I. Submergence

I sit and watch the specimens of my experiment through a microscope with wonder of this bacterial evolution. "Extraordinary..." I uttered under my breath as the organism mutated rapidly.

"Sean" said the sweet voice of my wife as she knocked on the door to my study. "Your dinner is here...I spent all day preparing it for you." She finished in the tone of a plea. "You do forgive me, don't you?" She asked of me, remorse haunted the sound she made.

I quickly dismissed her from my presence, irritated that she would have even asked me this after the atrocity that she had committed onto me. "No, I do not forgive you, yet." I retaliated to her.

"I thought so..." She trailed off from here to speech that I no longer remember, I only remember the sorrow that was bound to her words.

She then left my study very I shook my head with annoyance. I was quite upset with her, but I also knew that it would take a bit of time to heal my work out heart. With the pain of betrayal fresh in my mind. I, even with much anger, still felt the remorse of a thousand soldiers rested on my shoulders for the curses I delivered to my wife on that night a week ago. I placed these thoughts away from my mind before I returned to my notes. After this is when I entered my bedroom--one of many in the manor. On the large bed is where I was lain in a relaxing slumber.

In the early morning was when I heard a knock at my door. My eyes opened reluctantly whilst I rose from bed in a similar manner. "Come in, Gerald." I commanded the Englishman behind the knocking.

The door slowly became ajar before the tall-standing and slender young butler marched in and closed the door. He held a silver platter in his right hand and a cup of coffee in the other. "Master Perish, your breakfast." He stated simply.

"Thank you, Gerald. Just set it on the table." I said to him before I performed a gesture to the far table.

"Of course, master Perish." he set it on the table in a technique so silent I thought it to be concerning. After this action he asked me if I had anymore requests; I had , so I sent him off.

Soon, in the silence of my own loneliness: I heard another person outside my bedroom, a constant sound of something tread my hallway. Though this noise was inhuman in nature. "Who's there?" I demanded as I get up, I lingered to my door with my hand outwards to the knob. My heart beat grew louder, as anyone in this house would identify themselves at my call. Then, as my hand made contact with the door, silence struck. I knew there was another behind this door; but, I saw no one after it was swung open.

After this I did nothing for a while, I only leered to the far wall. Then, in a swift motion, I shut the door and went to eat the breakfast prepared for me. It was at room temperature, so I could only bear to eat about half of it. Then I exited my bedroom.

With a sigh, I went to the smoking room of my home before I plotted myself into a throne and lit a cigarette; I was left with my thoughts and the scent of burning tobacco. After some time spent in peace, I decided it be time to apologize for the words of destruction to my wife; so, I got up off my grand chair and began a search for the woman.

With every turn of every corner in the manor, I found my efforts abortive in nature. Soon I found myself in a circular motion before I threw in hope of finding her and decided to await for her at dinner. After some time I grew impatient; with a foot that tapped the floor rapidly, I approached one of the maids. "Excuse me, I hate to bother; but, have you seen Madame Rebecca?" I asked the short standing, short-cut brunette with a sort of quickness I had not expected from my own voice.

She was in the middle of an attempt to dust a high place. I informed her to cease action and answer my query; she did so almost immediately. "Sorry, sir, I believe she mentioned going on a walk through the property." She told me before I thank her and left the interior of the home.

It was spring and the air was lively, I searched all of what I could see and saw nothing but the darkened grass and the miniature forest on our property. My wife always enjoyed walking through this wood in the evening hours, after dinner. I still loved her; however, with actions of deceit, I was not enough of a saint to forgive her. I did want to apologize for my words, they hung over my chest like a large call of lead and I wanted the pressure gone. I quickly and thoughtlessly entered the forest; the tightly clustered and tall trees almost instantly made my surroundings significantly darker and my movements slowed to a cautious linger. Confusion soon overtook me as I found myself lost; the perceived infinite circle of foliage was on a level intolerable to me that bordered madness. After some time I decided to go forward, and after some time of that I found myself at the base of a perfect hill. It was a half-sphere, and only one tree stood at the top; I recognized this particular hill as one that my wife had loved more than any other on this earth.

