

The Eye of the Lord

Written by

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INT. ROOM

GRACE

It's like you wake up one day and your memories suddenly feel... fragmented. Like, divided up into chapters or something. So, it's not so much that feeling of growing older, but growing apart. From yourself. From whatever core you used to have. I guess I'm at a point in my life now where looking back, it feels like I've gone through so many stages... lived so many different lives. Like, I was a bunch of different people sharing this one timeline. Because when you're young, you don't realize how many myths you grow up with. How many lies you're told. About you. Your family. So the older I get, the further it feels like I'm drifting. From a sense of... of me.

GRACE (cont'd)

They called it The Eye of God. Or The Eye of the Lord. Or God's Eye. But this was before it had a name. He was yelling what sounded like nonsense. That the moon was falling. I was still in bed and half asleep. We didn't leave for school til eight so I still had about half an hour before I got ready. But I could hear the television. And then Sean just burst into my room yelling about the moon falling from the sky. For a second I remember thinking, Was I dreaming? But I could hear the TV downstairs, and Dad never turned on the TV in the morning.

GRACE (cont'd)

I opened my window and at first I wasn't sure what was different. Everything looked the same. It was almost the end of the school year so it was already light outside. But that's when I noticed. There weren't any birds in the fields. It was so silent. It was eerie.

(MORE)

GRACE (cont'd)

I could usually hear cars passing our farm on the dirt road this time of day, but there was nothing except that TV.

GRACE (cont'd)

I went downstairs and the news was on. And the guy being interviewed was talking real quick like there'd been some kind of disaster. And the front porch door was open. I went outside and there was my Dad between the house and the barn looking up at the sky. And right away I sensed something was really wrong. Everything felt different. I walked to where he was and that's when I saw it. That was my first time. The big white circle. That huge disk taking up the whole sky. Just...hanging up there, about ten times the size of a late harvest moon. It covered... everything. It was so weird seeing something so large in the sky. That's when it all started to change. When the world went insane. All because that thing showed up one day and just...hung around. Watching us.

INT. STUDIO

PAUL

From QRX you're listening to The Big Loop. I'm Paul Bae. Today's episode: "The Eye of The Lord." We begin with Part One.

INT. ROOM

GRACE

My mother was a Christian. That's what Dad always told us. But as I got older, I got the sense that he exaggerated that part of her life. Maybe to help make sense of her death for us cuz we were so young when she died. You know, like, to move the focus from loss... to meaning. So it's not, You're growing up without a mother.

(MORE)

GRACE (cont'd)

It's more like, Your mother was called to Heaven because she was so special. Dad never said that, but Grandma often did. And he just stayed quiet every time, like he was thinking about it. Imagining it. I think most people build these myths into their lives to give it meaning. You know? Cuz sometimes the truth of what we're doing here and the people who are supposed to love us... There are things that are true, and things that are good. And those things rarely meet in the middle. The strange thing was, I don't think I felt her absence that much. Well, I did, but not as much as people think I did, you know? It's like, when people hear about my mother, they're all like, "Oh, you poor dear. A girl without her mother is the saddest thing in the world. How will you grow up into a proper woman?" And yeah, I missed her. But I was five when she died. Sean was only three. I've got a handful of memories. But Dad... I never really understood his silence until I was fourteen. It was my birthday and Grandma showed me their wedding video. I didn't recognize him. It was like looking at another man. He was all smiles and laughter. I couldn't hear what he kept whispering to my mom, but whatever it was kept cracking her up. And at the reception, the speech he gave... Best wedding speech I'd ever seen. I never heard him talk like that, holding a whole room's attention. Grandma told me half the guests were pilots, like him. So joking around was a big thing, and he was the funniest of them all. And when she said that, it looked like she was going to cry. It's like, I know she's not my Dad's mother, but... even after my mom's passing, she treated Dad like he was her own. And she could tell how sad he was. How much he missed her.

