

THE BIG EYE OF LIMAFER

by

Daan Kogelmans

In a flat on the third floor in the town of Limafer, not far from the border with Mexico, there lived a giant eye. The eye was so large that three men could not circle it, even with their arms stretched really wide, and it was so heavy that eight strong men could not lift it from the ground.

No-one in the town remembered how the eye had come to live in the apartment, nor where it had come from and as the eye itself was unable to speak (for it was an eye and

not a mouth) no-one could ever find out. Some people said it was the eye of a giant or a cyclops, other said it was the eye of a philosopher and there were even people who maintained it was the eye of God; although this was officialy refuted by the church and condemned as heresy.

What everyone in Limafer agreed upon however was that the big eye on the third floor of the apartmentbuilding saw everything.

When children misbehaved, their parents told them: watch out, because the big eye will see you. Often ceremonies, like weddings or inaugurations, were held on the sidewalk across from where the eye lived, to have it as a witness. And even the burglars and the thieves of the city(who do their work at night) were afraid the eye would see them, although, as was said earlier, the eye could not speak and thus could never betray them to the police. It was because of this that the city of Limafer had the lowest crime rate in the whole country.

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Now it happened to be that in the same street, exactly across from the eye and also on the third floor, there

lived a really ugly woman. She had gray, sturdy hair, a bad skin and she was so meagre that her legs looked like bread sticks. The woman had tried lots of lotions and creams to improve on her beauty, but it had only made things worse, for as everyone knows beauty comes from the heart and this woman had a really ugly heart.

As this woman (whose name we shall not mention for privacy reasons) sat on her balcony smoking her cigarettes and throwing stones at doves and children, she really hated to see the big eye watching her from across the street. Does it watch me now? she always wondered, does it see my ugliness? This was of course a big problem because an ugly person is only ugly when someone sees him or her. And so, because of the constant stare of the eye, the woman was constantly ugly.

To stop this, she made it a habit to take her hand mirror with her to the balcony, and reflect the sunlight, shining it right in the giant pupil and forcing the eye to roll aside, away from the window. "There, you bastard," the woman smiled while lighting another cigarette.

However, when the sun went down she saw the eye re-appear behind the window, fixing its gaze on her.

At night she did not dare to come out onto the balcony

and she refused to put the light on in her room, fearing the eye would see her. Cursing, her fists clenched, she always walked around in her dark house.

Before undressing to go to bed she closed the curtains really, really well and made sure there was not a single slit or crack left so the eye could not see her ugly nakedness.

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She managed to live this way for a long time, however one night a terrible thought occurred to her. Can't this eye see in the dark like cats do? she thought, can't it see through curtains even if they are closed really, really well? How much can such a big eye see?

That's why the next day she went to see an ophthalmologist. "Doctor," she said, "is it true that an eye can see in the dark?"

"Well," the ophthalmologist answered, "that depends on what kind of eye we're talking about here and especially on how big it is."

"It's a big eye," the ugly woman said, "really big."

The ophthalmologist raised an eyebrow. "You don't mean

the big eye, do you? The big eye of Limafer?"

She nodded. "That's the one I'm talking about."

"Ah," the doctor said, "well, that eye is so big, it's almost certain it can see in the dark."

"Really? And can it see through curtains too?"

"Yes ma'am, I'm sure it can. It is the biggest eye in the world. My guess would be that it can even see through walls."

"Through walls?" the woman shrieked.

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Heavily shocked she left the doctor's office.

When she was home she looked across the street. You pervert, she thought, all this time you've been watching me in the dark, even when I undressed, even when I took a shower, and even... she thought with a shock, even when I went to the toilet!

She realized she needed help and immediately realized she couldn't call the police because they were the eye's best friends of course, given the low crime rate. Bastard, she thought, bastard, bastard, bastard and she waved her fist at the eye.

