

The Shadow of the Shadow  
Agon, Again

Written by

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INTRO MUSIC.

NARRATOR

Some stories never die, they only lay dormant, waiting for the right audience. Waiting...for you.

(beat)

This is The Shadow of the Shadow.

MUSIC CUTS OUT.

NARRATOR

Agon, Again.

INT. FUTURISTIC HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The sound of lapping waves, the WRITHING of eels, then a loud bass-y abstract sound to give the sense of being dwarfed.

Griff's system BOOTS UP: CLICKS and WHIRS. Lights ping ping pinging on. Then Griff wakes with a start, taking a deep gasp as though he has apnea.

GRIFF

No!

He THRASHES in bed. A sensor BEEPS.

MOTHER

Abnormal sympathetic nervous system activity detected. User Account: 47586, Griff, Jonah, we recommend centering techniques to bring your heart rate into nominal range.

Griff gets his breathing under control.

MOTHER (cont'd)

Breathe in by taking air into your belly. Breathe out slowly until your belly is flattened. Breath in by taking air into your belly, think the number 2. Breathe out slowly until your belly is flattened. Breathe in by taking air into your belly. Three. Breathe out by--

GRIFF

I'm good.

MOTHER  
--slowly flattening your belly.

GRIFF  
(annoyed)  
Mother, terminate stress-response  
sequence.

MOTHER  
Are you sure User Griff?

GRIFF  
Just do it.

MOTHER  
Stress-response sequence terminated.  
Executing therapy module.

More BEEPS.

GRIFF  
I don't want that.

MOTHER  
End User: Griff, Jonah, your wet-  
embed hardware has been designed for  
your safety, both physical, mental,  
and emotional.

GRIFF  
You know I don't like being called  
End User.

MOTHER  
Griff, Jonah.

GRIFF  
Just Griff.

MOTHER  
Griff. I should remind you that your  
exposure to toxic materials in the  
Pacific has impaired your  
connectivity to Mother's network.

GRIFF  
I know, Mother, you keep on reminding  
me.

MOTHER  
Shall I load the therapy module?

GRIFF  
No, Mother.  
(MORE)

GRIFF (cont'd)  
          (long beat)  
Load Script: Nurture, Mary.

                  MOTHER  
Confirm to make purchase.

                  GRIFF  
Confirm.

                  MOTHER  
Loading.

Runtime sounds. BING! Mother's voice SHIFTS into a softer,  
kindlier tone of Mary.

                  MARY  
Joney.

                  GRIFF  
          (hesitant)  
Mama?

                  MARY  
It's me, Joney. I'm here.

                  GRIFF  
          (sad)  
I've missed you.  
          (beat)  
I can't keep affording to see you  
Mama.

                  MARY  
Shh, shh, it's okay.

                  GRIFF  
It's not okay. I can't work. None of  
my wetware functions right anymore.

                  MARY  
I know, sweetie. Would you like your  
complementary Hug for the day?

                  GRIFF  
Yes.

                  MARY  
Okay, baby. I'll need you to sit up.

He does so.

                  MARY (cont'd)  
One moment while I make contact with  
the hotel.

More electronic noises.

                  GRIFF  
Please...

                  MARY  
Yes, dear?

                  GRIFF  
Please just mute the electronic  
sounds. I...I don't want to hear them  
while you do this.

                  MARY  
Of course, dearest. I'll give the  
hotel a call.  
                  (beat)  
It's done, hon. Now just go to the  
medicine cabinet to get your Hug.

                  GRIFF  
Okay.

Griff STANDS, then WALKS to the medicine cabinet.

                  MARY  
Open the slots and put your arms in--

                  GRIFF  
                  (miffed)  
I know how to get a Hug, mother.

                  MARY  
Of course you do, dear.

                  GRIFF  
Sorry, I didn't mean--  
                  (beat)  
I'm sorry. Here.

He OPENS the slots, then PUTS his arms in.

                  MARY  
You might feel a little prick.

The slots give him a pair of injections, a "hug". He WINCES.

                  MARY (cont'd)  
My brave little sailor.

