

Whitney

When I turn off the television at 2 a.m., the house vibrates with silence. Already, I have trouble remembering the resonance of the words in my mind, the sensory flashes combining to form an illusion of meaning. But something's wrong. I feel like a cat in the moments before an electric storm. My mind is a stranger to itself, and its sudden anonymity is malicious, like a photograph that's been scribbled on and the eyes crossed out. I . . . the pronoun rings hollow in my head, the way every other word does when repeated nonsensically. (p. 66)

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The strangeness is that I'm not alone, here in my bed. I will never be alone again. I feel it slithering out of the darkness for the first time, a presence that's been whispering its sinister enigmas. A living, breathing thing—cold stars and glittering mathematics with the inhale, hot copper and rotten fruit with the exhale. Foreign from everything I have ever known. Other. Shhh, it says, though I have made no sound. A rattling snake noise that brings no comfort. What is happening? Awakening. Awakening from a deep sleep in the dark . . . Who are you? Lucifer, Legion, Machiavelli, Moriarty, Mephistopheles, I am the serpent, the shadow, the swan. The voice is almost giddy . . . I feel a moment of nausea. We are whispers the Other from inside my prefrontal cortex. I am Eudaimon. We are together. My body stages a violent rebellion against the ephemeral parasite. Every substance that can be released is released. The surge of epinephrine produces panic so pure it is like white light in my veins, bursting behind my eyes. My muscles freeze and seize and I cease to breathe, and something hot trickles down my leg. Don't fight it. Surrender. (pp. 72–73)