
It started when I saw the eyes—not the big ones, not The Watcher. The little ones. The ones it left behind to keep count. The little ones you could never keep track of. But I did. I always did.
The ones where, if you brought it to another, they stated you were mentally unwell, unfit, dreaded.
I cataloged them at first—symbolic inventory, behavioral triggers, memetic drift curves. That's what you do when you're scared and still think you're smarter. But then I began to feel known. Not watched—known. The more I saw, the more it took from me and replaced.

I used to be Dr. Esmeralda Cree, Psychological Division Lead. I have credentials, transcripts, clearance levels. Maybe I still am somehow. Still myself.

She continued to frantically type in her office, seemingly leaving room for mistakes, typos. She felt the need to digitize everything. She had long filled her filing cabinets with test logs, pictures, narratives... evaluations.

Most memetic hazards don't take lives just because you know about them, or even when you know too much of their existence. Yet this one did. It took, and took parts of you—little by little—before taking you entirely. You were nearly just a shell of yourself, if you were lucky.

Sometimes it drives you to the verge of your own mental stability. A crisis. When people began to discover it, most showed no signs of suicidal ideation nor mental health disorders—yet were found dead with a gunshot to the head, the face. Anywhere it was lethal. Somewhere they wouldn't be able to see in death.

Sometimes, with that, it wouldn't follow you. It would merely detach itself.

It wanted to be seen.

She kept all the lights on now. Bright. Blinding. False security in illumination. The last four deaths had occurred in darkness.

Something she could have prevented, somehow.

She pulled another small vial from a drawer in her desk, Y blockers. A disgustingly orangeish liquid that stabilized your mental state. An only hope for her and those around her who were exposed, something to buy themselves time.

Amnestics seemed to have begun, failing personnel would still recall the symbol and events relating to the watchers presence without re-exposure.
Y-blockers began getting weaker only lasting three hours to half a day if you were lucky without a second dose.

She drank it, every last bit before dropping the vial slipping from her hands and landing onto the carpet below.
She continued typing.

Then it became. Or perhaps it always was and simply entered. But fear was here and true and was itself, and it hungered. It wished to know more. It wished to feel more. It wished to be more.

Or was it I?

they fed the fear. It was blunt and it was simple, but still it was solid enough to satisfy. And the thing that was fear was sated and content.
it is that they saw, to give it names, and struggle at learning, so too did they learn to fear that their eyes might deceive them, or show them too much. And as they learned to know their friends and kin, so too did they learn to fear the unknown figure, The watcher now known.

They began to take their thoughts, their instincts and their horrors, and they crystallised them. They gave them sound and form and shape to share them. And as they did the thing that was fear felt itself began to tear, to crack and fracture along a thousand unseen fault lines. It bled and warped and multiplied, and could no longer see itself as once it did. It could never be whole again.

I am not a brave woman. I believe I am starting to come to terms with that fact, but I am, in certain circumstances, a very stubborn one. And there was something inside me that made the decision that I would rather die at the hands of some tunnel-dwelling beast than work for who I am now, perhaps it's better for it to have consumed me in those tunnels.

I can almost hear the Ethics assistants chiding me for not turning tail and running then and there. Telling them what I had seen, But, it’s hard to fully explain the borderline mania that gripped me when I saw that eye. Almost a part of a ritual it seemed, there are many alike that one across the site in the deepest unknowing corners.