

## The Victim

The rest of my family had finally left for their evening out. Alone, I settled in the west facing room to watch, through the French windows, the sun fade into twilight. The bats arrived, bobbing black shapes that fluttered haphazardly at the end of the garden beneath the tree branches capturing the moths and flying bugs. The activity slowed, blurred by the creeping darkness, allowing me to dream in peace until suddenly IT was there. Just as it had been for as long as I could remember. A dark grey shape against the blue-black night, given structure by two hellish black pits. IT always arrived with the moon shadows after the bright sun had disappeared. From the depths of my soul the hatred of that familiar image rose.

Always before it had been given pause by the brightly lit room. IT feared the light but tonight, there was no warm glow filling the space. I had liked the darkness before IT had first appeared. Now a shudder slid the length of my back because IT had arrived.

On previous forays, when I was alone, dreaming without interruption, IT had been refused entry by locked windows. IT could see through but not get through to me. Tonight, the lower window was open a fraction to allow the cool night air to flow in. IT had noticed, I saw the black pits inspect the opening then the face at the window silently, swiftly became the face in the room. I could see IT's body flowing through the gap.

I crouched in my chair, my breathing slow and silent, my body tightly coiled praying it would not see me, would not smell me. IT came closer, wary as any thief should be, paused cautiously. I could not bear the tension; I sprang from the chair.

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There was a single despairing squeal then the silence of darkness returned. I looked down at the grey-furred, headless, body. I purred as I cleaned my razor-sharp claws and brushed my mouth with my paw. There would be no more face at my window

Word count 346