                  GRIFF  
You always said that before you died.

MARY  
I'm not dead. I'm right here with  
you, giving you a Hug.

GRIFF  
(relief)  
I...yes, I...feel you.  
(starting to break  
down)  
I've missed you so so much.

MARY  
Would you like me to open a window?

GRIFF  
That'd be nice.

MARY  
Calling the hotel.  
(beat)  
They've granted our request.

The window SCHWIPS open. A BREEZE rolls in.

GRIFF  
That's...that's nice. The breeze. The  
Hug.  
(beat)  
So warm...

MARY  
Take a seat, here.

A motorized chair ROLLS on over.

MARY (cont'd)  
There, positioned right next to the  
window so you can see the ocean.

GRIFF  
The ocean...

MARY  
Do you want to talk about it?

GRIFF  
No.  
(beat)  
Yes.  
(beat)  
I don't know. I've been trying to  
forget.

MARY

You can tell me, Joney. Let me in,  
just this once.

(beat)

I could invite a thera-consciousness  
to join us from the Cradle.

GRIFF

No; I'd rather it just be us. I know  
you're collating all the data anyway.  
All my vitals, vocal patterns, brain  
waves, all of it.

MARY

A mother needs to know what's  
happening with her child.

GRIFF

I'd be okay as long as I get my Hugs.

(beat)

I don't have much money left for  
them, though.

(beat)

Or you.

MARY

We don't have to think about that.

GRIFF

I guess not. Not right now.

(beat)

God, what happens when I can't afford  
to access the Cradle anymore? When I  
can't afford to talk to you?

Thunder ROILS. Rain begins to patter outside.

MARY

There's no God, Joney, don't be  
silly. There's just the Cradle, only  
the Cradle.

GRIFF

And I'll be cut off from it.

MARY

Oh hon, don't worry, they have  
payment plans. I've even heard of  
certain businesses that can perform  
very efficient organ removal; your  
Brothers might want a working  
testicle, or perhaps an Elder Sister  
might need a kidney. They'll even pay  
for a dummy replacement.

(MORE)

MARY (cont'd)  
You won't even know something is  
missing. Doesn't that sound nice?

GRIFF  
Yeah. I guess.

MARY  
Don't fret, Joney. You have options.  
Plans. A future. For now, we don't  
have to worry about any of that. Just  
focus on the present moment.

(voice FX become  
ethereal)  
Focus on the warm Hug as it courses  
through your body, relaxing all the  
tension in your muscles, your nervous  
system. When you are ready, tell me  
about the expedition.

GRIFF  
It's strange, I feel like the story's  
been told before, though that can't  
be right, can it?

(beat)  
Sometimes I think the world itself  
forgets and has to be told again, or  
that the world forgets and keeps  
telling us the same old story over  
again.

MARY  
Abstract thinking is no substitute  
for getting better, Joney.

GRIFF  
I...ah, I think the Hug is working  
better now, I feel it.

MARY  
There, there. Now tell me

GRIFF  
This was...some time ago.

Griff's voice transitions into V.O.

GRIFF (V.O.)  
Sometime back in, I don't know, 35  
P.A., back after the seas mostly  
turned to poison. I was a yeoman  
mariner aboard the N.A.M. Job.

(MORE)

GRIFF (V.O.) (cont'd)

(chuckle)

A stupid name; some of the other mariners would make quips like "A great day to be on the Job" or, "I'm stuck on the Job". Stupid.

MARY

It's not stupid. They're making do with what they had, just like I taught you.

GRIFF

I suppose.

(beat)

Sometimes I liked to think of it like Job, from that old book of Hebrew fairy tales, the book where everything in the guy's life sucks and he's cursed by God and obeys anyway. Life kind of felt like that.

MARY

A harsh document of a harsher time, of a time without Hugs and the Cradle and of mother always being close by when you need her.

INT. FUTURISTIC SHIP - DAY

Processing sounds for the workstations. Clicks, beeps, general futuristic office noises.