TRANSITION

GRACE (cont'd)

The first two days, all I did was watch the news. At school they had all the televisions on cuz, really, who could learn at a time like this? Every hour, it seemed there was something new going on. The first day was all scientists on the news, giving theories. But basically, they didn't have any. One guy from this university said it was as if everything they thought they knew were suddenly shown to be just the beginning, like the edge of what's known in the universe. That's because the thing didn't show up on telescopes. Satellite instruments were picking up nothing. They didn't even show it on the news because it didn't show up on cameras. It was so weird having the news on twenty-four seven talking about something we couldn't see on the screen. But they kept pointing their cameras at the sky at where we were seeing it so the whole thing was surreal. And according to every scientist studying it, it didn't exist. It was as if God cut out a circular piece of paper and taped it to the sky but whatever material it was made out of was invisible except to the human eye.

GRACE (cont'd)

The next thing was when we found out everyone could see it at the same time. In China, Russia, Australia, Canada. Everyone was seeing it at the same damn time. Everyone. It was like those paintings you see where their eyes always follow you. But there's an explanation for that. Not this. This defied...everything. They stopped interviewing scientists because none of them had any idea what was going on. It didn't fit any theories at all. So then came the religious nuts. Most of them said it was God or God's eye. It was Judgment Day. Even though none of the religions could claim anything in their holy books even remotely close to what was happening.

(MORE)

GRACE (cont'd)

Like, Jesus was supposed to return riding on clouds. Not as this gigantic circle in the sky doing nothing. So the news programs grew tired of those guys real quick.

GRACE (cont'd)

Then came day four. That's the day of the Sound. [pause] It was this... horn. But not really. No one had ever heard anything like it. And everyone on Earth heard it too. And it was weird because it wasn't really loud. Like, yeah, everyone heard it, but it didn't break windows or make anyone deaf. It wasn't like that. But everyone heard it. That's when everyone, and I mean *everyone*, even the religious groups, started thinking it was from another planet. cuz of course there'd been some talk since day one about it being an alien thing, but... that Sound felt like it was from another planet. Another galaxy. It had this otherworldly quality to it. And that's when the military people started coming on the news. I guess panic and rioting started in some cities and governments needed a way to keep everyone from losing their minds. This general showed up on TV and said that they were investigating it. Well, no shit. I'm not in the military but even I knew they were investigating it. What everyone wanted to know was, What were you investigating? *How* were you going to investigate it? Because, it wasn't in our atmosphere, and according to our satellites, it wasn't even there. According to scientists, it didn't even exist in space. Because everyone could see it at the same time. How does someone in Italy see the same thing in the sky as I do here in the Midwest? It's as if it only existed in our minds. In the mind of every human being on Earth. And that's when the psychological theories started coming in.

GRACE (cont'd)

Maybe it was a mass delusion. It was a psychological attack from another civilization. Another planet. That... thing in the sky, and that Sound... it was all part of a way to psychologically confuse and enslave us. But then, I think it was day seven. That's the day someone in Russia lost their goddamn mind... and launched a missile at it. I don't know if they even knew where it was, because... it wasn't in our atmosphere, it wasn't in space. According to every government agency, it wasn't even there. But we all watched the news as this Russian missile was fired into the sky and exploded at the edge of space. I don't even know what that was about, but most people think someone in their military just went insane and decided doing something was better than doing nothing at all.

GRACE (cont'd)

There were so many pundits on the news trying to explain what was going on. And even though none of them had any chance of shedding light on anything, it was strangely comforting hearing people from all over the world grappling with it all. Like, all of a sudden, every single person on the planet felt the same things: this sense of wonder and fear. Of not knowing anything at all, of having all our beliefs just thrown out the window because this thing was mocking them all. It's as if every story we've ever shared with each other, every narrative we built together... in our attempts to the explain the world to each other... they were all lies. But the strange thing is... when this thing showed up in the sky, it's like we all *knew* we'd been lying to each other. To ourselves. And this thing just appeared in the sky to remind us, that, yeah, none of this makes any sense. Any sense at all.

