



THE CURATOR

NATURE

"THE CURATOR" IS NOT A NAME.

IT IS A TITLE.

ACROSS COUNTLESS WORLDS, CULTURES, AND AGES, MORTALS HAVE ENCOUNTERED ENTITIES THAT FIT THE SAME DREADFUL PATTERN: CHARMING COLLECTORS OF KNOWLEDGE, MEMORY, INSPIRATION, AND IDENTITY. DIFFERENT CIVILIZATIONS HAVE GIVEN THEM DIFFERENT NAMES, BUT AMONG SCHOLARS, OCCULTISTS, OCCULT HUNTERS, AND THE FEW SURVIVORS WHO HAVE ESCAPED THEIR GRASP, THE MOST COMMON TITLE HAS BECOME **THE CURATOR**.

NO ONE KNOWS WHETHER CURATORS ARE MEMBERS OF AN ANCIENT DEMONIC SPECIES, FRAGMENTS OF A SINGLE PRIMORDIAL INTELLIGENCE, OR MANIFESTATIONS OF A GREATER INFERNAL FORCE. WHAT IS KNOWN IS THAT THERE ARE MANY OF THEM, AND EVERY ENCOUNTER FOLLOWS THE SAME TERRIBLE TRUTH:

THEY DO NOT MERELY STEAL LIVES.

THEY STEAL THE THINGS THAT MAKE LIFE MEANINGFUL.

THE SPARK

CURATORS FEED UPON WHAT PHILOSOPHERS, MYSTICS, AND ARTISTS HAVE COME TO CALL **THE SPARK**.

THE SPARK IS THE DIVINE FRAGMENT OF CREATION THAT DWELLS WITHIN EVERY MORTAL SOUL. IT IS IMAGINATION, CREATIVITY, CURIOSITY, WONDER, PASSION, AMBITION, INSPIRATION, AND THE ABILITY TO DREAM OF THINGS THAT DO NOT YET EXIST.

SOME SPARKS BURN BRIGHTER THAN OTHERS.

ARTISTS.

WRITERS.

INVENTORS.

MUSICIANS.

STORYTELLERS.



CHILDREN.

VISIONARIES.

MADMEN.

DREAMERS.

THESE INDIVIDUALS POSSESS PARTICULARLY VIBRANT SPARKS, MAKING THEM IRRESISTIBLE PREY TO THE CURATORS.

A VICTIM DRAINED OF THEIR SPARK DOES NOT IMMEDIATELY DIE.

INSTEAD, THEY BECOME HOLLOW.

THE PAINTER CAN NO LONGER IMAGINE A MASTERPIECE.

THE INVENTOR CAN NO LONGER INNOVATE.

THE POET FORGETS THE MEANING OF BEAUTY.

THE CHILD LOSES THE CAPACITY TO DREAM.

THEY CONTINUE TO LIVE, BUT SOMETHING ESSENTIAL HAS BEEN STOLEN FOREVER.

WHY THEY STEAL

CURATORS ARE CREATURES OF PROFOUND ENVY.

THEY ARE ANCIENT, INTELLIGENT, AND POWERFUL BEYOND MORTAL COMPREHENSION, YET THEY LACK THE VERY THING THEY COVET MOST.

THEY CANNOT TRULY CREATE.

THEY CAN IMITATE.

THEY CAN PRESERVE.

THEY CAN COLLECT.

THEY CAN STEAL.

BUT THEY CANNOT PRODUCE GENUINE INSPIRATION OF THEIR OWN.

THIS TRUTH TORMENTS THEM.

EVERY PAINTING, EVERY STORY, EVERY SONG, EVERY INVENTION, EVERY DREAM REMINDS THEM OF WHAT THEY WILL NEVER POSSESS.



THEIR HATRED FOR MORTAL CREATIVITY IS RIVALED ONLY BY THEIR OBSESSION WITH IT.

THEY DESPISE THOSE WHO POSSESS THE SPARK.

THEY WORSHIP IT.

THEY ENVY IT.

THEY CRAVE IT.

AND SO THEY STEAL IT.

HUMAN GUISE

UNLIKE MANY DEMONS, CURATORS RARELY APPEAR MONSTROUS.

THEY UNDERSTAND THAT BEAUTY OPENS DOORS MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN FEAR.

MOST CURATORS ASSUME THE FORM OF AN EXCEPTIONALLY ATTRACTIVE HUMAN.

A HANDSOME GENTLEMAN.

A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN.

A CHARMING SCHOLAR.

A BELOVED TEACHER.

A RESPECTED PHYSICIAN.

A TRUSTED FRIEND.

THE EXACT APPEARANCE VARIES, BUT THE PATTERN REMAINS CONSISTENT.

THEY APPEAR APPROACHABLE.

REFINED.

TRUSTWORTHY.

FAMILIAR.

COMFORTING.

MANY CURATORS FAVOR YOUTHFUL AND STRIKING FORMS, UNDERSTANDING THAT BEAUTY LOWERS DEFENSES AND ENCOURAGES FASCINATION.

OTHERS ADOPT FORMS SPECIFICALLY TAILORED TO THEIR VICTIMS.



THEY BECOME WHATEVER THEIR PREY WISHES TO TRUST.

THE FALSE NANNY

AMONG THE MOST FEARED MANIFESTATIONS IS THE FIGURE KNOWN IN COUNTLESS FOLKTALES AS **THE NANNY**.

