

A Torn Mind Piece

Eyes of Fright

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Jonathon led Marsela in a burst of madness. They crisscrossed through shelves of eighteenth-century philosophy in the library. Attendants dutifully dusted the shelves and categorized books. He inched his way through the mansion, stealing one room after the next. He led them into a bathroom and locked the door as she entered. A small window showed the night's sky beginning to crack and peel open as thunder drummed its way closer. A strike of lightning made Marsela clutch his hand. He knew he had her. He raised a strand of her hair to the light and slowly raked his fingers through it, enjoying it thoroughly. Jonathon climbed into the bathtub. He reached by his collar and pulled out a sheet of two stamps.

"Mars," he called. She bent down to reach his eye level. He was taking care and using precise hand manipulation with his product.

"Close your eyes," he said, and she did. 'Thank God,' he thought. Her mesmerizing eyes had released him from her sensual hold. He could finally think straight, but began to miss her. He studied her and tried hard to remember her face: the angle of her forehead, the birthmark above the corner of her right brow. He admitted to himself that she appealed to him. He peeled off a stamp, stuck it to his tongue, and kissed her. Rain pelted the window in horizontal viciousness.

He snatched her up and ran with his head ducked down, passing through hallways. They descended many flights of stairs. Wallpaper and fine candles no longer dressed the walls. Cobwebs and green moss breathed from cold concrete. The temperature dropped, but Jonathon could see steel furnaces roaring with fire in the distance.

He pulled her farther into the blackness. The light reached its end. The ground slanted downwards. The walls began to narrow to an uncomfortable width that squeezed their bones and bruised their flesh as they pressed on. Jonathon had an itch and his fix was somewhere in the depths of the darkness. His frenzied pace was interrupted as they entered a large cavernous clearing with wet shining walls. A bat flew before them and circled the ceiling in a slow, methodical fashion. It rolled off the ceiling and grew in mass before it touched the floor. Dark fabric and flesh appeared where there was none. The face of a sinister, human-looking creature appeared before them.

Marsela had eyes of fright while Jonathon looked to the man with eyes that beckoned death. He coolly spun the flask's top and swigged the gin hard, and twice for good measure. He looked to Marsela, but thought twice and put the flask away, sparing her virgin senses. The creature wore an elegant silk, black suit. A white handkerchief sat pleasantly folded in his outer breast pocket. Jonathon brushed his hand across the strange man's coat, feeling the fabric, and knowing it to be real. The man seemed amused, if not tauntingly so.

"I am Jonathon and she," he pointed to her, "is Mars."

"I bid you hello. How courageous of you two, you especially," he gestured to the boy.

"May I ask your name?" Jonathon asked.

"Why tell a human, who lives but a short life, knowledge he can't retain?" His words were sharp and venomous.

Respectfully, Jonathon asked, "Might you join us in a smoke?"

“Gladly.” He laughed. “In fact,” he said, stopping Jonathon, “why not try mine?”

“We’d be honored,” he said and looked to Marsela who didn’t look like she had her wits about. She was studying the veins in her arm. The creature slid his back down the wall and gestured. They followed, looking to the master. He conjured a purple piece and a glass vial with the head of a lavender rose covered in orange and green hairs and frosted in white and yellow powder. He skillfully packed the piece and handed it to Jonathon.

“Thank you, friend,” the boy said, looking up to the creature, who’s expression told him that it was his pleasure.

Jonathon rolled the flint and watched the flame erupt in spits and flickering. His newfound companion’s face was near translucent, a sure fright to an unsuspecting human. He handed off and succumbed to purple clouds choking his throat, taking his breath until his dying stopped and he bounced loftily on clouds with a scrambled brain and a heavenly indifference to the world he knew. A dream took his entirety and dumped him in a swim. Turning and twisting, he succumbed to the flower and gave over his reins.