Long pause.

GRACE (cont'd)

I remember this one night, something Dad said. We were watching this woman talking about the political effects of this thing. The North Korean president declared that he was responsible for it. That it was his way of showing the world his power. And the crazy thing is, his people believed him. Because even though he couldn't prove it, there was no way to disprove it. And my Dad never talks to himself, but just under his breath, I heard him say, "We're going to tear each other apart." At first I didn't know what he was talking about, but a few days later, there was news of huge riots happening across Eastern Europe and Africa. It looked like war in the streets. People were just going crazy thinking of the end of the world and alien invasions. And it really did feel like the end of the world. And that's when I thought about what Dad said. "We're going to tear each other apart." And I thought, he's right.

GRACE (cont'd)

The next morning I woke up and ran outside like I did every day to see it. And there was Sean standing next to Dad, both of them staring up at the sky. I could see it before I even reached them. I'll never forget that thing. As long as I live, I'll remember seeing that thing. That circle, that white disk, it was now... it was an eye. This... huge, gigantic... eyeball. And it was staring down at us.

GRACE (cont'd)

Maybe *eyeball* is the wrong word. Because it wasn't like a human eye, or any eye, really. It was a dark disk inside the big circle. But it *felt* like an eye was suddenly looking at us. Someone's eye. Staring down. At all of us. Some people thought it was a gigantic portal in the middle of the circle, but it didn't look like an opening of any kind.

(MORE)

GRACE (cont'd)

It just didn't have that look.
Everything about it was just...
ominous.

GRACE (cont'd)

Dad didn't talk much. I know he used to, but I guess my mother's death sapped everything out of him. I used to imagine I had one of those movie dads, you know? The kind who lose their wives so they promise to be everything to their children, to be there for them emotionally. To get closer to them since they only have one parent now. But real life isn't like the movies. Well, maybe it is. Now. The bad ones. But when he did talk, it was usually important.

GRACE (cont'd)

But we were staring up at this... eye...and Dad put his hand on my shoulder. He had his other arm wrapped around Sean. And Dad said, "God is watching us."

GRACE (cont'd)

It was the craziest thing I ever heard my Dad say. Because he never says things like that. And...he's staring up at this thing, and I see a tear running down his cheek.

GRACE (cont'd)

I think it was the next night. It was really late. And I woke up to someone making a racket outside by the barn. I opened my window, making sure to keep the light off. And I leaned out to see what it was. And it was Dad. I could see him sort of...wandering the field. He was kind of wobbly, like not steady. And he was yelling. I leaned further out my window. And I could see he was drunk. And he was looking up at that giant eye. And he yelled out, "Fuck you." He was swearing up at this thing. I couldn't make any sense of it at all.

GRACE (cont'd)

I don't remember what I was doing when the phone rang.

(MORE)

GRACE (cont'd)

But I remember where I was when he told us. He called us into the kitchen. He said Grandma was coming to stay with us. And Sean immediately started crying, like he knew something. And I'm asking what's going on. And Dad says... and he said... they have a new rocket they're going to launch to investigate this thing in the sky. It was called The Needle. It's fitted with all these devices and recording instruments. It was a joint venture with China and India. And because they won't know how anything reacts until it reaches the thing, if anything's even there, they need a pilot. They needed the best pilot willing to go up there to investigate. By himself. And that look in his eyes... I still think about it. The way his eyes spoke louder than anything he'd ever said to me in my life.

Pause.

GRACE (cont'd)

He... he was going up. Dad was going to fly The Needle into the eye of God. And meet him face to face.

INT. STUDIO

PAUL

When we return, the conclusion of "The Eye of The Lord," after these messages from our sponsors.

