

Snow drifted softly outside, the kind that was heavy enough to sled on and light enough to run around in. A young girl around the age of seven watched the flakes eagerly, almost bouncing with excitement. For the sake of the family, no names, first or last, shall be revealed. The mother of this young girl smiled and helped her quickly dress in her winter clothes, so the child wouldn't freeze in the cold. While that was occurring, the father was fetching the girl's sled from the shed. The sled was the old wooden type, with metal runners and a looped cord in front to pull it behind you. It had belonged to her mother, and had been painted with wonderful colours.

Outside, gripping the sled's rope in one gloved hand, the little girl shifted from foot to foot, as her parents dressed in their own winter gear. The little girl shouted that she would meet them at the hill, dashing off before her parents could yell for her to come back. She ran swiftly, as quick as she could in the layers of fabric and insulation that kept her warm in the freezing temperatures.

After a few minutes, the girl walked along the trampled path that led to the top of the hill. As she walked, a shimmer of light could be seen just past the crest of the hill, swirling purples and blues with a soft, pulsating glow. She ambled towards it, dragging her sled behind her, the runners leaving the tell-tale tracks in the snow.

Slipping slightly as she started her descent on the other side of the hill, the little girl recalled that her parents had forbidden her from going on the side of the hill, as the small river that ran along the bottom was swift and cold. Many people, adults and children alike, had been lost to those freezing waters. She disregarded the multiple warnings she had been given in the past, as she could see the softly pulsing light behind a small grove of trees. Rounding the corner, the little girl gasped at the beauty of the unknown light source in front of her. Reds, blues and purples swirled together and changed, the colours undulating and the glow pulsing. In the center of it, white and purple swirled together, looking smooth as glass. Dropping the rope of the sled, she shuffled towards the colours, which looked a lot like a tear in fabric, yet it hung in the air, like heavy fog.

Reaching out with one mitten-covered hand, the girl paused, wondering what caused such a beautiful thing. Just an inch or so before the fabric of her glove touched the surface of the anomaly, a spark of purple arced between her mitten and the swirling mass. The young girl's hand recoiled, before travelling forwards once again. This time, her hand touched the surface of the colours, and seemed to push through, much like the surface of water, only it felt much thicker. She went to pull her hand back, to return to the other side of the hill before her parents found her and scolded her. But the colourful surface wouldn't let her draw her hand away. Instead, the more she moved and the more she struggled, the more it pulled her in. The young girl began to panic, crying out and jerking her arm back harshly, trying to free herself. She heard her parents yell her name, and heard them crashing through the dead branches of the underbrush.

She cried out once more, but was sucked inside the floating mass, which was shifting in a much more sporadic manner. Its movements became more and more harsh, before it closed in on itself, a dull *boom* resounding through the forest.

Her parents sprinted as best they could down the opposite side of the hill, following the tracks their daughter had left behind with her boots and her sled. They happened upon that same grove the girl had found, only there was no light of any sort, save for the dying twilight that shone over the crest of the trees and the lantern that the father carried. The little girl's tracks simply stopped in the middle of the clearing, and the sled was a dozen or so steps behind the end of footprints. The surface of the snow in front of her empty footprints seemed to be dyed an incredible array of blues, reds, and purples.

The mother dropped to her knees, sobbing over the missing child. Her husband stood, vigilant and quiet, next to her, his hand on her shoulder. In the following days, posters printed with "LOST CHILD" in large, bold letters, accompanied by a photograph of her and the contact information, appeared all over the town, coating mail boxes, telephone posts, and doors to public places.

As the days merged into weeks, and the weeks melted into months, the mother grew more and more distraught, eventually disappearing from the public eye.

A visit back to the little girl is necessary to continue this story, as well as an explanation of the events that unfolded.

The poor child had happened upon an anomaly that few know of its existence, and fewer still know the details of it. She had found a Rift, a rip in the fabric of space and time if you will. A Rift can occur naturally, usually upon the intersections of Ley Lines, such as this particular one. Rifts connect two different dimensions - which dimensions are joined by the Rift occurs at random and the pair may not be connected again for years or even centuries.

