaries, who to everyone's surprise actually ended up slaughtering the Russian invaders.

The battle of Grozny has been described as hell on earth by the soldiers who were there, and I think it's a very fitting description. In the seven days that I was there, more than ten thousand people lost their lives, including several thousand Russian soldiers on New Year's Eve alone.

The Grozny assignment also stands out in my memory given that it was at the early stages of my career with Fear Inc. It was also among the ones that I was feeling very apprehensive about before starting on it.

To be continued.

There was a sound, and then there was nothing.

There was a sound. It wasn't particularly out of the ordinary, just a sort of ringing in the air, the kind you hear if you've got tinnitus. It started quietly, and initially, nobody paid attention to it. People thought it was just their mind, or that it was an alarm somewhere.

After two days, it made the news. It got progressively louder; unnoticeable at first but within a day, it was loud enough to give you a headache, and within two, it was constantly painful. Of course, we're human; there was mass hysteria by this point. People began stocking up on supplies in fear of the apocalypse; by day four, you couldn't find food in shops. By day five, it all fell silent. Not because the sound had stopped, oh no. The sound had gotten so loud that people's eardrums had burst. The hospitals were overloaded, but nothing could be done - after all, the doctors were all suffering from the same thing, and nobody understood. Those who were weaker became brain damaged, even comatose. For the rest of us, we had to adjust.

It was difficult, adjusting. I wanted to cry every time I saw my collection of CDs in the corner of my room. Knowing that I'd never hear the blissful sound of Gerard Way's voice again was possibly more agonising than the sound had been. Nonetheless, I adjusted, eventually.

Months passed, with no other occurrences out of the ordinary. The world was learning new ways to communicate; those who were already deaf taught people sign language, and people began to settle into the way things were now. That being said, industries were ruined. Musicians lost everything they had, voice actors becoming redundant. People lost their homes, entire families seen huddling in the street.

But then a new change came. It was immediately noticeable, when the number of missing persons cases spiked by 812% within a week. There was a pattern with these first disappearances; all of the victims had lived alone or were homeless. Nobody knew how they'd disappeared, just that one night they'd be there, and then come morning they'd be gone. People were too scared to talk about it, scared that it was all part of a big conspiracy and that if they mentioned it, they'd be taken too. They didn't want to be the next loner or homeless person to have their face on milk cartons and newspapers.

What was more worrying however, was when the pattern stopped. They'd come for anyone now. The common conspiracy is that they deafened us, to make us easy prey. Why? Well, the only way you can see them coming for you is the path of destruction they leave. There's no doubt that the sounds of buildings crashing down when they come for us would alert us. But now? If your back is turned, you have no idea. Not until they wrap their transparent claws around your throat and rip it open.

I had my own experience with them, about a month ago. My little brother was playing with his toy trucks in the back garden, occasionally signing to me the story he was telling in his game. Five minutes, I was gone. Five minutes, to get a drink of lemonade. Five minutes is all it took. I stepped back outside, ready to ask my little brother about the adventures of Bear and his truck, but... He simply wasn't there. The only thing I remember coherently was glass cutting into my foot as I dropped it, when I looked up and saw my little brother, suspended in mid-air, seemingly by nothing, his mouth wide in the motion of crying. I saw that, and then... Nothing. He disappeared.

Since then, I've been scared to leave my house, only going for food and water, for a maximum of an hour at a time. I know that thing saw me, even though I didn't see it. Sometimes, when I'm out, I'll feel a sensation of a being, breathing down my neck, ready to take me. I live in terror, waiting for it to take me.

Rumour has it that when they take you, you gain your hearing back long enough to hear the only sound left - the sound of these creatures tearing apart what's left of us, piece by piece.

Taken - Part 1

I woke up in a damp cold room, I could barely move my legs. My hands were bound behind me with what I believed to be zip ties. There was a piece of glass lodged in my upper leg. I couldn't see out of my right eye. 'Holy shit...' I thought to myself. I couldn't remember the night before. I heard a clang above me.

My eyes adjusted to the dark. I looked around, there was a metal furnace in one of the corners of the basement I appeared to be in. Old wooden stairs in another corner. I saw a tape player in the corner of the room. I was barely able to crawl on my knees to the small item. It had no tape in it however but I made sure to keep it with me. I layed down on the cold floor and thought the hell was going on.

I then realized that the clangs above me was something hanging on a rope that was hitting the wall every few seconds. It was a small rectangle. I painfully stumbled towards it and was barely able to jump up enough to knock it down with my forehead. I turned around and crouched down, sliding the tape into the tape player and clicking the play button.

White noise for a few moments and then some creepy voice spoke barely audible 'By now your eyes must have adjusted to the darkness and have obtained the tape player and this tape. In 15 minutes this room will fill up with steam unless you are able to turn off the furnace in the corner. After doing this you have to obtain the burning hot key inside the furnace. Even if the burning hot steam doesn't boil your blood, the key will be melted.'

The tape began counting down from 15 minutes in a robotic voice. I began panicking. I gripped my fists. I needed to do something quick. I looked at the furnace and took another look around the room. 14:30 seconds. The shard of glass in my leg. 'FUCK' I thought to myself as I panicked to come up with a way out of this. The shard in my leg, if I didn't find a way to patch up that wound I would be fucked. I came up with an idea. I leaned down and carefully placed my mouth onto the shard of glass and I winced in pain.

I yanked my head upwards and yelled in pain, blood gushed everywhere. I dropped the glass and shuffled grabbing the glass carefully with my hand. I cut a piece of the dirty hoodie I was wearing and dropped the glass. 'Wait' I stopped and dropped it. The wound would be infected if I didn't somehow keep it from being infected.

I knew what I had to do and shuffled towards a chicken bone in the corner. It was covered in maggots, it was the only way. I picked them up and moved them away from the chicken bone. I put the maggots into my mouth and spat them onto the wound, and then I wrapped the wound in the piece of cloth. The maggots would suck out all the germs of my leg, die and fall back onto the ground after a few moments. Now it was time to shut off the furnace.

AUTHORS NOTE -15 upvotes and a prequel will be made that I will link here when it comes out. If that prequel gets 15 upvotes then part 2 will be made! This is my first time making a scary story and I hope you like it!

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AUTHORS NOTE - I will make part 2 soon, please keep an eye out for it! I hope you like my story that I've made. I have many ideas for later parts so please keep an eye out. COMment your opinion and feedback please!