INT. ROOM

GRACE

I was eleven, maybe? Maybe ten. My friend Stacy invited me to her Bible camp over the summer. It was going to be five days of swimming, games, hiking. Like, regular summer camp stuff with some Bible teachings thrown in. Pretty harmless stuff. But when I told Dad, he didn't answer.

(MORE)

GRACE (cont'd)

It was during dinner, and he just sat staring at his plate. So I asked him again and he slammed his hand down on the table. We jumped. Sean started crying and I ran to my room. Dad rarely had outbursts like that.

GRACE (cont'd)

I was up in my room for a while. I remember thinking, Dad is so angry with God. Even at that age I knew what was going on. That Dad blamed God for taking my mother away from us. But I was wrong. I was so, so wrong.

GRACE (cont'd)

Dad knocked on my door. I was faced away from him. He pulled up my desk chair to the side of my bed. And I could hear him breathing, and I didn't recognize it at first. So I turned around, and I could see it. He was crying. Not much, but I could see how red his eyes were. And he said, "It's not you, sweetheart. I am angry, but not at you or your brother. I'm just...angry."

GRACE (cont'd)

Of course, it didn't make sense to me. What made sense was being angry at God, because even at that age, I caught myself being angry at God all the time. On birthdays, Christmas. I thought God was unfair to take our mother away from us. But this one day every year when Dad wanted to be by himself, and Sean and I caught him one night drinking in his room staring at a photo of him and my mother. It was their anniversary. And no matter how old I got, that day still managed to hurt Dad. And I slowly started to realize later that Dad never got over her. Grandma told me she was the love of his life. She said she kind of knew it the way you know couples love each other and you don't really pay closer attention to it. But she said they had something special.

(MORE)

GRACE (cont'd)

She said looking back, when my mother met Dad, it was like he completed her. And she completed him. Not in a romantic story type way but in a real world way. I was too young to understand what she meant by that and with my mother gone, I guess I'll never figure it out unless I find something like that. Grandma only knew it after my mother was gone and Dad carried on carrying that grief in him. On him. He walked. With grief. You could see it in his shoulders. Well, I didn't see it then really, but looking back, it's obvious.

GRACE (cont'd)

Sometimes... sometimes I hate myself. For not seeing it. Loss is... people think of loss like an empty room. That something's missing. But it's not really like that. Loss... loss has weight. Loss is an anchor. It ties you to the place of loss. So you're never really free from it. And it weighs you down. Like it did Dad. So Dad wasn't angry at God. I know that now. Because he didn't believe in God. At least, I don't think he did. Not in the way we imagine God. Dad was angry at the universe. For showing him real love. And then taking it away with so much life left to live. Most people move on. I think. That's what I hear anyways. But I'm learning, for some people, it's nearly impossible.

TRANSITION

GRACE (cont'd)

It took him two weeks to prepare. They allowed Sean and me to watch every day. I thought it was because we were one big family at the base. But I now know, it was Dad's idea. In case something happened to him during the mission. And Dad wanted us to see it all. The truth of it. No lies. No stories. Just the way it is.

GRACE (cont'd)

There were so many What If situations. And we heard them all over the speaker. All these engineers were so calm, talking about these awful things. "What do you do if alien craft emerge from a hatch?" "What do you do if you are fired upon?" "What do you do if The Needle is taken offline?" And Dad had all these protocols memorized. But during some of the drills, I could see them worrying. There was this one that stood out. I was standing next to another pilot. Dad's friend, John. He was always around the house between missions so became like a part of the family. I used to call him Uncle John. Well, he's standing next to me when the head engineer says to Dad over the comm mic, "The disc begins a transformation. What do you do?" And I hear Dad say, "What kind of transformation?" And the engineer says, "It starts to glow brighter." And there's this long pause. And then Dad says, "I fly into it."

