



the curious twitching lady
Mr. Delirium

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On a vividly blue and sunny afternoon, along a clean and unspeckled sidewalk, in a well-kept and unpolluted city a stunningly handsome, clean cut man wearing an expensive business suit, traipsed aimlessly along the sidewalk. Although the man had sauntered up and down the city sidewalk for years and years on end, traveling to and from work (and other destinations), on this particular day he found himself fully and utterly confused and very lost. On this particular day, he had somehow forgotten his destination. All around him cars, trucks and busses maneuvered and shifted course through and about the city streets. Pedestrian men and women from all walks of life fringed and flanked the path he marched and tread upon. Everyone around had some place to go and some place to be, even the pigeons and crows adhered to a calendar of sorts (understood only by themselves), everyone except the man in the business suit, on that particular day.

A budding sense of anxiety and confusion flourished within the man. A jolt of disequilibrium struck his being. His vision blurred and his breath compressed into his lungs. Beads of sweat overlaid his brow. Naturally, he questioned his current situation. Had he become sick? Was he experiencing a sudden DELIRIUM of sorts?? Why on earth did he suddenly not recognize the routine of his life? Distressed, he nervously glanced at all the people in his vicinity, wishing and believing that his panicked eyes might recognize a familiar face, someone who somehow could help him regain his bearings. However, amidst the throng of passerby men and women not a single face was recognizable. Besides, it was apparent that no one in the mob of persons would take the time to stop and administer any sort of aid or assistance to the man. They were all much too much in a hurry. Everyone was walking, hustling and shuffling towards something. Everyone except for him.

The man spotted a hapless, voodooed woman sitting alone on a bus stop bench off in the distance slouched over herself the way very old women usually slump and droop whenever they're seated. She spotted him too, exactly at the same time. From his distant vantage point he could clearly see the woman was of a very elderly and timeworn age. She wore a black full length, long sleeved, high neckband dress- much like the dress of a fairy tale witch. Her long silver hair hung tangled across her shoulders. Her face was an indiscriminate array of pleated, corrugated old and spotty skin. In spite of her unsightliness, the man could not deny she was fervidly staring right at him. He could also not deny the sustained grin she had across her face. Was this a woman he knew, but in his confusion could not recognize?

Not knowing what else to do, he ambled down the street towards her, adding swiftness of motion and haste to his pace. Perhaps he did know her, perhaps she could assist him some way, somehow. The ogress never lost eye contact with him, nor did the grin drop from her face as he clinched the gap between them. As he drew near he could see she had an odd twitch at the neck. Her entire head lurched to the left every so often. The muscles in her face were also playing tug of war on the woman. Her left eyelid quivered and the corners of her mouth also threw themselves about. One might think she was having an epileptic seizure. Yet despite her freakish condition she maintained constant eye contact with the man, of which the torrid intensity behind those eyes the man could not disregard.

Now, he stood directly before her. She remained seated but positioned herself upright, shoulders back and charmingly folded her tired old hands across her lap one above the other. The man's intent was to speak out to her and possibly obtain an orientative confabulation from her. Yet, before he was able to utter a single word the hag affronted him with laughter, subtle and quiet at first: "ho. ho"... "ho. ho"... .but quickly her laugh became crescive and began mushrooming into something more shrill and maniacal:

"Ho-Ho-HO! Ho-Ho-Roar!" and then again, but even more piercing and discordant still:

"HO-HO-HO-ROAR!" "HO-HO-HO-ROAR!!"

"HO-ROAR!! HOR-ROR!! HORROR!!! HORROR!!!"

She chucked her puffy head backwards and opened her mouth wider to deliriously laugh louder, increasing her cacophonous volume exceedingly higher:

"HHOOOORRRRROOOORRRR!!!!!!"

"HHOOOORRRRROOOORRRR!!!!!!"

It was suddenly then that the clean cut man in a business suit realized, and became aware of, the awful turn this day had taken, more so than already preconcieved. Not only did he unanticipatedly find himself stricken with an amnesia of sorts, but the woman to which he procured assistance from was undeniably mad! Mad, mad, MAD!!! Little did he know, things were about to get weirder and worsen still, much, much worse!

