

# *The Man with No Eyes*

By Tessa Bodart

(age 14, from Hove, UK)

*'Before I go, do you wish to be told a story?'*

I asked this as I looked up from where I was sitting, on a small wooden chair, with a smooth brown surface, next to a bed. The bed, dressed in simple white sheets, was occupied by a small, seven-year-old girl hugging her knees and currently shaking. Her pale skin seemed to have been stretched out over her weak bones, her cheeks sunken and the bags under her eyes heavy and bruised.

The hospital room was the size of any regular room but with the lack of furniture, it was twice the size. High up ceiling and thick walls were painted badly with white paint, revealing the faint colour of the red bricks that had desperately tried to be hidden underneath. The once marble floor was now wrapped in grey carpet, keeping it from chilling the pair of tiny, bare feet.

The girl glanced at me but remained silent, looking with a blank expression as if my words had rushed right over her frail brain. I reached towards my bag, taking out a little book from it. 'Shall we read *The Princess and the Frog*?'

'He's watching me.'

I wasn't expecting to hear her voice and was quite intrigued by how quiet and raspy it was. My gaze slowly moved onto her and I made a mental note to discuss it with the other doctors. I was surprised once again when I saw the pure fear in her eyes, once sapphires, now just a dull blue. This wasn't a sign that she was improving in any way; after all, this was why she was here in the first place.

'Who's watching you?' I softly questioned; my voice low so as to not panic her more.

'The man with no eyes.'

'Let's play a game,' I picked up a sheet of paper and pencil. 'Describe to me what he looks like, and I'll draw him.'

'...'

'What is his size?'

'Tall.'

'What else?'

Instead of replying, she seemed to have lost interest in me, diverting her gaze to the mirror next to the desk and staring at her unmoving reflection. I said nothing for a moment,

watching her every movement carefully but then I decided to prod more. ‘Very well, he’s tall. What else?’

But I was met with silence once more. ‘You said this man had no eyes. Anything else about him?’

‘He makes a noise when he walks.’

‘What kind of noise?’

She huddled her body into a ball, not daring to meet my curious gaze. ‘D-drip’ she fearfully croaked.

I blinked several times, then tilted my head to the side in amusement. ‘*Drip? Why drip?*’

‘It s-sounds like he’s m-m-melting when he’s walking,’ she whispered.

‘Does this man with no eyes hurt you?’

‘No.’

I lowered the pencil. ‘He doesn’t hurt you?’

She shook her head hurriedly and gripped herself even more.

After a tense moment, I slowly rose to my feet and approached the door.

*Drip. Drip. Drip.*

I kept my gaze fixed firmly on the girl who was now pale in horror, her entire body trembling in fear. She flinched when I locked the door and smirked; ‘Maybe he should then. No screaming allowed.’

And I then drew the curtain to hide the insides of the room.

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