

## *Drive*

The Maine forest was cold and uninviting in the autumn rain. The dark of the night was unyielding to the man's headlights as he made his way back home to the city.

Desperate to stay awake, he turned on the car's radio to the doom and gloom of the news. Between the bombast of songs singing of wealth that the station frequently played, the voices on the radio spoke of global crises. Alone on the road, the man continued on into the dark.

A faint beam of light glimmered from the horizon behind the car. It was another car, approaching decently fast from behind. It crept closer and closer until it caught up with the man and maintained its distance behind him by a few yards. The headlights were blinding.

"Couldn't you turn off your brights?" the man muttered.

He began driving on the shoulder to let the following car pass. It didn't budge. It continued to follow from behind like a shadow, keeping its distance. The man's heartbeat began accelerating as he returned to the road, suspicious of his follower.

The two cars continued on. Each time he encountered a roundabout, the man glanced anxiously in his mirror to confirm he was still being followed. The follower would disappear until their lights flashed back into the rearview mirror, and a growing sense of dread would seep out of the man's once sleepy demeanor.

The follower suddenly accelerated until it tailgated the man. The rain grew harder and tapped at the car windows like hundreds of disembodied fingers, and the man grew frantic in his paranoia. He adjusted his rearview mirror to reflect incoming light for a better look at the car behind him.

His followers were two humanoid creatures. One had massive white eyes with pupils the size of a drop of ink. It had a manic, jagged smile shaped like a crescent moon that stretched from its left ear to its chin, and its eyes tilted down to the center of its face. It aimed its ghoulish grin directly at him. The other creature sat in the passenger seat. It had an emaciated face, and its eyes missing, two sunken holes standing in their place. Its mouth stood agape in a scream as though the weight of its jaw was too heavy for its facial musculature to hold up.

The man, snapping out of a state of horror, swerved onto a county road into the forest.

He looked back and forth frantically as he drove through the woods, the light from his followers growing distant. As he drove deeper, the trees began twisting, warping. The interior of the car grew impossibly dark until the man was floating in a void, the steering wheel disappearing under his hands. He watched in a terrified stupor as a pair of headlights grew from the dark behind him. They didn't keep their distance as they approached the man, however, and, as one does on a trip home, they simply drove.