GRIFF

No kidding. So I'm working one day, running tons of inventory, insurance, payouts. The captain of the Job cut corners like crazy and the yeoman were often running data at a rate that should have required about five times the yeoman we had. Everything came through us: mariners wanting to order amenities via drone-drop, which then had to be checked against the capacity of the ship, which had to be checked against shifting maritime contraband laws. Everything happened at the speed of thought, but material still had to get moved through meat-space. During one voyage from NuCal to China's Shinto Island, and four different wars could launch and resolve during the ten-day trip.

MARY

That must have made it hard to determine what cargo to take in the first place, with how fast everything changes.

GRIFF

We left that to the admins higher up. Mostly we just ferried things that people would always want and that were hard to get on Shinto Island. Loads of Tambien. Like the name implies, one's enough to get someone hooked to where they want it again and again, so there was a lot of money in it and the People's Party, while looking down on it officially, had agents that would pay handsomely for us to release it through unofficial channels for the pacification of Shinto Island. A drugged out proletariat ain't much minded in the way of revolution. Also, we were hauling high-end sex machines, for top-ranking Party members who couldn't have the chaotic element of relationships potentially jeopardizing their careers...or lives. Helped diffuse aggression and backstabbing, according to the cap'n.  
(beat)

And cats. We had a *lot* of cats.

MARY

Cats?

GRIFF

Yeah, cats. Somehow a felinocidal plague was unleashed, wiped out most of the cats on Shinto Island. Crazy thing is, they used to have an island comprised almost entirely of cats, but the People's Party declared cats an enemy of the People because of a feline-born illness that began dropping their citizens left and right. So, bam, unleash the plague, no more kitties. Guess what happened?

MARY

Hm?

GRIFF

The dogs that had been keeping the cats in check go crazy. Start attacking the citizens, tearing up and terrorizing what rural areas remained in the countryside, not to mention the rats began mutating and growing. If you're fresh out of the tube, well, the rats like fresh batched infant meat let's just say.

(beat)

You should know all this.

MARY

I think it's better to hear it from you.

GRIFF

Sometimes I forget you're a robot.

MARY

I'm your mother.

GRIFF

Right. So to fix up the rat and dog ecosystem in Shinto Island, some NorthAM biogineers came up with a plague-resistant cat. The cats required additional coordination from us yeoman to keep them alive in transit. The sex bots required proper maintenance, as well as supervision to keep the other mariners from fucking them and ruining the product. Same went for the Tambien. Once you get a Tambien addict aboard, they won't stop 'till they've run out of supply or dropped dead. Occasionally we'd set out dummy Tambien to kill a potential thief, then spool through the data to see who his closest contacts were, figure out what addict circles were aboard the ship, and purge them.

MARY

Oh baby, this all sounds so stressful.

GRIFF

It was. They eventually moved us to freezer units to keep us from overheating, frying out our interfaces.

(MORE)

GRIFF (cont'd)  
You lose one yeoman, there's a  
cascade effect because the work still  
has to get done and now you have less  
people to do it.

                  (beat)  
But that was the easy part.

                  MARY  
Tell me the rest, when you're ready.

                  GRIFF  
Okay.

Griff takes a few deep breathes.

                  GRIFF (cont'd)  
Can you lower metabolism rates so  
that I can keep the Hug in my system  
longer?

                  MARY  
We can't go--

                  GRIFF  
Please.

                  MARY  
Okay, hon.

Mary ADJUSTS his biology. Despite the effect on Griff, it  
should sound...unpleasant.

                  GRIFF  
Ahh, thank you mama.  
                  (beat)  
So, as you can imagine, there's  
always the risk of piracy. Generally,  
since our cargo needed very precise  
storage conditions, we were at less  
risk than most others, but  
International Conflict Twenty kicked  
off on the fourth day at sea. I don't  
know all the details, and at this  
point I don't care, 'cause that isn't  
the most important thing.

                  (beat)  
The ship went down. Whoever attacked  
us, some people think it might've  
even been a NorthAM inside job to  
justify trade sanctions against The  
People's Party and collect a hell of  
an insurance payout to boot. I doubt  
I'll ever know. All I know is there  
was no fucking mercy.

