

AFTER THEY DID IT



Danielle
Brathwaite-
Shirley



The five of them looked at each other

Lady Eburn
Malik Myst
Reih Ex
Tobii See
Travis Light

Their hoods shrouded their faces in shadow.

Their eyes glowed through the dark.

Fear was in each of the 5 pairs of eyes.

Their gazes shifted from the twisted ashy horror on the floor between them, to each other's faces.

Each felt that the other's gaze was burning the weight of what had happened onto their bodies.

Into their skin.

Their bodies would tell the story on sight.

They felt that people would be able to read ,or perhaps, more appropriately -

misread

-the events of the night from the new layer of history now coating their bodies.

The panic was setting in

and the


answers to their problem


didn't exist.

At the start of the night there were 6 of them.

Having kept each other alive to this point the 6 of them had formed a family bond. They signified this ceremonially by changing their names on the same day, keeping the secret of their deadnames between each other.

On that day all their secrets had passed between each other's lips and something about the ceremony





altered a part within each of them. They had all felt it, but in their excitement failed to place what had exactly changed. It wasn't until later that they understood that somehow, for some unknown reason, they had gained an uncanny ability to unearth the secrets of others. Things that were impossible to know. Some part of each of them possessed the ability for people to trust them, things to land in their lap, or just to know the right way to push for something unspeakable to unearth itself.


They traded in these hushed stories and although everyone in town knew what they could do, no one dared to discuss it for the fear their own secret would be spilt. Over time they developed a kind of spiritual significance and they were enrolled into the spiritual practices of others, as a way of off-loading their conscience in confidence, for a fee of course.


The death of the cosmic horror known as the colonial legacy was marked on the last friday of every month. Each town had marked this ending with a small memento, a cross, a pillar. An object to signify and celebrate its passing. However their town was different.

Having been the death place of one of the last colonial memories. This memory, when it was alive, would bend the reality of others eventually leading to an imbalance in the rights of certain people. It would then feed off this supremacy and the cries of pain by those subjugated by it. On its death this memory had crystallized becoming frozen in place, losing all power to move others. Its burnt carcass resembled the loose shape of an featureless Alpha Male with a perforated surface. It had a definite human shape but deep endless dark holes for its eyes. When it was alive, those eyes had spat fire as the heat of hate coursed through its body like blood. On this friday the 6 of them led the ritual, which was to pour water on the figure, signifying the extinguishing of hate. At first it was done to ensure that it didn't heat up again and wake, but after some passage of generations, it had become nothing more symbolic.

No one ever expected that it could be awoken again.

Because of all this they had embedded themselves as important figures in the community. They were seen as the knowers of all secrets and the extinguishers of any hate. All of them had accepted this





with reverence. Yet there was one secret that no one knew. A secret that had passed by everyone. One of the 6 was planning to wake it.


During the ceremonies they had gotten close to the Memory, having let their guard down. And as they stared into the dark holes of its eyes, it stared back at them, whispering in the subconscious. Setting up home for its old ways, in the back of their minds. Most of their minds no longer had the receptors for this kind of hate so these whispers would dissipate as soon as they were planted. Yet, over time, the whispers had gained a foothold in the mind of one. They had tried to fight it at first, but fighting what feels like your own thoughts is harder when it begins to grow, generating new thoughts off itself. Slowly the way they saw the world changed. Soon this thought had given birth to so many others stretching across their brain, contaminating old memories, casting them in a new light of disgust. And soon this thought could no longer just live in their head, and began to worm its way out. This manifested itself in their ritual during the moment of pouring water on the figure. Each of them would bring a bottle of water and empty it in the


eyes of the memory. No one had thought to check the bottles, and so one of their bottles was instead filled with alcohol. The idea was that if this memory had access to fuel a spark of hate could inflame this memory, waking it from eternal slumber.

They were not careful to cover their tracks. Part of their plan was to cast suspicion on all of them, causing distrust and outrage. The perfect storm for subjugation. Someone had discovered it and had been revealed in the town paper with the headline “HATE IS AMONGST US” with an article stating the following

“After last Fridays ritual, some matches were found next to the figure soaked in alcohol. The SJWs are looking into it but nothing is yet uncovered. If you have any knowledge please let us know” followed by an address and number that could be used to contact them. They hadn’t left the matches, so it looks as though the hate in their mind had already begun spreading.

As no one else was entrusted to pour the water the 6 of them were instantly cast under suspicion. People were outraged.





Then the misinformation began, Lies were made up about them as people began to jossel for the place the 6 of them had held within the community. Greed had awoken and deep below in the darkness of the eyes, a flame bega to kindle. The 6 of them insisted they knew nothing about it, and that there had been a mistake. However no one would trust them. They were supposed to know all the secrets. How could they not know who was behind this? Conspiracies became accepted truths and they were ostracised. In the hopes of finding refuge they wandered towards the forest. And as they left those sparks of hate grew.

5 out of the 6 hadn't felt it. They didn't feel it even as they crossed the barrier between the church and the graveyard and found themselves beneath the towering evergreens deep in the forest. They didn't feel it even as the wind pushed against them and the sky darkened. They didn't feel it until they saw it.

Something was wrong with one of them. Something wasn't right. They had been too close to see it until now. Until it was too late. Until they saw a flame in


the eyes of them. Until they felt the heat coming off them. Until the skin on their body started to bubble and blister as this fire coursed through their veins. Until they opened their mouth choking on the thick smoke as their body caught alight.


The rain had begun falling now. Hot red rain that seemed to burst into small explosions as it hit the one who had betrayed them all. They had surrounded them, keeping their distance.

The face of the one who betrayed them was gone now and instead fire poured out of the holes in their skull, burning any remaining tissues and skin.

“You know, don't you?” they said, spitting molten blood as they spoke and their eyes melted.

And at that point they did know. They knew that they had to kill them before this hatred infected them all, if it hadn't already. They knew that something that they had prayed had ended, was now starting again. That the flame of hate had come back, and this was just the beginning.





With this,
and tears in their eyes,
they descended one who betrayed them.

Killing them
in secret.
by muttering their dead name
in secret.

And burying the remains
in secret.

In this moment
the memory
awoke
and the town

drowned in its flames.