The hair upon his head started to loosen and slip and plummet off of his scalp along with the rest of his bodily hair (his chest, his arms, his legs and the engaging, tightly-spiralled hairs framing his anatomy) strand by strand. Without warning an agitated tremor advanced up

along the core of the businessman's fragile spine. Vertebrae by vertebrae it crept instantaneously. A sudden loss of brain function caused by an interruption of blood supply to his brain (cerebral thrombosis?) broke down our protagonist: he fell helplessly to his knees.

worser still, his skin began to delaminate the musculature of his build. Square inch by square inch, the skin just began peeling and falling off, first the epidermis dried and flaked off, then the dermis cracked and mottled exposing itself revealing subcutaneous skin that went raw and sore. The fine and intricate network of nerves that once were housed within his body now met the light of the sun and wailed in pain and suffering His blood pooled over onto the sidewalk. Every drop stained the street, so bright and so noticeable. Like a morning-time alarm, the blood rang loud. He had now fallen completely flat onto the sidewalk. Yet, no one noticed. Not a single city street pedestrian became aware of this dire, strange and awkward scenerio. Perhaps they were ignorant, of perhaps the chose to remain blind, who can honestly speak of what happened that day?

His tear ducts cried blood instead of tears. His eyes turned red with blood. Soon after, they imploded and collapsed into themselves, causing the wilting eyelids to shrivel fold into their essential nature.

Meanwhile, his inner organs also started malfunctioning. His bladder loosened, and he pissed on himself. His rectum went baggy and unbolted, causing him to shit himself. The tongue in his mouth lost all strength and control, and flopped haplessly , marginally along the perimeter of his suddenly snakebitten lips. Lips that once were juicy and kissable, now had begun to crust and rot and blister. Then came the teeth. Pearly white gems that at one time were masters of charm, wit and seduction begun to unpin and unbind themselves from his gums. One by one they abandoned their housing, cut themselves loose and quit their duties.

Then, after all the skin was lost (and nerves were exposed), the muscles fell victim to this paranormal (and vicious) assault. They eviscerated and decomposed, fast and uncanny-like.

It was at this time that the curious, ugly , horrid twitching lady roused herself up off the bus stop bench. And although the man had lost his brain fuction capacity, he was still conscious on a very deep, very hidden level. Although he could no longer see with his eyes, his soul could sense her approach. She now stood above him. Beneath the hem of her long black dress, she extended a leg out and up, then stepped down onto his chest. His sternum fractured under the weight of her foot.

He could hear the audible "crack" of his ribs (a horrible crunching sound) as they too yielded to the weight.

If there was a god up above, certainly he could hear the inner screams of this tortured man.

The femme fatale knelt down at his side. Her hands clamped on to his blood soaked clothing. She tugged, and nimbly, effortlessly ripped it to shreds. The scraps of clothing vaporized into little tufts of smoke as she tossed them aside. All that remained now, was a small accumulation of bones and chunks of flesh atop a steaming pool of blood. She reached into his ribcage, pushing aside his deflated lungs and juiceless liver. At last she found the treasure she had wanted all along. She pulled out his heart, still palpitating, still alive. She pulled it and gently placed it into the folds of her gown, alongside her breast.

The change in her was almost immediate. Her mottled skin took on a newfound youth. The wrinkles smoothed away. The age spots gave way, to suppleness and glow. Her tangled silver-white hair transformed into a jet black, silky cascade of gorgeousness. Her lips, breasts and hips ballooned into sensual curves. Her gnarled and twisted spine became an elastic column of poise and grace. The hollow in her eyes fattened out. Her knotted arms and legs aligned and corrected themselves. Her feet and hands became frisky and limber. And her yellowed unsymmetric teeth now gleamed a brilliant white and took root in balanced and proportionate places within renewed rosy-pink gums.

A sumptuous, splendid smile spread across her beautiful face. As she rose up from her kneeling position she completely blanketed the remains of the once potent and virile man with the skirt of her gown like an umbrella. She then stepped away from the spot in which the body lay. No trace or evidence of the man remained, not a mote or iota lingered. Once there lived a man with a life full of meaning, a life full of love and laughter, pain and sorrow, simple and complex. Once there lived a man, with a name and a story, sometimes humble and sometimes stubborn, a man with a fair share of mistakes and regrets but a man nonetheless, a lucid creature of God, or a product of Darwinian evolution- either way his life was precious to him like it is to all of us. But now there was nothing, only cold pavement on a clean and unspckled sidewalk, in well kept and unpolluted city, on a vividly blue and sunny afternoon.

The now radiant woman walked away down the sidewalk still grinning, integrating herself into the throng of pedestrians from all walks of life. All around her cars, trucks and busses maneuvered and shifted course through and about the city. Everyone driven by intent and

purpose, even the pigeons and crows. Blinded by their own agendas, everyone remained ignorant to the darkness that walks amongst them.

Yet as beautiful as this woman had now become, any keen observer who by happenstance might lay eyes upon her, would undoubtedly notice her sinister grin, and the curious twitch on her face that never went away. And if any keen observer might be so unlucky as cross paths with her, lets hope his or her intuition is resilliant enough so that their primary insticnt is to immediately turn and walk away.

THE END



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