I knew she was on this hill and I sprinted to the top, I figured she was behind the thick oak; I continued the haste-filled action. As I turn the corner I had seen her: Dead.

No, dead is not the only word I would is for this experience. She was hanging by a rope on the thickest branch of the oak, blood dripped from the chafes on her neck, the very life in her open eyes had escaped and were now replaced by a pure whiteness from the heavens, her mouth was ajar and I was in an emotion of peril and sorrow. I could barely make any clear thoughts, I could only stand there, frozen, with my legs locked in position and without feeling. My eyes only followed her swaying corpse as I begun a sob.

"I'm sorry..." I say to her dead body; I only wished she could've heard it.

II. The Doctor

A week has passed since that evening, we had a funeral held the night after Rebecca's death. Now it was not she who awaited my forgiveness; but, now it was myself. And I awaited this dearly, it never came. Only constant nightmares of being hunted by a monster much greater than man. This has caused great paranoia to a point where I saw fit to leave most of my housekeepers unemployed.

I typically would put these dreams to rest, as they did not bother me thus far. Every night since her death I saw it standing far above me in a daemonic manner far greater than that recorded in the likes of the Bible or Qur'an. It would tell me of my incompetence as a husband and as a human. After many nights of this nightmare I have seemed the assistance of doctors in psychology.

I did not know why I was prone to such visions; but, that is why I had hired a doctor to heal me. Now I only awaited his arrival in my home bar, I poured myself a glass of ice and scotch that I kept hidden behind the other drinks. I then take a small sip before checking my pocket watch, it was five in the afternoon. I still had fifteen minutes before the doctors arrival. I look out my window and told myself "Of course you aren't lost yet, you only need a push to lift you up."

In a response, I could've sworn I heard another say "Is that what you truly believe?"

As I turn to gain knowledge of my surroundings, I found nothing. Perhaps the voice only spoke in my head; I would like to believe this, if I hadn't felt the same amount of asphyxiation that I had in my bedroom the weeks prior then I may have given myself this relatively merry thought. Whilst I made this decision is when a knocking came through my front door.

I went to my door with a more-than-skeptical approach, "Who's there?"

The voice was partially muffled through the door; but, this did not cause deterioration of my understanding. "It's Dr Lansforth, your psychiatrist, Sean. Let me in, it's raining."

I open the door and allow the doctor to enter. He was a man of average height and in his late-to-middle ages. His hair was a heterogeneous mixture of a rain cloud and a silver coin in color; with all of this, rectangular spectacles rest over his oceanic eyes. He wore a mahogany-colored trench coat that went to his knees; this covered the vested suit beneath. "Where would you feel most comfortable for this session?" Asked Dr Lansforth.

"Honestly: I'd like to be outside, thank you much."

Dr Lansforth nods to this, "Any particular location outside?"

"Perhaps the porch of my bedroom?"

"Very well."

At this time I lead him to my porch, we sat at a circular glass table. For the next few hours I told him of the dreams I had, "I was with my wife in last night's dream, we were at a masquerade ball. As we danced I felt myself being drawn away by a force unknown. And as this occurred, a man in a pallid mask took her and began to dance with her. As he passed her to me I saw her velvet dress become muddied and ruined before my very eyes. As she got closer and tried to press against me, I heard a sounding of a musket; and at this time, she was dead." I explained to the doctor. "But, after all of this... a creature much taller than I had arisen from the floor of my shadows. It was about three or so yards in height and with a mahogany color, this daemonic entity had my face-- on...only two golden eyes had made the difference. The...the eight arachnic appendages that came from its body trapped me, and that is the end of my dream." At this point my voice had a coat of melancholy and guilt.

The doctor took notes throughout the story of my dream. "Well, Mr Perish, I believe that this dream might be you trying to tell yourself that you must let go. The daemon is clearly an allegory for your sorrow and your guilt. You must let it go and forgive yourself." He says.

"Yes; I know that, doctor, but how!?" I demanded him, frustrated. He simply kept his posture and looked at me.

"You have to realize it was not your fault for your wife's death." At this time is when he pulled a pipe from his coat and lit the tobacco inside. He then inserted the mouthpiece and inhaled before a small cloud emanated from his mouth.