Now, entering a Rift does not mean one is instantly in a whole new world. No, there is a space that must be crossed in order to enter that new world. The most dangerous aspect of Rift travel is this space, called the Veil Between Worlds. The Veil is much like a hallway, except there are no walls, no ceiling, not even a floor. The Veil is as vast as the universe that humankind knows and studies, and is simultaneously empty and crowded. Creatures known as Veil Dwellers inhabit this inhospitable space. Veil Dwellers are a curious thing, not having any exact physical form, Metaphysical almost. They are perhaps the most biologically diverse entity in all dimensions, yet not diverse at all. Like the Veil itself, they are a paradox.

A Veil Dweller can not exist outside of its natural place of residence. If one is somehow sucked out of the Veil and into a Dimension, they will start to convulse and take on a blob-like shape, with a rapidly expanding size. Then, they will simply disintegrate within seconds. It is every Veil Dweller's dream (if they do, that is) to somehow enter a dimension. To do

that, they need a host, preferably one who is young, untainted, and scared. The fear allows them to find the host, while the youth and purity make it easier to bond to their new residence.

The poor little girl who was sucked into the Veil fit the bill to a tee. Her fear was strong enough to pull Veil Dwellers from leagues away towards her, searching for their possible host. However, there is yet another catch to a Veil Dweller leaving the Veil, and that would be the have to wait until the second before their host leaves to bond with them, lest they destroy the body. This left dozens of Veil Dwellers circling the unaware child, waiting until the Veil Between Worlds would spit her out through another Rift. The parasitic Dwellers did not care what dimension they entered, be it the one this young child came from, or one that housed prehistoric or futuristic creatures.

The Veil itself is as curious as its inhabitants, acting as though it possessed a conscious of sort. A truly temperamental mistress, the Veil is, as it may choose to retain a traveler for longer than they intended.

The passage of time in the Veil is also unusual, with a year passing in the span of a minute and then a minute passing in the span of a year. The young girl wandered the Veil, soft sobs shaking her frail body. She looked around at the void, a mist-like substance limiting visibility. Around her, Veil Dwellers circled, diving in close to her and brushing her face, making her flinch and cry a little more. The unknown things touching her were very alien to her, feeling much like a moving mass of a partially liquefied solid that was barely visible, if at all, to the eye.

The child aged, quickly at first and then slower, then quickly again. She changes from the tender age of seven to the rough years of a teenager, a hardship she would never know. Her clothes long gone, she shuffled around now, unruly hair hiding her face from those around her. Exactly how long she had spent in the Veil Between Worlds is impossible to tell, with the passage of time accelerating and slowing at random.

Now about her mid twenties, the girl stumbled forwards, seeing a rip in the mist that had surrounded her for so long. Moving quicker, she went to dive out of it, to get out before it closed before she got there, like so many other Rifts she had seen. The Veil Dwellers around her circled closer and closer, jockeying for a prime position in order to bond with their possible host. The moment her hand passed through the Rift and felt a cool breeze on the other side, many Veil Dwellers rushed forwards, attempting to get to her first. Just as her shoulders went through the Rift, a warmth landed across her bare back, quickly spreading throughout her body. The female cried out, landing hard on the cold, unforgiving ground of this world, a world, clad in the darkness of night and unknown to her.

Or so she thought.

A page of a newspaper, snagged under a metal donation box belonging to a charity organization, fluttered in the breeze. The female reached for it, fingers barely grasping it. She managed to tear the top portion free, and dragged it towards her. She only managed to take in the title of the paper and the date before falling victim to exhaustion, curled up behind the donation box, hiding as best she could.

The date was October 15th, and the name of the paper was the New York Times.

