

## Title: Open your eyes, look outside

It was in the middle of the night when I finally decided that it was time to rest. After a day of working that seemed like a never-ending cycle of checking lists, recruiting doctors, your legs, arms, shoulders and head felt as much heavy as a truck full of bricks. You left your work building with trembling legs, in your head just fog. You reached your car, parked just a few meters away from the structure.

The lights of the lightbulbs continuously reflected on the front part of the vehicle, making your sleepy eyes sore. You touched your left pocket multiple times , trying to reach for the keys of the apartment. You struggled a little while inserting the key in the keyhole, bumping on the sides until it slid completely.

You stared at your dark living room, standing on the door you attempted to find the switch, succeeding. Leaving your bag next to the door, you walked through the room, looking for the calendar. "Friday" you mumbled to yourself. You slowly moved towards the stairs, and for each step you did, you heard a creak. You turned the handle of the bathroom, the lights turned on, perceiving your movement. As soon as your eyes adapted to the bright light, you couldn't avoid noticing a black fluid-like substance dripping from the socket.

You crawled down and closely observed the liquid. A drop hit your hand, it felt like boiling oil. Faster than a bolt, you got up and quickly put the hand under a waterflow. It wasn't rinsing off. Instead, it was spreading around the sink like it was freshly generating from that single drop. Panicking, your hands started shaking, staining walls, a carpet and the mirror. "Am I crazy?" you thought, while looking at your own reflection. You could see the liquid that quickly rose from your neck, until it reached your cheeks, heading towards your eyes. Instinctively, you shook your head and as soon as your eyes opened, everything was fine. The socket was working, the room was clean, even the hands.

"This isn't absolutely possible! What the hell is going on here?! Was that my imagination? Am I delusional? It felt so real though... I must go to sleep...this is getting out of hand".

You left the room, heading straight to the bedroom. With a mind still very confused, almost scared you decided to change your clothes in a comfy pajama, hung inside the wardrobe, to try to ease the tension of the moment. For a fraction of second, you saw again that black substance, but this time it was covering completely the inside walls and the objects stored inside. "No...it can't be..." you said, as you quickly backed away until you collided with a piece of furniture. Checking yourself, with frustration you screamed: "This is the last straw! I can't do

this anymore! I'll just go to bed, hopefully everything will be alright by tomorrow morning".

You shut the door and jumped on the bed right away. You were afraid and concerned, but your body was tired. You fell asleep in a matter of minutes.

In your dream, a black figure moved towards you, while you were laying on the floor of a completely white room. You couldn't move, even if you wanted to. The figure whispered in your ear, slowly, so that you could understand what it was saying: "Open your eyes, look outside". Once you were out of that sort of sleep paralysis, your eyes widened, you gasped anxiously and almost hesitantly you looked at the window next to the bookshelf, noticing a massive, black web, made of the same fluid of the previous moments. The Moon was the only source of light you could rely on. You cautiously approached the window, and you finally saw **me**.

**I was watching you.**

**I've always been.**

**I'll forever be.**

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