

# They were always there!

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*By AbyssalEros*

Not that she could have seen or ever really had seen them. Yet, she knew that they were there, that they were a reality. They existed.

Had she told someone about them, they would have thought she was crazy and told her she was afflicted by hallucinations and was suffering by schizophrenia. She knew, however, that she was not crazy. The eyes existed! And they watched her!

They had been watching her for a very long time, although she could not really tell how long.

Especially in those dim moments of being half asleep, when her consciousness was numb, she was aware of their piercing gaze. Then she startled up and was unable to find sleep again. Sometimes she thought she could vaguely glimpse dark-glowing outlines of eyes watching her from the shadows.

She did not know why the eyes were watching her, but she was sure they were lurking outside the apparent reality, where they seemed to be waiting for something.

The feeling of being constantly watched had frightened her in the early years, almost ruined her. She did not have the slightest privacy, no matter what she did. Even in the bathroom, she could feel the gaze of the eyes gliding over her naked body.

Therefore, she had withdrawn more and more from everything and everyone around her, fearing to be confronted with questions she could not answer and did not want to.

Gradually, however, she got used to those gazes watching her day in and day out; but the questions remained.

What were those eyes? What did they want from her? Why were they watching her?

These questions filled her life, and after some time, she began to pursue investigations that increasingly went in obscure, pseudoscientific, and finally magical directions.

After finding next to nothing in the city's libraries to help her, she enrolled at the prestigious university of her birthplace to gain access to the old archives, where according to rumors, not just worldly knowledge was hidden.

And there she finally found some answers. In old books and folios hidden deep in the archives, she learned that already other people were exposed to these eyes before her. For thousands of years, there had been people who reported of dark glowing eyes watching them from the shadows and robbing them of sleep.

Some could no longer endure the fear and ended their lives, others just went mad, and others simply disappeared without a trace. But some set themselves to learn more about the eyes, devoting their lives to mystical research to unravel their secret.

As far as she could tell, no one has ever succeeded in deciphering the mystery of the eyes. However, everyone was sure that something existed outside the human world and was observing humanity. No

one could say precisely what that something was. Also, the motives were completely unclear, why it observed mankind. But most of them agreed on the malevolent nature of this entity.

During all the time of her research, she could always perceive the gaze of the eyes on herself. Whatever she found out, also did not remain hidden from the eyes. Whether they enjoyed her efforts or were worried by them remained in the dark as themselves.

Finally, in a dubious antiquarian bookshop, she found an old and weathered handwritten folio called *Ens Daemones*, which allegedly originated from the sphere of influence of Paracelsus. Although the merchant demanded an outrageous sum, she immediately recognized, trained by years of research, the value of this tome and paid grudgingly.

When she left the antiquarian bookshop with the folio under her arm, it had already become dark. Although it was not unusual at this time of the year, so close to Samhain, she felt uncomfortable as soon as she was alone. The staring of the eyes was more intense than ever.

Pressing the heavy tome firmly against her delicate body, she headed home through the shady alleys of the old town. Repeatedly she believed to see dark glooming eyes within the shadows. Eyes that were clearly pursuing her hostilely. Their gaze was literally burning on her skin.

Nervous, she kept looking around and grasped the book more tightly so that the ankles of her fingers stood out white. She shivered. Her breath formed small clouds of mist that were torn apart by her haste.

It should not have been so cold that her breath could condense, she thought. Something was not right at all. She looked around anxiously, but could not see anything unusual at first.

Then she noticed it! The narrow streets known to her had given way to alleys that were utterly unknown to her and whose architecture had a bizarre appearance. Without realizing it, she had gone astray. But had she really lost her way, she asked herself. The angles of the houses were too wrong. Everything seemed somehow unreal, shadowy, as if these alleys did not belong to her reality.

Then she heard shuffling footsteps coming at her from all directions.

