

SIGNAL TO NOISE #16

You think you're alone. You are. You see the world as the horror show you never thought it could be. Your eyes don't deceive you. You fear the night. You have every reason to.

It should be obvious to anyone with the eyes to see, this planet is in the grip of something dark, the grip of something horrific.

Thieves in the night bleed us (a whole generation of young people fall to the bitter-sweet music of their twisted culture), the restless stalk us and take our flesh. Unseen puppeteers pull the strings and we dance without even knowing that we are strung.

It should be obvious to anyone with the eyes to see, this planet is in the grip of a horror, a black horror -- birthing itself in many forms. Like a parasite.

It should be obvious to anyone with the eyes to see, this planet is gripped by a terrible darkness. Birthing itself at the expense of and with the unwitting cooperation of mankind.

Like a parasite, the darkness burrows deep and nests in the soul. Like a cancer the darkness so often finds a foothold because the infested open the door. The darkness bursts forth/out like some filthy insect from inside a ripe melon, revealing the soul as corrupted.

The darkness alters us so extensively, if we let it, we become unrecognizable as what we were and unable to become what was intended. The darkness finds its foothold because the stupid, the greedy, the shortsighted, the blunted and the timid open the door.

Wealth and power. Thirty pieces of silver for a soul -- what a bargain! The old woman consumed those men. That dark thing hid within an old woman's shell and ate those men. Not just the bodies but the souls as well. What price did she pay for her power? Live longer! Be stronger! Drink deep and rule the dark.

But what about the sun?

All they ask is that we steer them, our fellows, their way, into the abattoir. They sit behind mahogany desks. They breed unnaturally in the slaughterhouses where they reside. Feed us and we will feed you, or so they promise. Public office, corporate control, the loins of every man and woman and child crossing your path -- power, money, sex. "We have it, you want it," they say. "Let's talk..."

Why are things this way? Why do bloodsuckers and their proxies sit in board rooms, sharp-nailed fingers picking away at scabs? Why do old women consume the newly-sighted with impunity. Why is the police cruiser driven by a thing with a uniform and gun? Why do the restless walk and talk and laugh with us, feed on our laughter and tears and pleasures and sorrows? Why do dreams dance in French Quarter bars. Why did the beasts abandon their place?

Why are things this way? Because man abandoned the covenant, fouled his worship places and cursed God.

The sun is setting. Winter is coming. And we did it to ourselves

For the worst of the lot, the parasites, nothing but fire and the sun are certain to end them. Burn them to chalky ash.

For the restless, set their dark sides against them. Find what they love, what they lust for, what they will not release. Settle the debt, break the mirror, mediate an understanding and they will sleep.

Silver is the final solution for the shifting beast who steps away from his appointed role.

Go ahead. Cling to your property, your money, your television, your politics. Invest yourself in washboard abs, white teeth and steel buns. Work to the point of exhausted apathy for faceless corporations so you can own a home with a white picket fence, or a condo in the pricey section of town. Invest yourselves into the car, the hairstyle, the clothes. After all, status is everything, isn't it? Status, and what status brings. I say, open your eyes. These things couldn't save you before and they sure as hell won't save you now.

Things weren't supposed to be this way.

There is a whole strata of society the average, 9 to 5, working-class man or woman is blind to. Something about the darkness and its proxies -- collectively and individually -- makes them invisible. We see them but not as they really are, for what they really are. Perhaps the blindness has its source in us. A congenital defect perhaps, a weakness we've been purposefully bred to, or one that's always been there, one the darkness simply exploits. Regardless, the darkness uses our weakness with skill and subtlety. They dangle carrots in front of our faces, leading us to the block for sale or butcher, and we are incapable of seeing the rotting claw holding the string.

It is fortunate for us the bloodsuckers squabble and wage war on one another with a ferocity that occasionally blinds them to the actions of their food animals. Their politics is both a perverse echo of our own, and the model for atrocities we visit on each other, in the name of patriotism, partisanship and bipolar ideology.

Actually, the internal struggles of our adversaries work in our favor. These things do not exist as a monopoly. The ignorance of the individual factions among the parasites, about us, seems to rival our own ignorance of the darkness. It is a tool, yes, but do not mistake internal strife of the parasites as being so deep it offers the perfect tool. Though pitted against one another, they will join forces to eradicate us if the need arises. Or, they will use us against their rivals, promising (again) power, or safety, something the wise understand as an illusion -- comforting like a blanket...or a shroud.

Weapons to use against the thieves of the night -- their own vanity. Against the changing beasts

-- their fanaticism. The restless fall to broken bonds and divided intention. The walking dream despises the stoical. Builders can be goaded into working openly and inviting disasters of their own making.

These perverse variations on the human theme are but the symptom. We have not yet met the disease.

Restless souls, unsatisfied with their lot, try to rekindle lost love or past hate. Holding onto to a person, a place, a thing they are confused and pathetic, but still a danger. A dangerous symptom.

Dreams and nightmares sip on the most heady of wines -- the soul -- pulling gently at essences and leaving behind husks, unimaginative and dry. They are another symptom.

The cynics rage against us, declaring a new war against the children of a past so distant it is entombed in myth, not stone. They will not shepherd or maintain. Their fall is a symptom.

Building a world, they shape events to their own ends, most as blind as we are to the darkness they serve. Despite loss and war and victory the builders fear the certainty of the hapless. They want to write the rules. Their arrogance is a symptom.

Bloodsuckers bleed us, slave us to their stolen vitality. The restless stalk us, hound us, refuse to let go of the past. We are puppets who cannot see, or are even aware of, the strings.