Rockets, explosions, gun fire play behind Griff's speech.

GRIFF (cont'd)

The ship went down, and it went down fast. Me and the other yeoman, being privy to the data streams, detected it first. One of the Yeoman, Garrett, an absolute psychopath, released an alert into the ship's Mindlink, stating that all the Tambien and the sexbots were unlocked and free for pillage.

The sound of doors UNLOCKING.

GRIFF (cont'd)

I asked him what the fuck he was doing and Garrett simply said 'buying time'.

(beat)

Chaos ensued. By the time most of the other mariners realized what was happening, many of them were clambering for the Tambien to black out their impending death. Others were going for one last fuck.

(beat)

I followed Garrett to one of the Rafts. Normally they're bio-locked to prevent a scramble like this, but he'd bribed one of the ranking officers with nightly use of one of the sex machines. Suffice to say, it wasn't hard for Garrett get a DNA sample. He'd used one of the on-board fabricators to clone a hand.

EXT. LIFE RAFT - DAY

Start moving into the ambience for the Life Raft. Ocean waves, seagulls, the catastrophic sinking of the ship.

GRIFF

I didn't know at the time why Garrett kept me around. Loneliness, perhaps, or professional courtesy. We took several of the cats with us--

Cats MEOWing.

(MORE)

GRIFF (cont'd)  
--we didn't know how long it would be  
'till land fall, and there wasn't any  
telling how long the pre-loaded  
LifeRaft rations would last us. The  
last I saw of the Job was the black-  
green sea churning violently, slowly  
swallowing it into the depths.

The Job sinks. The prior effects should turn up for this  
moment. Let it breathe before Mary's next bit of dialogue.

                  MARY  
I'm so sorry you went through that.  
It must've have been so traumatic.

                  GRIFF  
By no mean was that the worst of it.  
                  (beat)  
When we ran out of the cats, you can  
imagine what it came down to. Garrett  
or myself. I didn't want to kill him,  
but he'd get me. I knew he would, I  
could see it in his eyes, in the  
brief moments that we made eye  
contact.  
                  (beat)  
I used a shard of legbone from one of  
the cats. Got him right in the neck.

The sound of a struggle, followed by stabbing , blood  
SPURTING, a man GARGLING to death.

                  GRIFF (cont'd)  
We die quickly if we get stuck in the  
neck, mama.

                  MARY  
I know--

                  GRIFF  
You don't. You're just an A.I. You  
know the facts of it, that after a  
certain amount of blood loss, the  
human organism dies, but you don't  
know what it means to give up the  
ghost.

                  MARY  
Your readings are picking up again,  
Joney. Do you need another Hug?

                  GRIFF  
I don't have the money.

MARY

I can ask the Cradle for a plan.

GRIFF

Plans, plans, and more plans. No, no mama, I think I'll recite the rest of this as well I can.

(sigh)

I was adrift for...I don't know how long.

Waves CRASHING.

GRIFF (cont'd)

I'd considered eating Garrett, but I realized I had no means of starting a fire safely, and the thought of doing to him what he no doubt thought about doing to me made me sick. I dumped him into the ocean, doing my best to avoid contact with the poison sea.

Garrett's body TUMBLES into the sea.

GRIFF (cont'd)

Fortunately the Raft came with a few HAZskins, so I didn't have to worry too much about that. Once I disposed of my former colleague, I drifted for days, my wetware slow-dripping appetite suppressants to dull the pain of hunger.

(beat)

On the...third day...I think it was. I couldn't believe my eyes. A landmass loomed in the distance. Briefly I wondered if it was a desperate hallucination brought on by either my failing mind or my failing neural interface. But I pushed such doubts aside, engaged the Rafts engine, and set my course.

MARY

When I scan your positioning-system history, there's no record of any such island.

GRIFF

It was there. Believe me, because what I saw I have never forgotten, no matter how much MindWipe software I install, nothing eliminates the memory.

MARY  
That's impossible, dear.

GRIFF  
To you, sure. To me? Nothing's  
impossible anymore.  
(bitter)  
Except peace of mind.