As she lay there, the Veil Dweller began to strengthen the bond it shared with its host, best done when the host was asleep. By deepening the connection between them, the Veil Dweller would inadvertently alter the appearance of its host, along with recreating their mentality, gifting them a whole new personality. Also, the bond might just perchance grant the host some new abilities. The changes to the host can vary greatly, as the set of changes are unique to each Veil Dweller. The female's hair paled from its natural colour, to a white, and it altered its length as well, shrinking to a little over a third of the way down her back, with choppy bangs covering her forehead. Rich violet-coloured markings faded in to existence on her skin, covering her torso, her arms and a few extended up onto her neck. The gave a sharp glow that quickly subsided, as her body shivered from the process of the bonding.

Just before the sunrise, her eyes snapped open and she drew in a deep, shuddering breath. Her eyes, now a cloudy purple, flicked around the surroundings. Jumping up, and almost falling over from a lack of coordination, she reached into the donation box, intent on getting something to cover her skin. After digging through and tossing clothes to the side, she pulled on a pair of dark slim-fitting pants, as well as a black sweater with a purple hood and trim. She choose to keep her feet bare, as she stood up on her toes, stalking around like a predator. On the ground behind the donation box, next to where she had collapsed, lay what looked to be a mask, a smooth black material with a stylized purple eye on the forehead. Accompanying this mask was something constructed of dark purplish metal, with a violet gemstone set just above the wrist. She picked it up, and slid it on, recognizing it as armour, but only enough for her right arm. Once she had it on, she flexed her hand, turning it over and admiring how the metal plates moved with her hand, in a very fluid, almost organic, motion. In truth, both the armour and the mask alike were a manifestation of the Veil Dweller she had unknowingly bonded with. Each time a Veil Dweller bonds, a physical object or two is created, a physical form of the Veil Dweller. Slipping the mask onto her face, where it simply sat in place, she looked around once more, feeling more at ease in her skin.

Dashing deeper into the alleyway, she jumped up and clung to a fire escape ladder, scrambling up the rusty metal rungs quickly and efficiently. Once on the roof, she slowly crept to the front of the building, looking down at the street below, where life began to buzz as the city awoke. Stepping back, she took off at a run, leaping down to the next rooftop and landing on her toes. Light footsteps carried her across the buildings, bringing her deep into the rougher section of the city. Finally finding an abandoned factory building of sorts,

she slipped in through a shattered window, and almost screamed when her bare foot landed on a sharp shard of glass. Hopping on one foot, she sat down on a wooden pallet and examined her foot. There was no cut, no blood, meaning the glass barely scraped her skin before she felt it. Realizing her nerves were much more sensitive than previously thought, she carried on carefully, taking great precautions not to cause herself injury and pain.

Slipping down to one of the lower levels, sounds of roughhousing and laughing reaches her ears. Carefully rounding the corner, she was faced with a street gang of sorts, made up of delinquents and drop-outs. She watched them for a few more minutes, watching with almost a slight curiosity about them. As one of the hooligans stumbled backwards from a punch, she side-stepped to clear a path for him, sliding around the concrete-covered I-beam.

"Hey guys! Looky here, seems a broad found her way here! Whadda say girl, step out and have a lil fun with us?" One said loudly, his friends snickering behind him. The male who spoke wore a orange bandana over his head, contrasting the blue jacket he wore.

The Veil-Dweller host stepped forwards, her hands flexing and muscles tense. She had a feeling, a gut feeling that told her to move to the left, and soon.

"What the fuck is up with you, is that a mask and like some kind of messed-up armour?!? Christ, you some nerd looking for more nerds?" The orange bandanna wearer exclaimed, taking a step back. The female took one step forwards, clicking her tongue in response.

"This chick is freaky, Ryan. We should book it." One of his companions told him, their voice shaking slightly.

"Run like chickens, Ty? Hell no, besides, she just looks like a freak. Probably can't do anything to us. Plus, how do we know she isn't a cop or something? You know they try crazy shit to catch us." Ryan drew a slim object from his jacket pocket, flipping it over in his hand, which allowed a blade to flick out. He rushed at her, and she calmly moved to the side, as he flew past her, careening into the concrete support post.

