

The night monster.

CODELL SWEATED himself awake, his heart a pounding creature trying to escape his chest. The nightmare was so real. He was on some kind of battlefield in a red haze. There was a lot of smoke drifting upwards; it smelled of marijuana. Soldiers fought each other at close range. Two of them were at the trunk of a tree. A giant arm and hand came down out of the haze, and the giant thumb and forefinger lifted one of the soldiers by his head. As the soldier's hands pushed against the monstrous fingers, the monster squished his head and dropped the writhing body.

It got worse. The haze began to clear and revealed that the huge tree was actually a leg of the giant monster. From out of the dissipating smoke, the monster's torso and its head became visible. The monster picked up a second soldier, the one that the first soldier had been fighting. He started screaming. The monster held his body with one hand and with his other hand tugged one of his legs. His scream increased to an ear-splitting shriek. The monster pulled the leg off. With the oozing stump of the unattached leg, the monster smeared the soldier's body with the soldier's own blood, and popped the soldier and the leg into his mouth.

Codell ran. The battlefield ruptured open into a huge chasm, swallowing all the soldiers. Then through the red haze, the monster reached for Codell.

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