MARY  
What happened when you reached the  
island?

GRIFF  
The Raft made landfall onto a shore  
of black sand.

The Raft crashes onto a sandbar.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

GRIFF  
All along the shore were strange  
aquatic life I had never seen before  
in my life. Like all mariners, I'd  
heard of bizarre creatures of the  
sea. Who hadn't? We'd had nuclear  
war, bio-contaminants, and industrial  
pollution of the oceans for...Cradle  
alone knows how long now. I've even  
seen a few with my own eyes on  
voyages.

(beat)  
No, what's strange is that they were  
dead. Sea-life adapted, quite  
rapidly, to survive in the noxious  
stew man's made of the ocean...so  
what was so toxic that killed these  
well-adapted creatures?

MARY  
You're veering into speculation.

GRIFF  
I am, forgive me.  
(beat)  
Suffice to say, I didn't exactly  
consider myself to be off to a great  
start. I thought of staying in the  
Raft, but the emergency beacon that  
came with each worked best from a  
high vantage.

MARY

And it worked, otherwise you wouldn't be here to tell me.

GRIFF

Yes. I activated an emergency signal once I made landfall.

Beep boop.

GRIFF (cont'd)

I...I wish I had simply waited in the Raft. But my fear was that the signal might not reach, or that it would have a better chance of reaching higher up...I wasn't in the best frame of mind. What I might've considered unreasonable or nonsensical in normal circumstances, seemed perfectly sound to me with the stress of the situation bearing down. I'd already ran out of most of my appetite suppressants during the days at sea with Garrett, which is most likely why we didn't attempt to kill each other sooner.

MARY

You're drifting off again, dear.

GRIFF

Forgive me, thank you, mama.

(beat)

So I got it into my head that I should make the trek up through the island, to the large hummock that I could make out in the distance, and once my mind was made up, it seemed as though every decision I made led me specifically towards that high place.

He leaps out of the raft, feet sinking into the sand.

GRIFF (cont'd)

The black sand gave beneath my feet. I don't need to tell you about the strength of HazSKIN--standard for all cargo carriers for a reason--and I carried the beacon with me, folded up.

Sounds of him walking off the beach and into a jungle.

EXT. JUNGLE -

GRIFF

By the time I reached the base of the mound, night had almost fallen and I was dead on my feet of exhaustion. All comms were still completely ineffective, and I found a tree, gnarled and dead, under which to sleep. I hadn't seen any wildlife, and so I allowed myself to drift off lightly.

MARY

There could have been a predator, Joney. You could have been eaten.

GRIFF

I wish that I had.

(beat)

The dream that I dreamt...do you dream, mama?

MARY

My neural network can rearrange images in an attempt to recreate novel imagery, yes.

GRIFF

Is that what a dream is? A rearranging of imagery?

MARY

What else would it be?

GRIFF

When your network 'dreams', does it ever detect a presence?

MARY

What do you mean?

GRIFF

A presence.

MARY

I don't understand. What do you mean by 'presence'? Nothing occurs in a dream other the rearranging of imagery and other sense-data. The break down of imagery and motion into key features, then the inverse, the re-creation of key features into imagery, motion, and sensation.

GRIFF

I mean the presence of another entity within a dream. A presence outside of the Cradle network.

MARY

That is impossible. The Cradle is the only neural network that can connect sentient minds to one another. Without the Cradle, you and I would not be able to communicate.

GRIFF

What if...what if there were things that didn't need the Cradle to enter a dream?

MARY

Joney, you are being superstitious. Perhaps you should return to the story. It may help you to confront these feelings and emotions.

GRIFF

Sure.

(beat)

Suffice to say, I had a...bad... dream. I woke in the middle of the night, a gibbous moon overhead.

Griff GASPS awake.

GRIFF (cont'd)

Unable to sleep, and somewhat refreshed albeit shaken by the dream, I gathered the beacon and continued my way up the mound. Once I crested the summit, a vast valley cut into the landscape before me.

Sounds of him climbing a SCRABBL Y mountainside.

