

**“we stopped checking for monsters under the bed
when we realized they were inside us”**

by

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We all live in our separate houses, boarded up with steel and nails, floating around our stairs and landings like ghosts, all mysteries to each other. Our houses are our safe places, the caves that no one else can reach, that only we know the exact location of. We curl up into the corners of our rooms and showers when the life and the world threatens to knock on our doors, seeking entry. We put up the wall around our minds and we descend into ourselves, like Dante into the Inferno, sheltering ourselves against the unknown and the unwanted. For we do not want life and we do not want the world or happiness. It scares us, for our human instincts, those whispering demons that sprouted in the womb with us and spread out to our brains, tell us that we should be miserable. That is what makes us so great and so special, the fact that we are all so miserable most of the time, subconsciously cherishing our masochism, but consciously whining and complaining about how unhappy we are. Yet we do nothing about it, we simply rock back and forth, back and forth in our corners and let the scalding water beat against our backs as our eyes stay closed and dare not open for fear of seeing light.

But we must go out into the world and mingle with others like ourselves. We place our armours carefully, our bulletproof clothes and we bravely step outside and walk out the door. Our feet carry us to other buildings, other hiding places, and we roam the streets like hungry wolves waiting for something that we don't quite know. And we wait until the moment we die and then perhaps, some of us realize what it is we truly are looking for, but most of us do not and we perish with sadness in our eyes, still unknowing why we have been so unhappy all of our lives.

And so we walk in the cities and sit in the planes and gesture to strangers and speak to our friends, but there is one thing we do not ever talk about, and that is the monsters. We all have them, deep within our bones and heart, our veins and marrow, they permeate our very souls and we know that they will never leave because like the demons that sprouted in the womb with us, these monsters developed once we were born. Their mother was light, no father to create them, but our bodies became their homes, and they took on the forms of children. They can be seen by anyone of us quite well in the sunlight, for they appear as our shadows, moving exactly like us and mimicking every action that we make. Though the monsters grow as we grow, their spirits never cease to be children, and if one looks very closely, one can see them dancing in the day.

But we humans, we have this trait that we are frightened of everything that we do not understand, and we did not understand why these monsters would want to thrive within us. They opened their hands and smiled at us and told us they would not hurt us, that they were simply here because we are human, not complete animals, humans, and that we are different and *need* them. But we shook our heads with horror because their hands had sharpened claws, and their teeth were covered with the blood of our brethren and we took steps back and ran. And these monsters, saddened, ran after us, trying to catch us and make us realize that we have no choice, we all have monsters. They tried to make us realize that the only way their claws would retract and their lust for blood would diminish was if we turned toward them and we welcomed them, discussed with them our fears and dreams and hopes and all that is important to man. But humans rarely face what frightens us so the monsters decided to infiltrate our bodies anyway, without a welcome and to stay there until we decided to talk to them. Of course, like us, they grow and they change, but unlike us, they become stronger the more they are ignored. The more we run away from them, the more they become saddened, angry, and lonely, the harder they try to get our attention and soon, they overpower us. It is not their faults, for they are simply monsters and from where they come from, they do not understand this concept of running, they only know of confrontation.

Human nature and monsters have not gotten along together since the beginning of humanity. The former believes, because it has originated from those pure animals that it is superior than the latter. Most humans agree with this and therefore when the demons whisper that these monsters are bad or that these ones are good, we believe them and we either run away harder and push them further down or we slow down to a walking pace and extend a hand to them. However, only the monsters truly know which one of them is good and which one is bad and they have realized that we have got it all backwards. Jealousy, we believe, is a sign that we truly love another human being, whereas the monster Jealousy knows that she is truly one of the worst monsters to be born. Lust, tortured and murdered and spit at for centuries, knows in her heart of hearts that she is one of the most cherished monsters and unfalteringly waits for us to change our minds about her. Yet there are other more powerful monsters such as Power, Pedophilia, Murder, and Cannibalism that we truly do fear for our demons have told us that they are the worst and

that we must never look back or we will give in to our urges and we will truly be lost.

And yes, it is true that these monsters are truly powerful and that if we give into our urges, we are truly lost but our demons are not right all of the time. And we do not have the minds or the desire to contradict them so we blindly trust them and run and run and run until we cannot run anymore and the most powerful of monsters, Time, comes, hand in hand with Death, and takes us away. And when Death asks us if we have anything more to say, we sob and ask what we did wrong.

You did not face your monsters. There is no reason to run from them, for if you do, you will not live the life you want and you will always ask yourself why you are so unhappy. You will run to your corner and your house more and more until you will be afraid to walk from it because you will believe that your monster is outside your window looking at you, smiling with those blood-stained teeth, when in reality, it has been inside you all along, patiently waiting for you to speak to it. Do not ignore your monsters for they are not as frightening as you deem them to be. Hush those demons and stop running, turn around, and invite what is inside you to come out. Discuss with yourself why you are so afraid, discuss with yourself that you truly are strong. For your monsters do not want to tear you down and they do not understand why you scream at them so when all they are doing is waiting for you. Only you can tear yourself down and it is your fault if your monsters grow and you burst, for only you let them do that and only you ran and ignored them. If the monsters truly are a danger, then you must curb them, like a parent curbs a child and they will learn to listen to you. Until then, they will be pouting as they face the wall, concocting plans of revenge in their infantile minds.

Do not be afraid of those around you, for they have the same monsters that you do. We are all the same and we all have these creatures within us. Whether we only have Lust or whether we have Pedophilia, we all must face what we fear and decide whether we truly must fear it or whether we must accept it and be careful that our demons do not grow louder and louder and tell us that our monsters have overpowered us. They cannot and they will not unless we let them and unless we want them to. It is not our monsters that we must be afraid of, it is our human nature, that which we take for granted. We must not take anything for granted, we must always think through it and let it confront us, for then we will not ask us why we cannot step out once again from our houses. We will not ask Death why we are so unhappy and we will not whimper self-pitifully for decades, believing we are powerless. We are not. We are more powerful than our monsters and our demons and we are more powerful than we give ourselves credit for.