"But I am the one who shouted those things, god dammit! I am the one who verbally abused her, it was me!" I shouted whilst a standing motion was made. I gaze into nothingness with my rage before it became embarrassment. "I...I apologize for that, Doctor."

"It's quite alright, Mr Perish, it's a healthy thing for you to...explode in such fits of emotion." He replied calmly.

I sat down, nodding in a motion of absorption to this new knowledge. "It is?"

"Yes, of course it is! Without emotion, what would separate from the likes of beasts on four legs?" He took another puff of the tobacco after this rhetorical question.

I agreed with him, "Well, what of the negative emotion?" I asked him.

"There are no negative emotions, only negative action done in retaliation."

"And I am too suppress these emotions-- I mean these actions, yes?"

"Indeed."

"But how should I do that, Dr Lansforth?" I asked him, desperate for answers.

"I believe you should ponder that until next Wednesday, when I come back to visit you once more." He says as he rose up, the hour was over. I nodded in response and shook his hand before I saw him out.

At this point I was alone, yet again.

I remembered Dr Lansforth; however, I never brought him back into my home. I only paid the doctor and we had never exchanged words again. This was an ongoing trend for this section of my life: A doctor will always come and will be unsuccessful in giving me simple answers. At this point, I had always enjoyed their offer of further sessions.

Because of this, I had figured perhaps a priest or a father of sorts may help me. Luckily, a local chapel was willing to send a young prettier to my aid; however, they informed me it may take many weeks for him to arrive to me. This was a period of waiting for me.

III. Waiting for God

My nightmares have thenceforth grown more terrible in nature, this has caused a great decrease in slumber. I have found the use of alcohol to soothe the terror caused by an entity that I have only seen in my dreams; but, I knew the daemon was in my waking life as well. I was far too good a catholic to believe in dreams; however, the many things I've experienced in the past two fortnights have caused an increase of melancholy.

In the morning, after I had arisen from my bed, I was walking through my hallway when I noticed something peculiar in my home. The same mask as the strange man wore in my dream, as I approached the mask and slowly picked it up. I lifted the black ceramic and gazed upon the jeweled surface. As I stared on this mask curiously, my mind wandered to theories of how this had escaped my mind and found its way into reality. As I did this I thought I saw a shadowy apparition in the corner of my eyes; but, I quickly discovered it was only a hallucination after I quickly look to my left and again, nothing was there.

I drank another glass of scotch in my study. I leered to the work accumulated over the twenty years I've worked for an unknown man, countless filled notebooks and various records of experiments. A murderous intent overcame my body before I snapped in an instant, swiftly sweeping everything off of the table in the centre. I made no exhales or bursts of shouting or any words during this fit of rage; immediate regret followed after. I looked at the broken glass and scattered paper before trying to hastily piece it together. But, in this haste I accidentally cut my palms. With a wince of pain, my hands retracted and closed into fists. I then quickly retrieved a first aid kit and bandaged the wounds.

After the treatment, I went to the destruction with remorse to my step. I made an effort to sort the notes before a strange tapping sound was made, I turned around with a suddenness that was unnatural to me. There was nothing at all, I shook off the notion of another presence and read through the notes.

The notes were of nothing special, only the recordings of bacterial genetics were scribbled on the papers. After I collected the notes into a semi-organized pile, I proceeded to stack them into the bookshelf with only the preservation of time in thought.

After this, I climbed up the stairs to the second story of my home. Even with my eyes kept forward, I knew that there was something following me. With every step I had the image of a daemonic entity in my peripheral vision. I had to stop at the midpoint of my staircase and study my surroundings. I knew there was nothing here, I just knew it! However my mind could not stop warning me that the eyes of a stalker are trained on me. My eyes grew with terror and with horror as my head spun. I was as a lost child, my senses eroding as I could almost *feel* the whispers of my own voice making accusations! Accusations against me!

*YOU killed your wife!*

*YOUR own hand is at fault!*

*It was YOUR absence! You were never there, she's dead and it's your fault!*

My feet staggered me up the stairs, I ran to my bedroom without a single gaze backward. My door had shut behind me and I grab myself by the hair and pulling at it, "Stop tormenting me!" I shouted, my eyes spilt tears in a raging sensation of discomfort in my own home. I was still able to feel the eyes of daemons staring at me.

