



Ambush in the Night

by Rūne

My caravan was ambushed on the edge of the Empty Lands, three of the monsters attacking in the night. They ran quickly on all fours, taking very long loping strides. They had no hair and looked as if their black skin was covered in a coating of slime as light from the lanterns reflected off of them. They also had massive yellow eyes that almost glowed in the dark.

They tore through all except me before we could reach our weapons; slashing with claws and leaping onto people to bite with tentacle covered faces. Occasionally they would spit something from their mouths that would pierce into those they targeted. They slaughtered everyone in the caravan swiftly, not caring who the victims were, be it man, woman or child.

I grabbed my weapon and fought them one at a time as they rushed toward me, deflecting their claws to counter with attacks of my own. Soon two of the monsters lay at my feet, my sword held high over the third. In a last effort just before I killed the vile creature, it launched one of those things from its gaping maw which imbedded into my shoulder. I struck the beast down, and ripped the projectile from my body. I didn't know what it was, but black venom seeped from the tip.

I looked at the wound. I could already see blackness creeping out from it. Ripping my shirt from my arm, I watched in horror as the blackness crept in both directions up and down my arm. It burned beneath my skin. As it got closer to my skull, I could feel my mind begin to grow foggy.

As the first tendrils of the blackness slithered up the side of my head, I heard the Voice. "You are now one with us," it hissed into my mind.

I could feel myself lose control of my body and grow numb, though I could still see and think. My head jerked down to look at my arm as it began to change. My skin, muscle, and bone morphed and contorted wherever the black creep had spread to.

I was suddenly thrust into feeling, and the pain of the transformation overwhelmed me. I fell to the ground convulsing and screaming, though this was all I was allowed to do. All the while the Voice hissed its laughter into my mind, and forced me to stay conscious throughout the whole ordeal.

After a long while, I was forced to stand, my will not my own, and look at myself. My entire body had changed. All of my clothes had been ripped and torn from me during my

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convulsions so that only scraps of cloth clung my body.

Most horribly, I was now one of the monsters I had slain. With its dying breath, it had turned me into one of its own kind.

My mind reeled at this, but I was immediately off and running, into the Empty Lands. My thoughts were on the creatures I had slain, the fact that inside them there might have been others like myself who were trapped in a monster's body, their actions not their own.

Soon, more creatures loped across the moor, running alongside and behind me. My head swiveled and looked at them with large yellow eyes. I noticed familiar scraps of cloth hanging from each. Every member of the caravan that had been struck with the venomous barb had turned into these monsters. Where there were once three, now there were five.

The Voice hissed its laughter once more into my mind as this pack of monsters went off into the night, the bright stars reflecting off of their slime-covered skin.



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