

Kevin whipped an arm out, seizing a wooden curtain rod lying on a table — hefted it angrily into the air ...

“You walk yourself toward that door — slowly ... Now!”

The figure moved — the opposite direction from the door.

Grunting in horror, Kevin shifted position, spread his feet, purchasing a more balanced stance ...

“Hey!”

The form slowly continued to migrate away from the door.

It was now out of direct sunlight, walking in a stiff, soundless jiggle.

Kevin instantly recognized the red-blue webbing of trace-lines glistening in the transparent epidermis ...

... the thing walking through his library was the faceless human body that had sat festering, maturing in the library for weeks.

It turned its featureless ‘face’ to Kevin’s —

— the mortal went white with terror —

— in the head of the thing ... a hole formed where the mouth would have been in a healthy, human anatomy — it blubbered open and closed, sluggishly, like a fish collecting scum off an aquarium’s glass wall.

Then ... a sound bounced around the library.

At first Kevin couldn’t tell from where it issued. But then he understood — it was coming from the walking horror show, emanating deep within the body, oozing out the “mouth” —

— it gurgled wetly, mindlessly ...

“... ggoiiiiisill-og-lohshij-belobisssssss ...”

Then a ripple waved across the entire form, initiating at the head, terminating in the two feet. And the blue-red webwork was replaced by — human skin. The globe atop with the hideous maw — replaced by a human face; eyes, nose, mouth.

Kevin was utterly frozen. His eyes moved, tracking the thing’s measured movements ...

... it shed its gawky locomotion for a graceful, intentioned forward flow ...

... then ... it was a woman.

She took a book from a shelf, studied it for a moment then turned to face Kevin from across the room —

— instantly, Kevin’s face went flush, sweat seeping from his pores ...

... his heart ballooned, hard, painful in his chest ... he sputtered ...

“... Mom ...?”

She smiled at him affectionately and replaced the book upon the shelf. Hers was a voice soft as a dissipating cloud — clear and calm as a slow-running brook ...

“I’m sorry, Kevy ... I just couldn’t sit in that chair any longer.”

Kevin choked.

It was his long dead mother. Naked.

Kevin tried to say something ... but wheezed.

She lifted her small hands in an earnest appeal ... “Kevin.” She hesitated. “Ke-vvv-i-i-n ....”

“You ...?” He could scarcely speak, had no breath. “Are you here?” Then — “Who are you?”

“Kevin. For Pete’s sake ... please ...?”

Son and mother-thing stood ... wordlessly. Moments slowed to molasses.

He studied the form. A slight female figure. Thin arms and legs. The small, aged, yet buoyant breasts. He tried to avoid the vaginal patch, but caught a fleeting glimpse.

Kevin's skin crawled.

The old woman gestured toward the curtain rod in Kevin's fist, "Kevy ... please ... put that thing down, Honey."

He was paralyzed.

"Im sorry, Kevy. I just can't sit in that chair any longer. Son ..." she paused, sympathy in her gaze, "... why don't you get some new furniture? Something less than 80 years old."

Kevin's mind was speeding beyond the think-barrier — its all adrenaline now, Babe! —

"If you're budget conscious try Ikea, Son."

The man trembled. He struggled down from the panic in his skull ... and ... attempted to speak at the thing ... his lips glued ... tongue heavy, thick with the swim of confusion-panic —

"You're ... not ...my mother ...."

It was meant as declarative — oozed-out as interrogatory.

The woman-thing ... dropped its chin, as if in sorrow, then gently raised its clear eyes to again take in the man ...

"Kevy ... please don't talk like that. Don't be afraid of me." Long pause. "I am here to comfort ... to aid you." She gazed at him.