I did not slept that night, I mean I had no ability to sleep that night! The eyes kept me from it, eyes that I saw in my mirror. I only stayed in the corner of my room. I prayed many times that night, holding a rosary to my breast whilst I plead for mercy from God.

In an incoherent jumble of things, I waited for the gracious liberation of the sunrise. This night was dreadful for me, no matter the prayers I performed it seemed as no God was to help me in my moment of calamity. I could only shiver and sob at the terrible things which lay in my presence.

In the morning hours, my mind felt as if an acidic spear had pierced it. I felt severely exhausted and prayed for sleep from God himself but with no fruit from my efforts. In a movement of frustration, I went to my ground floor.

After I ate, I only sat there in a day-dream. I thought I saw my wife, I thought I could just *hear* her voice. It was a soft tone. I saw her standing afar. I watched the slender figure of my wife erected, rigid, she stared at me with no words and all I could do was return the gaze -for I had felt strangled by the weight of the air around me- until enough strength was built to utter a question.

"Is that you...?"

There was no response as she only stood there, this was so queer to me before I decide to approach the black-haired woman, her hazel eyes illuminate to me. And as I go to touch her, I am only meet with tweed on a coat rack. I had never missed a night of sleep before, perhaps this was my consequence.

"To be taunted by a coat rack in my time of despair!" I exclaimed to no human. My thoughtlessness and irrationality lead me to blame the coat rack, almost as if the coat rack had killed my wife. I knew it hadn't. It 'twas I! But to think for a second it was anyone else bred hatred rather than guilt, honestly, I'm unsure of what is preferable.

After that, my own thoughts were unknown to me. No no, they were known-- only untrustworthy. How am I to stay awake when I cannot trust myself? How am I to go to sleep when I cannot trust my surroundings. I knew of slumber would never visit me, I would continue to see these things in the day. I leered around, hoping to shake off any other false images that may have manifested in my dwelling. Nothing was found, yet the thought of being followed-- being watched was one i never lost that day. My quiet step had become almost ghostly as every step was treated as my last. Every corner in my home beared the weight of a nightmare.

My prayers to good to vanquish this foul creature had proven abortive. Every night haunted by eyes that cover my walls keep me! I feel the voice of a hundred mouths whisper to me as I lie alone in late hours! If I leave candles unlit, I fear the beasts of night; if I leave candles forever flaming, I fear the beasts that haunt my mind.

III. An Almost Sunny Period

Seclusion left me to a dark reality that she was gone forever, insomnia had bound me to the thought that I was to be punished for heinous crimes.

*Perhaps... Perhaps if you were to recall the good times in your marriage?* I thought to myself, efforts were made to relive the moments of serenity.

The memory was so lifelike I had thought it was a dream. The construction of the scene was mind-boggling at the very least and I shivered to think of my wedding day. This was after I was hired an extra-ordinary job, so I was able to pay for an extra-ordinary wedding. She seemed so happy that day, the white dress gave her the precious perception of flauntacious wealth that she ever so desired since her childhood. Happiness and infatuation were our lives during this chapter. When we lied together, the passion of love inhabited our bedroom. Every meal was in a euphoria similar to that of wine.

And when the first week came to its end, all things have come to a melodious finale. The overture had been finished, this was the happiest time of my marriage. But as work had grown in between us, there was no rain or sunshine. I spent many days locked away, Rebecca erected a façade of glee with this. However, the lingering pain of solitude had engendered in her soul. The thought of a man bound by his work was nothing uncommon, but I was a sight almost unheard of. The time of closed doors lead her to infidelity. I did not know for the longest time thanks to my work! Why I did not simply leave my study is unknown! Why I could not cherish my time with her is unknown! She had tried to love me, the adultery was not her fault, but mine!

I now quill these words in my down study. The thought of remorse is now so familiar that the demons in my rooms are negligible to me. They are still the cause of insomnia unparalleled, they still give me a feeling of unease. But knowing I brought it on myself is rather alleviating of the discomfort.