

# THE SOMETHING

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I WAS TEN-YEARS-OLD when I first saw it. Or rather, didn't see it. It never really made itself visible. That is not to say it was invisible by any means; no, it always seemed like it was perfectly able to be seen but placed just out of my range of sight. Out of eye-shot, if you will.

Because I couldn't ever really see it, I could never really ascertain what it was. Being unable to observe something does make it hard to describe, after all. But it always showed up when I least expected it to, and vanished whenever I realised it was there. That's how I came to call this mysterious entity 'The Something'; because, as the saying goes, it was something I saw out of the corner of my eye.

As I got older, I came to realise that other people didn't see The Something. They weren't plagued by a feeling of being watched, or thinking that there was something following them. I began to wonder if I was going crazy. I mean, normal people didn't see The Something, right? So, of course, that made me abnormal. Right?

I started trying to catch sight of The Something. To prove that it really was there, taunting me. I tried all manners of methods to capture some kind of evidence. I tried pointing cameras at the edge of my vision, hoping to get The Something on film. I tried staying indoors, in the hope that The Something couldn't possibly be out of sight range in

an enclosed space. I even tried devices used by ‘paranormal specialists’ that I bought off the internet, despite questions over their authenticity. All of them failed. It was as if there really wasn’t anything there.

My parents were getting suspicious of my activities. They thought there was something wrong, like I was being bullied, or taking drugs, or other stupid stuff like that. I always denied any wrongdoing, but it never seemed like they believed me. I had to make them believe. So, I told them the truth. I told them about The Something.

It didn’t work. The next week, they took me to see a psychologist. I was asked all these dumb questions about my childhood that gave me a creepy, ‘I’m trying not to directly ask you but did anything happen to you that might affect your state of mind’ vibe. As if she expected there to be something wrong and was just trying to confirm it. ‘Evidence to suit the theory’ and all. It was infuriating, especially with the constant taunting of The Something lying just out my peripheral vision. Maybe I shouldn’t have said anything.

After one of my weekly sessions, I met a girl. Her name was Alexandra, but she preferred to go by Alex. She had come to the psychologist for her own reasons. We didn’t talk much at first, owing to her appointment starting straight after mine, but in time we exchanged details and began meeting up outside of the clinic. And as we spent more time together, I started noticing The Something less and less.

I don’t know if it was just me getting used to having it there, or whether it was actually gone, but I began to feel a sense of relief. I was able to spend more of my time learning about Alex. It turned out her parents were very strict and caught her reading about ‘improper material’ on the internet. She never told me what exactly it was that she had been researching; she would just smile coyly and say ‘I’ll tell you one day’. But she was fascinated by my Something.

It seemed as if talking about The Something made it disappear. So, I told Alex about it as much as I could and she listened intently. I was disappointed to learn that Alex didn’t see The Something, but given her interest in the topic and its decreasingly frequent appearances, I was willing to forgive her. After all, if I didn’t see it anymore, why should it bother me that she didn’t?

We moved out together after high school. Mostly cut ties with our families. Stopped seeing the psychologist. What purpose did they serve when we could support each other? It was tough living, but we made it work. In a few years, we had built up a nice little life for ourselves. You could say things were completely normal for us. But then I started seeing The Something again.

It would be in the corner of the room just as I was about to go to sleep. Reflected in the mirror as I left the bathroom. Outside the window as I closed the curtains for the night. But it was only ever when I was home alone. Nevertheless, Alex was delighted to hear about it. She suggested we try and catch The Something. Together. I hadn't had help before, or anyone that saw the world the way I did. I agreed.

We made elaborate plans, spent inordinate amounts of money and invested all of our spare time, but we never tasted success. As the weeks dragged on, I began to get more and more frustrated. The Something was out there, laughing at our fruitless attempts to catch it. Sometimes, I could have sworn I heard its cackling laughter.

I became more dogged in my attempts; even stopped going to work in favour of stalking my stalker. Alex didn't. I guess she had to, or else we wouldn't have any money coming in. It bugged me that she wasn't helping me all the time, though. I thought we were supposed to be in this together. Eventually I was even seeing The Something when I was with her. It would even appear at times such that when I turned to look, Alex was in its place. Maybe it was doing that on purpose, just to mess with me. To mock me for trying to catch it. It was maddening.

I had to make it stop. I had to. I knew there was only one way to do it. I didn't tell Alex what I was going to do. I just said good bye to her in the morning, kissed her on the cheek and watched her walk to the bus stop. Then I withdrew the shiny silver tool from its holster in the kitchen, and gazed over it. Slowly—lovingly—I caressed it as if it was Alex's body. This instrument would mean the end of my torment at the hands of The Something. There was one thing left to do.

But you already know the rest, don't you?

‘So, junior, what do you think?’ my superior asks.

I shrug my shoulders and go back to looking at my coffee. ‘Not much for me to think. Doc says she’s a paranoid schizophrenic. They can’t even find any record of this “Alex”.’

‘Heh, doesn’t mean it’s not a good story though, right? Pretty spooky if you ask me.’

‘If you say so. I’m more concerned that she cut out her own eyes.’

‘I’ve seen worse. At least she only hurt herself.’

‘As far as we know.’

‘Lighten up, kid. We haven’t found any evidence to suggest that’s not the case. Girl’s a recluse. As long as we’re doing our jobs, the public doesn’t have to worry about people like her.’

I roll my eyes. ‘Whatever. I just wanna go home and get some rest. It’s been a long—’

Boss man gives me a sharp look. ‘What is it?’

‘Nothing,’ I sigh, rubbing my temple. ‘I just thought I saw something out of the corner of my eye.’