

Mother

It watches me when I sleep. I can sense it standing in the corner, tenebrous and eerie.

Sometimes, I feel it move onto my bed, thread its fingers through my hair, whisper nonsense into my ear. My body stiffens in trepidation, sweat trickling down my back, soaking my cotton shirt.

In the mornings it disappears, the sun driving it away until darkness returns. I see its face in the daytime too, as if it never left. I hear the words it whispered to me in the night.

I freeze when it greets me in the mornings. At night its voice is otherworldly and cold but, in the light, I hear it sweet and warm.

It's been going on for months, repeating every night. I find solace knowing it won't harm me, it tells me that every night. Often, I can ignore its presence and gain a decent amount of sleep, though it is still restless.

Occasionally its routine changes. Maybe it starts on my bed this time or tells me a new lie. This throws me out of my small comfort, and I lay awake, hoping it will leave before the sun.

It never does.

Tonight, is one of those direful times. The figure starts in the corner like usual but when I risk a glance, I see my mother's Sunday best, torn to shreds, draped across its tortured body, the floral pattern indiscernible among blood smears, and writhing gore. Bloody nausea builds in my throat.

"Let me look at you" the figure rasps as it creeps to the side of my bed. I halt my breathing when her stench reaches my nose. I should be used to it by now, but it's still harrowing to my senses. It reminds me of the rat I found rotting in our basement last summer, guts oozing.

I keep my sight straight ahead; I can't look into those eyes. So familiar, yet, otherworldly. Tears sting my eyes as this monster rests its head on my mattress, tilting slightly to match my angle.

Our noses almost touch. I can feel its noisome breath dancing across my face.

Paralyzed. It's like a boa constrictor has emerged from my sheets, winding its way up my body, slowly tantalizing me.

Those spindly fingers brush my forehead, pushing away my bangs. Sharp nails nick my skin, blood trickles down into my hair.

I try to speak but my throat is like the Sahara at noon. I breathe in and inhale the stench I was trying so hard to avoid. My tongue is assaulted by the taste of rancid air. I gasp hard as my lungs run out of breath. My greatest mistake yet.

A gnarled tentacle erupts from the creature's back, attaching itself to my face. I try to scream but the arm just seeps farther down my throat, scraping away my inner flesh.

My soul gets sucked away by this creature.

I feel betrayed.

I thought I could trust you, Mother.