He danced, shifting his shoulders and nodding his head. Music crept through the walls in delightful swoons of energy and bales. Marsela had her head in the clouds. She was enjoying the breeze and lifting her head into the oncoming air. She soared in absolute bliss. The skies stroke her cheeks and whispered ecstasy into her ears.

Jonathon awoke with a chill. He latched onto Marsela in fright. She awoke in his arms, scared with her big doughy eyes. Chains clanged and rattled, and shadows raced along the

walls. Jonathon felt challenged to find the source of the sound. He perked his ears, and focused on his keen sense of smell. Marsela followed him willingly. Around a few corners and bends, swinging back and forth in their visual was an upside down bag of meat – human. He was salty, sweaty, and gluttonous, seeing by the size of his waist. He hung with anxious eyes, trying to reflect his pain onto Jonathon and Marsela.

“I don’t like the looks of this one,” Jonathon said plainly.

“Me neither,” she responded.

A bat flapped beside the body. It fluttered its wings and pushed off the man as it formed into the shape of a man. The vampire stretched out his strong neck and tore into the human. Hot fluid splashed the walls. The master shared a smile with blood in his teeth and gums.

“How are you two?” he asked.

“We want what you have. We want to devour the night.”

“That so? But why, I knew that’s what you’d ask for,” he said, stretching out two vials of deep crimson to the boy. “Drink and you’ll die, and live undead like me. But I have something you must do. Yes, a troubling errand I’ll ask you to take care of it, otherwise I’ll destroy you.”

“Name it,” he dared the vampire.

“Good. Drink now. I’ll explain after.”

Jonathon shrugged off his familiar jacket, gave Marsela a vial, and held her hand firmly.

“Tonight, we die,” he proclaimed, “and live forever – immortal, unmatched, and forever dominant. To us – the new way.”

She drank as if to please him and not for herself. He noted this, warning himself there could be vast complications.

The light and warmth inside their flesh burned out. Their bodies died, yet their bones seemed to harden. Strength was building. A lightness came to their limbs.

Jonathon forced himself to his feet while Marsela quaked, still petrified. His eyes sat cruel, fixed on the ugly swaying human. He flexed his forearm, spanned out his claws, and swiped across the human’s throat. The flesh peeled outwards and drooped obscenely. The human choked, and gurgled blood. He drank from the wound and pointed Marsela to the growing puddle beneath. She leaned forward on all fours and lapped at the blood. She instantly felt more comfortable in her skin.

The master vampire returned as a strong-backed wolf covered in black fur with devious eyes that needed no words. He offered a map in his loosely clenched jaw. Jonathon pulled it from the beast’s mouth and gave all effort to studying the map. The only significance was the circled Brunswick Cloisters. ‘Why here’, he pondered, and folded the map away into his boot, not bothering to show Marsela.

The wolf massacred the bloody, swaying meat. Growls echoed, filling the lair in piercing volume.

Jonathon snatched Marsela's hand and ran up the winding steps, back to the furnace room, and back to the stairs leading to the dining room. His legs carried him faster than ever. Attendants blocked the doorways. The two of them altered their forms to wolves, lowering their perspectives to the ground, trampled the humans, and scrambled out of the main door. Jonathon looked over his shoulder, directing Marsela, and launched himself to the sky in his aerial form as a bat. They ascended, feeling the currents of wind on their wings.

With a wide wingspan, he was airborne. They parted through the clouds, dispersed through water droplets, and splashed themselves in cool, vibrant water. Hours passed, but the joy did not lessen. As the night died, light appeared through the tops of the clouds, and burned them with liquid fire. He dived below the atmosphere with Marsela mimicking his movements. Spiraling down, he glided over dark fields. The night grew purple with pink not far behind. They raced for cover under the great evergreen trees until they landed before the base of a cliff side.

As wolves, they burrowed through the cakey mud, and shut their eyes, impervious to insects and disease. Jonathon rested his immortal frame, eager to find the cloisters and pay their due.