That night she lay fully clothed and trembling with anger on her bed, the pressure on her bladder slowly rising. I have to pee, she thought, oh I'm going to burst, but what can I do? I can't possibly go to the toilet!

She climbed out of bed and peeked through a slit in the curtains to see if the eye maybe slept. But there it was, big as ever, staring directly at her with its monstrous dark pupil.

"You miserable wretch," the woman whispered, "why do you keep looking at me?"

Precisely at that moment the phone rang. Who could it be at this hour of the night? the woman thought. Hesitantly she picked up the receiver. "Hello?"

There was only a silence at the other side of the line.

"Hello?" she said again, but there was no answer. She peeked through the curtains. The eye was looking at her with a strange intensity she had never seen before. The woman startled. "Oh God, it's you, isn't it?"

The stare of the eye became even more intense and the pupil seemed to enlarge.

"What do you want from me, you monster!" she cried into the phone, "why don't you leave me alone?" She threw down the receiver.

Immediately the phone rang again.

She picked up. "You terrible, terrible creature!" she shouted in the dark, "you don't know how powerfull I am. I can come over to you apartment with a big, sharp knife and stab it into that monstrous iris of yours. Is that what you want?"

At the other side of the street the eye was watching her in silence and somehow seemed to say: "Yes, come over."

"Is that what you really want, you bastard? Alright then, you'll get what you ask for!" Grumbling she walked to the kitchen and took her biggest, sharpest knife, the one she used to cut meat with. "Oh, oh, I have to pee," she muttered.

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Across the street she entered the apartment building and knocked on the eye's door. To her surprise however, the door opened by the force of her knocks alone. She had to take a step back when a terrible stench came from the apartment.

"Oh my God," she said, lifting a part of her dress to cover her nose and mouth. She looked inside and when she

didn't see the eye she went silently through the door, her hand clamped around the meat knife.

The flat was a mess as she had never seen before. Books, chairs and papers were strewn across the floor, cockroaches climbed the walls and a rat rushed through the kitchen. Everywhere she looked, there lay a thick carpet of what seemed to be micedroppings. "My goodness," she whispered.

She walked to the window where the eye was. She tightened her hand around the knife. "Turn around you miser," she said, "so I can cut you to pieces."

The eye rolled to the left, making a soggy sound, but it was not turning around.

The woman put her knees together. "Turn around, I tell you!"

The eye now seemed to try, because it was turning maybe twenty or thirty degrees, but there it stopped.

The woman looked in amazement. She blinked her eyes. "You cannot turn around?"

The eye tried again but it couldn't turn so it kept staring out of the window.

"Oh God," she whispered, "you cannot turn around!" She realized that from her apartment she had never seen the

back of the eye, which meant the eye had never seen the inside of its own apartment, nor had it ever seen... "The toilet!" she cried.

She ran through the mice-droppings to the toilet and even though it was the dirtiest place she had ever seen, she lifted her dress without hesitation and sat down.

"Aaaaagh!" she sighed. When she had relieved herself she looked at the back of the eye through the door which she had left open and shouted: "You cannot see me, can you bastard? You cannot see me! Hahaha!"

And that was when she had her great idea.

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The next day she bought three buckets, two boxes of soap, a bottle of all purpose cleaner, a packet of sponges and a mop. She took it all to the apartment and started cleaning. Now and then she looked up at the eye which was staring silently out of the window.

When she had thoroughly cleaned the flat, she summoned a few strong men from the neighborhood to take her bed and her belongings and move it across the street.

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From that day on the ugly woman lived in the apartment of the big eye which could no longer see her ugliness. Undisturbed she slept, undressed, showered and went to the toilet. And the big eye profited from her presence too because it was no longer disturbed by rats, mice or cockroaches.

The two lived happily ever after and that's how it came to be that the people of Limafer, when they held their ceremonies, and the tourists who came to take pictures, always saw the ugly woman sitting behind the big eye smiling and smoking her cigarettes.

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