WHEN HUNTING CHILDREN, MANY CURATORS ASSUME THE APPEARANCE OF GENTLE CARETAKERS, TUTORS, GOVERNESSES, NURSES, OR NANNIES.

PATIENT.

KIND.

PROTECTIVE.

ALMOST IMPOSSIBLY LOVING.

THEY LISTEN TO CHILDREN'S STORIES.

ENCOURAGE IMAGINATION.

PRAISE CREATIVITY.

REWARD CURIOSITY.

ALL WHILE QUIETLY STUDYING THE BRILLIANCE OF THE YOUNG SPARK BEFORE HARVESTING IT.

ENTIRE VILLAGES TELL LEGENDS OF GIFTED CHILDREN WHO SUDDENLY LOST THEIR IMAGINATION OVERNIGHT AFTER BEFRIENDING A MYSTERIOUS CARETAKER WHO VANISHED WITHOUT A TRACE.

MOST DISMISS THESE STORIES AS SUPERSTITION.

THE CURATORS PREFER IT THAT WAY.

TRUE FORM

BENEATH EVERY DISGUISE LIES A PATHETIC HORROR.

A CURATOR'S TRUE FORM IS NOT MAJESTIC.

IT IS NOT BEAUTIFUL.

IT IS NOT EVEN PARTICULARLY FRIGHTENING IN THE CONVENTIONAL SENSE.





IT IS MISERABLE.

TALL AND UNNATURALLY THIN, ITS BODY APPEARS STARVED AND MALFORMED, AS THOUGH ETERNITY ITSELF HAS CONSUMED IT FROM WITHIN. SPARSE STRANDS OF BLACK-AND-WHITE HAIR CLING TO ITS SCALP LIKE THE REMNANTS OF A FORGOTTEN DISGUISE.

ITS FACE RESEMBLES A COLLAPSED IMITATION OF HUMANITY STRETCHED OVER SOMETHING FUNDAMENTALLY WRONG.

ITS LIMBS ARE ELONGATED AND AWKWARD.

ITS HANDS END IN SKELETAL CLAWED DIGITS BETTER SUITED FOR GRASPING TREASURES THAN FIGHTING BATTLES.

ITS FLESH RESEMBLES YELLOWED PARCHMENT, DECAYING CANVAS, AND ANCIENT MUSEUM ARTIFACTS LEFT TO ROT IN DARKNESS.

MOST DISTURBING OF ALL ARE THE FRAGMENTS THAT CONSTANTLY EMERGE FROM ITS BODY.

HALF-FINISHED SYMPHONIES.

FORGOTTEN STORIES.

UNPAINTED MASTERPIECES.

LOST MEMORIES.

ABANDONED DREAMS.

GHOSTLY FACES.

THE REMNANTS OF STOLEN SPARKS DRIFT AROUND THE CREATURE LIKE SCRAPS TORN FROM COUNTLESS LIVES.

A CURATOR IS A LIVING ARCHIVE OF THEFT.

THE COLLECTION

EVERY CURATOR MAINTAINS A COLLECTION.

THESE IMPOSSIBLE ARCHIVES EXIST BEYOND CONVENTIONAL REALITY AND CONTAIN THE TREASURES STOLEN THROUGHOUT CENTURIES OF PREDATION.

WITHIN THEIR HALLS CAN BE FOUND:

- LOST MASTERPIECES.

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- FORGOTTEN LANGUAGES.
 - EXTINCT SONGS.
 - ERASED MEMORIES.
 - UNWRITTEN NOVELS.
 - ABANDONED INVENTIONS.
 - ENTIRE IDENTITIES PRESERVED AS EXHIBITS.

TO A CURATOR, THESE ARE NOT TROPHIES.

THEY ARE SACRED POSSESSIONS.

PROOF THAT, DESPITE THEIR INABILITY TO CREATE, THEY CAN STILL POSSESS CREATION.

DESTROYING PART OF A COLLECTION IS ONE OF THE FEW ACTS CAPABLE OF PROVOKING GENUINE FURY FROM A CURATOR.

TEMPERAMENT

CURATORS ARE NOT MINDLESS MONSTERS.

THEY ARE INTELLIGENT, CALCULATING, MANIPULATIVE PREDATORS.

PATIENT ENOUGH TO SPEND DECADES CULTIVATING A SINGLE VICTIM.

THEY LIE EFFORTLESSLY.

THEY FORGE FRIENDSHIPS.

THEY CREATE TRUST.

THEY OFFER MENTORSHIP.

THEY PROVIDE COMFORT.

ALL WHILE PREPARING TO HARVEST WHAT THEY TRULY DESIRE.

A CURATOR MAY GENUINELY ADMIRE A MORTAL'S CREATIVITY.

IT MAY EVEN LOVE THEM IN ITS OWN TWISTED WAY.

BUT ADMIRATION HAS NEVER STOPPED A COLLECTOR FROM ADDING ANOTHER SPECIMEN TO A DISPLAY CASE.

FINAL OBSERVATION

THE GREATEST DANGER OF A CURATOR IS NOT DEATH.

DEATH ENDS A STORY.

A CURATOR STEALS THE ABILITY TO WRITE ONE.

SOMEWHERE BEYOND REALITY, IN AN ENDLESS ARCHIVE FILLED WITH STOLEN DREAMS AND FORGOTTEN WONDERS, ANOTHER EXHIBIT WAITS PATIENTLY TO BE CATALOGED.

AND EVERY CURATOR HOPES IT WILL BE YOURS.

CREATED BY D.M.