Ryan spat on the ground, as his companions formed a circle around them. He ran forwards again, this time feinting to right. Before she knew what she was doing, she had grabbed him by the shoulders and spun him around, tossing Ryan onto the hard floor.

"Bitch! You're going to pay for that! C'mon guys, get that three eyed fuck!" Other members of the gang rushed into the fray, and the female danced among them, before jumping up onto one person's back and pushing off, soaring up and grabbing a chain that dangled down from machinery on the floor above them. Using the chain to swing around, she let her knee strike the throat of the one that had been called Ty. He collapsed coughing, spitting up a small amount of blood onto the floor. She let go of the chain and landed behind Ty, then

swiftly grabbed his head and yanked it to one side. A clean, sick, snap echoed forth, as his limp body fell to the ground.

This death of one their members sent the rest of the gang into a full-blown assault, all of them drawing a variety of weapons. The female glanced about, and ran, dashing past the shocked people before running behind a metal tool box, and waiting. The first who rushed to attack her was greeted by a rusted socket wrench striking his head with such force that the bone cracked. He stumbled around, crashing into another of his friends. A pair ran towards her, both brandishing knives. The taller of the two found an armoured fist connecting with his esophagus, crushing his windpipe with the force of the blow. The other one had his compatriot's knife slash open the critical artery in his legs, hot blood spraying across the floor, making it slick. Ryan's fury-filled face whipped around to look at the female who was destroying them with no effort.

"Who the *fuck* do you think you are, bitch?! You're just some punk-ass with a third eye, big whoop! Who the fuck are you?!?" Ryan pulled a pistol out from a kidney holster hidden underneath his jacket, quickly readying the weapon for use. "You killed my best goddamn friends and you don't even act like you care! Fuck, for all that shit you did, you're gonna die!" He leveled the gun at her, a short distance between them.

"See you in Hell, bitch!" He went to pull the trigger, to let the bullet leave the chamber and enter the female's chest cavity.

He barely had time to register the object that just blocked his field of vision was the muzzle of his own gun. The bullet ripped through his face, exploding out the back of his skull, bone fragments and brain matter splattering behind him. The female had dashed forwards faster than he could realize, and snapped his arm back just as he pulled the trigger, redirecting the bullet's trajectory to intersect his head. Wrenching the gun from his hand, she looked it over before shrugging and deciding to hang on to it.

"You talk too much." She whispered, her voice soft and almost musical. Stepping over the cooling corpse, she crouched next to some of the other bodies, retrieving the deceased's belongings, such as a wallet or a knife. Collecting all the paper money they had, she kept it all in the wallet she decided would suit her best, a black leather rectangle that had a very slim profile. A few members of the gang she had encountered were still alive, but only barely. Dispatching them by snapping their neck column, she retreated from the building, her intuition telling her that law enforcement would soon be there. She left the abandoned factory, choosing to hide out in one of the decaying warehouses.

Up in the rafters of the massive structure, she watched out a partially broken window, its glass covered in dirt and grime. The brutality she had just finished was barely a thought in her mind, it came as natural to her as breathing, something she did without consciously choosing to. In her mind, she ran over the words and phrases that had been shouted by the recently deceased, insults yelled at her and them yelling each other's names as they died.

Freak.

A three eyed freak, they had called her.

A punk ass with a third eye.

She mulled over those last two words. Third eye. Third Eye. A name. But what is a name? In a sense, she thought, it's useless, something trivial and not needed. But names can also be powerful. They can change how some responds to something or someone, they carry one's reputation far further than one is able to. Observing the body bags being wheeled out of the factory, the victims of her simple actions, she made her choice, and waited until she was alone to speak her decision aloud, an answer to the question of the delinquent who was going to shoot her, asking who she was.

"My name is Third Eye."