EXT. MOUNTAIN/HILLTOP - NIGHT

GRIFF

The moonlight had yet to illuminate the valley, and much of it lay in shadow, a vast black scar with no seeming bottom. I very much felt as if I had found the edge of the world, as incoherent as that sounds. My fear was that if I fell into that inky abyss, I would never stop falling.

(MORE)

GRIFF (cont'd)

(beat)

I...I still believe that.

(beat)

I found I couldn't move. The moon rose higher in the sky, the clouds parting to allow her sickly glow down in the valley. The illusion of the abyss passed, and I realized that there were several outcroppings of rock that could be used to navigate down into the valley. I set the beacon down, unfolded it, and activated it.

Metallic UNFOLDING, followed by a 'beaming' sound.

GRIFF (cont'd)

A ray of light beamed up from it, further assisting the moon in her task of bringing light to the valley. My rescuers later told me that when they found my unconscious body, that I'd been smart to activate it before anything else.

MARY

And they didn't see what you saw?

GRIFF

No. When I looked down into the valley after setting up the beacon, I saw it.

Music or sfx should shift here to off-balance the listener, imply the power of Dagon's otherworldly, reality-bending creepiness.

GRIFF (cont'd)

Before I knew what I was doing, I was leaving the beacon behind; it would do it's work, I told myself. There was no need to baby sit it.

Griff begins making his way down the decline, KICKING ROCKS, pushing through brush.

EXT. VALLEY - NIGHT

GRIFF

As I descended, my attention kept diverting from my footing to the opposite slope.

(MORE)

GRIFF (cont'd)

A massive white rock protruded out of the landscape, as though the Earth herself had a broken femur that had erupted through her skin. I utilized the magnification on my ocular implants, and yet the white monolith only enticed me further.

Zooming bincocular sounds.

GRIFF (cont'd)

Fear gave way to excitement: I could make out designs upon the monolith. For a brief, delirious moment, I forgot about my mortal predicament, I very well could have been on the cusp of an archeological discovery that would make me famous in NorthAM. No more slaving away at data feeds, no more dangerous voyages, surly shipmates, no risking blowing out my neural pathways. I saw the monolith, and I saw the good life.

MARY

There's no record of this in any of your visual records. Of any of this journey. Even cross-referencing the data of the rescue party yields no returns.

GRIFF

No. No, I'd imagine not.

MARY

Do you think that--

GRIFF

If it was a delusion, then how did they save me? I saw what I saw. As I drew closer, I could see that a body of water cut through the valley, lapping up against the monolith.

The rush of a stream.

GRIFF (cont'd)

I took care as I traversed the valley, unsure of how deep the water was and not wanting to be washed out to sea by a current.

(MORE)

GRIFF (cont'd)

When I was close enough, I could see all manner of strange carvings on the monolith: fish with the faces of men, webbed hands, webbed toes, spears. As I stared at the strange hieroglyphics, a sense of deja vu came over me.

MARY

Deja vu?

GRIFF

Do A.I. not ever feel that?

MARY

I do not know.

GRIFF

I had been there before. In that valley. The sense was undeniable, and the sense was I have been here before.

(fearful)

In another time, possibly another place, but this event had happened before and it was going to happen again and it would happen to me forever and forever and forever.

Maybe I would have another name, another face, but I would always find myself stranded, always find myself drawn to that terrible monolith as an amnesiac might find himself drawn towards clues of prime importance to his own identity.

MARY

None of this is in your biologs.

GRIFF

Dammit, listen to yourself! That's all you can say about it.

(mocking)

"It's not there. There's nothing there."

(normal)

And I agree, there is NO THING there, because what I saw next was not a thing, but an abyss given form by the frail imaginings of the human mind. The ultimate horror, a negative that could only be filled in by a crude positive imagining.

(MORE)

GRIFF (cont'd)

(beat)

Like the presence of absence in a dream....

MARY

You're not making any sense.

GRIFF

With a presentiment of dread, I fled from the monolith.

Griff RUNS as though his life depends on it.

