

The Outsiders in the Night

By Michael Ogez

I saw their deranged red eyes through the darkness. They inched closer, their hideous rasping breath consuming the room. I crept backwards in terror, reaching ever so slowly for the pistol which lay above my head. I shuddered as I felt an icy, reptilian grip on my forearm. Soon I was surrounded. Their repulsive, inhumane stench overwhelmed me. My death was inevitable now. I could see their mouths twist upwards in a distorted smile, waiting for the taste of human flesh. My flesh. Then a ghastly shriek pierced the darkness, and suddenly they were on me. They scratched and clawed like animals, tearing through every inch of my body. Desperately, I lunged for the gun. I grabbed it and began to fire madly, while their claws dug deeper into my skin. One by one, they dropped to the ground, too fixated on the thought of a meal to realize what was happening. Still they tore and bit, until every last one lay slain on my bed. I collapsed in exhaustion, with blood trickling from several puncture wounds in my body. I had survived.

When I woke up the next morning, I washed off in the shower and tended to my wounds. I had been forced to take care of myself for my entire life, as there were no Insiders living within a 50-mile radius of me after my parents died. About 1000 years ago, when the government announced that the air intoxication level had reached a maximum of ten, people were forced to make a choice. They could either go inside and live as long as possible on whatever food and water they had, or they could risk their lives and stay outside. Thus, the two groups were formed, the Outsiders and the Insiders. My ancestors were very wealthy, and chose to stay inside and live out the rest of their lives in peace. It was an obvious decision, for they were among the few people in the world who owned nanites which were advanced enough to produce food by themselves. Even for those without nanites, it was a much wiser decision to remain indoors. After all, the streams and rivers were too polluted to drink, and the climate was so extreme and the sun so intense that no crops could grow.

Nevertheless, by some miraculous feat of evolution, the Outsiders had managed to survive and change to suit their environment. Over time, they had grown into animal-like creatures, able to withstand the deadly UV rays and the black, smog-laden air. For a while, they had scavenged for whatever nutrients they could find, but they were forced to resort to cannibalism when the resources ran out. It was for that reason that they'd come for me last night. Although I escaped, my spirit is broken and I no longer have the will to live on this lonely planet.

Tonight, I will go outside and give my body to the Outsiders. I can only hope that some day, human kind will be able to restore the peaceful lifestyle that I have read about in the ancient tales on my bookshelves. Someday, we will be able to go outside and play games like basketball and soccer, and bathe in the glorious sunlight. But as for me, I have given up. Good bye.