It should be obvious to anyone with the eyes to see, this planet is in the grip of something dark. We are not at the top of the food chain. We ARE food, breeding stock, possessions that are held close -- and sometimes broken.

Certainly there is something to be said for patience. But patience means nothing without intelligent planning. You can sit on your ass forever, watching. Ultimately, one must make a decision. Will I wait one more day before acting? Will one more person disappear before I stand up? Consider -- if you act prematurely, you will die; if you decline to act (ostensibly as you gather information) other hapless victims will feed the beast or the machine. I have watched both scenarios played out. I have watched the energetic and foolhardy walk with confidence into the lion's den, surprised to find themselves served up as the main course. I've watched the more reserved or reticent observe -- all in the name of tactical or strategic research -- while ordinary folk are plucked up and eaten, body and soul.

The few I've watched and listened to have no consensus. One wants to kill everything that's wrong. Another wants to approach them with palms up, offering redemption. And yet another sits back, asking questions, sometimes promoting the would-be eradicator's agenda, sometimes taking up the conciliator's banner. Mostly though, this one just asks questions. I can sympathize with each. I've watched deviance that should not be allowed walking the streets. Thieves in the night using the hapless as food. A gray-haired old woman wiping away the lives of five men. A tangible nightmare, the bogeyman, in some unfathomable way draining the vitality from what was a once bright child, turning her into a dullard, a mere echo of

what she was and what she was meant to be. I've also watched as the restless cry ethereal tears over the loss of a love and a life. Fierce beasts have gathered beneath my unseen gaze weeping over the rape of the mother. Whoever this "mother" is, the depth of the beasts' anguish over her abuse was real. Their humanity is as real as their rage. There is enough right in some of the wrong that parity is a possible, perhaps even a reasonable expectation.

We are an apparent new player on the scene. Even a causal investigation reveals our adversaries' roots are sunk deep into the fabric of everything while we have barely begun to scratch the rock-scrabble surface. Anything I could cite to support this notion is purely anecdotal, but anyone with the eyes to see knows that human society, in all its forms, at least through recorded history, has belonged to the darkness -- shadowy architects without our best interests in mind. We are (to them) food and breeding stock and (perhaps) a benign plague. We are aphids who think we sit securely as King of the Mountain. How galling to be shown that we aren't even camped out in the foothills. Our adversaries, beset with internecine squabbling and blood politics, scratch at us like fleas. We are a minor curiosity to those who pull rabbits -- or lightning -- out of their hats. We are monkeys who have learned a new trick. How entertaining we are to the night-timers, the restless, the nightmares, the beasts and the enigmas. Our advantage is that we are overlooked. Couple our lowly status with our adaptability and we have a tool. Despite being ruled, bred and enslaved we still individually spike up from the baseline. As a species we are a poor thing, but new thought and insight still surges out. We may be nothing but a weed, but a weed can still work its way up through the cracks in concrete. Sometimes the weed cracks the concrete.

Part of our problem is seeing the darkness and its proxies as a unified force. Pitiful, weak, unorganized us versus ancient, powerful, hierarchical them. Yes, some of what we face is ancient. Certainly most of what we face is powerful -- even the weakest bloodsucker is more than a match for the strongest among us in one-to-one encounters. And yes, there is a profound organization among the various factions. But our adversaries are as much - if not more so - in competition and conflict with one another as they are with us. We are an essential unknown, overlooked and written off.

We are unorganized as a whole. However, operating as we do -- individually and in small groups -- preserves our fractured community. Certainly -- if captured or enticed -- no one can betray our movement, only his or her immediate comrades. Despite our fractured nature(s), the common, foundational motivation behind everything we do is to change things. We feel it in our bones, the need to change the way things are. We each know the status quo is untenable -- and for more than just the obvious reasons. Someone has set us the job of stirring things up. In a sense, even with our divisions, we are more organized than our adversaries ever could be.

Again, anecdotally speaking, the proxies of darkness are as rooted in a stagnating mire of their own creation as they are in human culture. The night-timer is consumed by one thing -- despite its eruditeness. It lives to feed. It would not surprise me to discover that every dictator, every tyrant and despot were a parasite, or slave to a parasite. It would, however, surprise me to find that any philosopher, writer or artist was anything but uncorrupted human. We can change. We can adapt. We can grow. They cannot. We certainly can and do fall, becoming what they make us. They cannot, to my knowledge, revert to being us. They are fanatical, obsessed with

satisfying base and basic drives. We are as well, but we can -- with great difficulty I admit -- act in defiance of instinct. They cannot. The very behaviors and attractions that make them our superiors also afford us with blatant weaknesses to exploit.

A word of caution: I suspect in the same way we are empowered and guided from on high, our adversaries, our owners, are themselves mastered by those from below. As implacable and daunting as they are, our adversaries are but proxies of something far worse that bides its time.

Very little signal makes it way through the noise. There is little I can tell you which you couldn't figure out for yourself. All I intend is to point you in the right direction, steer you away from unproductive paths. This has to be worth something, yes?

The one thing that comes through the noise clearly is the inevitability of what we face and what the future holds. The world's course is set and we cannot stop the rise of darkness or the decimation of everything we value as it is trampled under the jack boots of our adversaries' armies. The masters will awaken and this planet will quake as they feed. Our adversaries -- our counterparts -- know this too; they rush to consolidate power, to squirrel themselves away from the coming winter. What I know is that we will not win. They will not win. This is not about winning or losing -- it's about survival. If we succeed then those that should and can survive, will survive. Their number will include some of our adversaries. If we fail, then it ends for everyone.

And the sun will not matter.

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