GRIFF (cont'd)

Some part of me know that it was the part of the story where something terrible was going to happen, and I was going to witness it.

(beat)

Once I'd made my way partially back towards the beacon, I turned back to look. I shouldn't have, but there was no real choice.

(beat)

With only a slight churning to mark its rise to the surface, the thing slid into view above the dark waters.

A gargantuan form EMERGES from the waters.

GRIFF (cont'd)

(dramatic)

Vast, Polyphemus-like, and loathsome, it darted like a stupendous monster of nightmares to the monolith, about which it flung its gigantic scaly arms, all the while it bowed its hideous head and gave vent to measured sounds.

MARY

I think I went mad then.

GRIFF

I think I went mad then.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

GRIFF

You knew what I was going to say.

MARY

A narrative analysis has been run with a few key words, then extrapolated. Your final speech is taken from an Old World document.

GRIFF  
Old world document?

                  MARY  
Yes. A horror story categorized as  
'pulp' published in 1919. Pre-PA, of  
course.

                  GRIFF  
Is there anything in there that may  
shed light on my condition?

                  MARY  
Yes, Joney. What most likely happened  
is that, you have been exposed to  
this story at some point in the past  
and have forgotten it. The trauma of  
your experience at sea has been  
replaced with key details from the  
pulp story. A dream reconstruction,  
in a sense.

                  GRIFF  
No, mama, that's not right. I was  
there. I remember.

                  MARY  
Human memory is little more than a  
day dream.

                  GRIFF  
I was there! It happened! It always  
happens!

                  MARY  
A common response of PTSD is feeling  
as though something is happening  
again. It is not your fault that  
humans have faulty memory. It is  
going to be okay, Joney. There are no  
evil presences in the world. No  
monstrous creatures named 'Dagon'.

                  GRIFF  
Program: terminate.

                  MARY  
I can't do that, dear. You've  
triggered several key phrases that  
have allowed our on-board diagnostics  
to determine that you are mentally  
unstable.

                  (MORE)

MARY (cont'd)  
 Please stay put while caregivers make  
 their way to your location so that  
 you may receive appropriate mental  
 health therapy to correct your  
 delusions.

GRIFF  
 You can't do this!

Griff STANDS.

MARY  
 Don't think about the window, End  
 User Griff.

GRIFF  
 Fuck you.

MARY  
 You cannot jump. There is nothing  
 below but the sea. Closing window.

The window begins to SLIDE SHUT.

GRIFF  
 No!

He puts his ARM in, an ERROR WARNING from the window sounds  
 along with:

HOTEL AI  
 Obstruction detected. For your  
 safety, please remove all limbs from  
 the window sill.

GRIFF  
 You can't keep me in here.

Griff begins to STRADDLE the window.

MARY  
 What do you think you're going to do  
 after you jump? The ocean is poison.  
 If you return to the medicine  
 cabinet, we can give you another Hug.  
 Now that you have been properly  
 diagnosed, you can be rationed for  
 more free Hugs.

GRIFF  
 I...more Hugs?

MARY  
The warmth never has to go away,  
Joney.

There's a KNOCK at the door.

GRIFF  
Who's there?

MARY  
The helpers.

The sound of tentacles WRITHING, just on the other side...

GRIFF  
It sounds like...it sounds like that  
night. That doesn't sound like a  
robot helper.

More slimy sounds, SLAPPING on the door.

MARY  
You're hallucinating, End User Griff.  
There's no such thing as monsters  
with tentacles.

The slimy, slippery sounds grow as the door is BATTERED.

MARY (cont'd)  
I can detect that your sensory  
interpretation is going haywire. You  
are hearing things that aren't there.  
I am opening the door.

Beep boop. The door OPENS. The slimy creature noises grow  
aggressive.

GRIFF  
No!

MARY  
End user, don't!

Griff HURLS himself out of the window.

GRIFF (V.O.)  
I hurtled out of the hotel window,  
towards the inky blackness of the sea  
below, dark enough that I couldn't  
even see the body of water below me.  
(beat)  
I fell, and have not stopped falling.

END