

DEMON MONKEYS

They first appeared to me when I was sitting in the park, sketching the people I saw. No one else seemed to notice them. I guess I was actively looking for unique beings to put on paper so to me they stood out in a sharp affrontive way. They were quite hairy individuals and at first I thought they wore costumes, such was the level of their fur. I watched for a while. They seemed normal, nothing was unusual about their behaviour. There was however an evil aura about their presence. Like they had done unspeakable things. Their eyes shifted around and though I looked away they realised I had been staring.

One came over first and introduced himself as Abageddon then snatched away my sketch book, running an aged black nail over my rendition of him. The other, Zenodros was instantly beside him and tried to take the book, but they tussled and the pages tore. I was a little put off by this display and told them to stop. Abageddon complimented my work, saying it was the finest depiction of himself and his brother that he'd seen in a long time. While I appreciated the compliment I did not appreciate my sketches torn and lying strewn across the ground. To this Zenodros employed the oddest excuse I'd heard, explaining that yes, they were reckless and rude, but unfortunately couldn't help it. He and his brother were 'Demon Monkeys' and this is just what they did. Initially I ignored this as a childish attempt to justify their actions and so collected my things and went to leave.

Something stopped me that day and I think it was a misguided artist's intuition but I asked the two if I could get their contact details so as to re-attempt my drawing. They did not seem to want to share that information and instead we organised to meet at a cafe nearby. While walking home I realised my sweat had soaked through the two layers I had on.

I was so excited I could not sleep that night and I awoke feeling quite drowsy. Though I was nervous they would not show, they came right on time. I began quickly but halfway through my second sketch of the brothers a most peculiar thing happened. I realised Zenodros had urinated in his seat. The loincloth he wore had turned from its normal crimson to a deep maroon and there was a vinegar sourness to the air. I tried to ignore it but then Abageddon joined his sibling too. The stench was unbearable and other customers started to turn and look at us. I became suddenly overcome with embarrassment and asked my muses to continue our session at the beach, to which they excitedly agreed. Unfortunately we had to walk as they had no money.

The journey there was unbearable. The brothers would leer at women, screech at random and constantly fight each other for silly things. By the time

DEMON MONKEYS

we'd reached the sand hours later I just wanted to finish up the drawing and end the cruel and unusual punishment I'd inflicted on myself. The brothers had no such plans, jumping straight into the water. Thinking at least I could take the time to have a well-deserved nap, I awoke to screams. For some reason, unbeknownst to me, Abageddon had thrown his faeces at Zenodros who had responded in kind. Bystanders had become caught in the crossfire and were covered in steaming brown slop, which singed nose-hairs and ate at the skin.

I felt like it was my responsibility to deal with the intruders I had introduced to this otherwise idyllic environment so I called out to them but they did not respond. Marching into the sea I grabbed them both by their elbows, intending to walk them back to the land. I did not get that far. As soon as I made contact with their hairy arms I was filled with a sudden feeling of overwhelming despair, and I let go immediately as if I'd been struck. I had to resort to begging them to leave with me. They eventually obliged.

At this point I would have been more than happy to chalk up the entire experience to a failed attempt at following my intuition and drop my project altogether. However, the brothers were hungry. Ethereal in their existence, I assumed they did not eat, although I admit their excrement said otherwise. With no money and seemingly no sense of having ever been in a society I questioned internally how they had existed up until this point. They complained I had wasted their time and so owed them a meal. I saw one last chance to finish what I began in earnest a veritable millennia ago. So I invited them to my house.

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Abageddon and Zenodros were very obviously salivating on our route home, to the extent that their necks glistened and crusted with dried spit. When I asked them how long it had been since they'd eaten they simply replied, 'Forever'. It appeared that may have truly been the case, as their appetites proved to be insatiable. Nothing I had or could prepare was enough, so I decided to go out and buy a veritable feast from a nearby eatery. They did not join me in my endeavour, opting instead to stay. I do not blame them. They revealed to me their feet, which were bloodied and scabbed. Zenodros quipped that he may need to amputate his big toe, so decrepit it had become.

When I returned I found them asleep and once again they had expelled waste where they lay. The confined space was too much and I exploded into a rage at the disrespect that I had been shown, ordering them to get out of my premises.

DEMON MONKEYS

Abageddon asked if he could take the food I had brought but I denied him out of spite. They got heated, screamed that I had tricked them and given them false hope, that they deserved it for all the work they'd done for me, that their hunger was too much. Although their ape-like screeches terrified me I somehow found the strength to stay steadfast, and finally they shuffled out, menacingly glaring at me, eyes full of a burning vitriol.

Then, just outside my house, Abageddon attacked Zenodros, striking him at the point where the spine meets the skull. Zenodros dropped with an ear-splitting shriek that slowly morphed into a moroseful wail, as his brother battered him over and over into submission. Once the only sound remaining was disgusting wet thuds, Abageddon opened his primate mouth, baring fangs that he sank into Zenodros' furred flesh.

I could not do anything. My legs were frozen. My heart ceased beating.

I think the fiend sensed this and he turned to me, blood soaking through his face, dripping and staining the tiles.

"We told you we were Demon Monkeys. What did you expect?"

Then he lept away, leaving the body on my porch.