

Monsters are created. They are invited into lives, feeding off those who accept easy routines and limit reality to the expected. These monsters overtake and distort human curiosity, eliminating anything new to offer. Their illusion of comfort entangles individualism, thickening the barrier between existence and action.

By unwrapping ourselves from these monsters, we become receptive to our surroundings. We create with the purpose of offering ideas and sharing our experiences with others. In confronting this endless struggle, we hope that others will engage themselves likewise.

Eat the Monster

<http://eatthemonster.tripod.com/>

Scribbles and doodles. Nonsensical images, less than abstract, more than an empty, begging page. Frozen steps, in sequence. Human faces staring, questioning, frowning. Circles smiling. Machines that function beyond reason; spinning arms, ink engines powering their bizarre tasks. Schematic diagrams mask banality in hard edge. Holes in letters, gaping for attention, filled; tidy up these dangling shapes and make them into black boxes. Arrows dictate thoughts, concepts are directional. Dots connect in complex structure; the world's shapes simplified. Spare seconds, wandering minds. Loose mental scraps find their way onto paper.

For how long have people been saying goodnight?
Since culture?
Since consciousness?

But more still, I love seeing the doodles of others. These images, these scribbles and doodles, give a special sense for the existence of others. The work of other minds, profoundly demonstrated in these careless drawings. And more, these minds have something in common with my own. I see the haphazard creations of others, I know that they too are alive; in doodles, other minds are wandering into places I have visited as well, and so I know I am not alone.

Sleep is rest, but rest can be a demon too. The sad, friendly demon exhaustion grants relief at the end of the day, and eventually at the end of life. But though this agreement is certain at the close of day, conscious dissolution never instructs existential safety. Facing the nothingness of the night, and perhaps the empty sky of diminishing stars, warrants a wish of good going from a friend.

The stranger walks over to the house across the street, carrying an unnaturally large fruit basket. Holding the heavy fruit to his belly with one arm, he reaches out the other hand and painstakingly knocks on the door. Hurried footsteps abruptly stop behind the portal. Several minutes pass as Mrs. White fiddles with the locks. She opens the door and sees a young man hugging a basket of fruit to his body. She looks at the stranger blankly, not saying a word. He pushes himself to speak, calmed by the sight of a familiar face.

"Good afternoon...I'm Even, your neighbor from across the street. You moved in not too long ago, and I wanted to...introduce myself and give you a housewarming gift."

Even offers the medley of fruit to Mrs. White. She hesitates for a flicker of an instant. "Is it heavy?"

"I am so sorry; how impolite of me. Yes, it is rather cumbersome to handle. Let me carry it inside for you."

As he walks into the house, Mrs. White regains her sense of speech. "Even...that is quite an *odd* name."

"Yes, I know. My mother was entirely convinced that I was going to be a little girl. In her delusion, she picked out the name Eve five months before I was born. She just couldn't let go of Eve, so she compromised."

"You know my name," Mrs. White says.

Even sets down the fruit basket on the floor. "Ellen White."

Mrs. White's face remains expressionless.

"I watch your performances whenever I can. I must say, I've never seen an actress with such emotional energy on stage."

"You," Mrs. White pauses, "have never seen an actress."

"Ellen—"

"You have only known me for seven minutes; there shall be no informalities...please, you may call me Mrs. White."

"You are married then," Even says, not bothering to state his inquiry as a question.

"No, my husband is an actor."

Confused, Even sits down in the nearest chair, but quickly gets up again, realizing that the chair is made of cardboard. He takes a quick survey of the room to find that every piece of furniture is made of old moving boxes.

Even looks at Mrs. White awkwardly, unable to carry on the conversation any further. As if no one is in the room, she absently walks over to the basket of fruit, bends down, and takes an orange. She then sits on the cardboard sofa and comfortably begins to peel the fruit. Faintly disturbed, Even watches her tear tiny patches out of the orange peel. "I...have always delighted in removing the entire peel off in one piece," he says.

Mrs. White digs her fingers into the fragrant orange, unresponsive to Even's remark. There is a long, unnatural pause before he decides to open his mouth again. "Mrs. White, don't you like to peel your oranges that way?"

"Absolutely not. I like to reveal the orange bit by bit; and besides, the peel doesn't come off in one unbroken piece. An orange is still an orange no matter how you unpeel it."

"The cardboard..." Even trails off.

"I am not a wealthy woman—I am an actress. My fortune was spent on this house, and I had nothing left to purchase furniture. I thought that my boxes would do just fine."

Mrs. White props her feet up on the coffee table, which is an overturned box. Even looks at the orange in her hand. The bits of peel are scattered around her as if something exploded. She divides the orange into separate lobes and lines them across the emptiness of the cardboard box. "Just eat the damned thing!" Even cries out.

Mrs. White, without a word, gets up and opens the front door. She then sits back down on cardboard. Unable to remain watching her play with the damaged fruit, Even drifts out the door. The afternoon sun beats down upon his back, as he unevenly walks back across the street.

(white noise)

A chair scrapes against the floor. The little girl stands up and slides off her dress as if discarding an orange peel.

Mrs. White sits at the table, petrified in her seat. Someone in the audience starts laughing uncontrollably. A stranger in the middle row immediately takes verbal action.

"For crying out loud! Will you be quiet?!"

His voice lowers suddenly.

"Please, have the common courtesy to act like civilized people."

The stranger turns back around and resumes avidly staring at the frightened woman on the platform. Mrs. White begins to redden with embarrassment. Searching for anything to clutch on to, her hands frantically travel across the table through the bits of crumbs.

The half-clothed child, humming a healthy tune to herself, flattens out the apricot dress on the floor and folds it into a tiny square. A moment later, the girl runs squealing off stage.

Mrs. White feels someone's hand on the table; she opens her mouth to scream, unaware that it is only her other hand.

The sound escapes empty from her lips and then explodes into the harmony of television static.

Realizing that the audience is applauding, Mrs. White quickly glues her mouth shut without having uttered a sound.

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