GRACE (cont'd)

I... I had a bit of a meltdown. Right there in the control room. And Sean was crying because even though he didn't understand what was going on, he knew by my reaction it was bad. Thinking back, I probably should have been more aware of everyone else around me. But I loved Dad so much I forgot about Sean. And I think about that now and how Dad forgot about us because of my mother. I was angry at him for so long. But now...now, I see it. I see it all. Some people are born for one person. And they do the best they can with everyone else. Including family. They can't help it. It's the way they are. And I can either choose to forgive him, or stay angry. Not everyone is built for this Earth. Not the way everything is. Dad wasn't made for here. But here he was, and my mother was the only good thing he had in his life. Sean and I were good too, but not in that way.

(MORE)

GRACE (cont'd)

Not good enough to make life worth it, you know? Or... Or maybe this is just the next lie I'll keep telling myself to get to tomorrow. Until I come up with a new story, a new way to tie my life together.

TRANSITION

GRACE (cont'd)

The last day. Everyone remembers the last day differently. You notice that? To some it was scary. To others it was beautiful. To me... to me... it feels like it was happening to someone else. Because the whole world was watching. The whole world seemed to know our story. About the pilot leaving his two children with their grandmother to save the world. But to me... to me, it began with the photo.

GRACE (cont'd)

He was in his room. Sean was napping on the bed, Dad caressing his head. When he saw me, he held his hand out for me. He put me on his lap like he used to do when I was smaller. And he was holding the photograph. Of him and Mom. And he said, "You have no idea how beautiful she was. She was the most beautiful woman on the planet. The universe has people like her to make up for the ugliness. She balances it all out." And then he looked at me and said, "You are like her. You don't know it now, but you will." And... and I remember holding on to him. I didn't want to let him go. How do you let go of your own father? I didn't care about the rest of the world. Who cares about the rest of the world? It's not like it cares about me. I wanted my father to stay with me. It's not fair. It's not fair that the world gets to continue because of my father, but takes him from me. Because then how do I continue? I just wanted my Daddy. I want my Daddy.

TRANSITION

Background impressionist sounds of the journey.

GRACE (cont'd)

We watched from the control room. No one had any idea what was going to happen. No one was even sure why they were doing this. It's almost as if doing something was better than doing nothing at all. And then it began. The countdown.

Effects.

GRACE

The rockets blasting. The way he went up into the sky in a straight line.

Effects.

GRACE

It was so fast. I could hear him on the comm. He was telling us what he saw as it was happening. You could see it on the monitor. And there was a camera in the cockpit. And that's when I saw it. On the dial in front of him. The photograph. Everything was going crazy. The engineers were yelling at each other. Something was going on but it was all so busy to know what it was. Then I looked up at one of the big screens. It showed the thing in the sky. It was turning black. And glowing around the edges. And it was getting bigger. Someone yelled out that the same thing was happening in London. Another yelled out that it was the same in Cape Town. Everyone was yelling out these cities. It was happening everywhere. And I could see Dad getting closer to it.

GRACE (cont'd)

And then, I heard his voice over the comm. "I see it," he said. And they asked him what he sees. And he said, "I see it. I see it all." And on the screen, his ship was glowing at the front. He was so small, compared to the thing in the sky. His tiny ship flying into this huge, glowing, black hole in the sky.

(MORE)

GRACE (cont'd)

And I could feel Sean gripping hand.
And then, in the middle of all of
that, we heard his voice change.

Effects.

GRACE (cont'd)

It was real calm. He said...he
said... "Oh god you're beautiful."
And then it shut off. On the screen,
his ship was gone. The engineers were
running around, screaming at each
other to pick up a signal. There was
nothing. And then someone yelled to
look up. And there it was. On the
screen. The disc started to turn back
to white. And it was glowing brighter
than it ever was. The sky looked like
it was on fire, white hot. Like a
supernova. And then... and then it
disappeared. All of it. Like it was
never there. And everything grew
silent.

GRACE (cont'd)

Someone took my hand, and Sean's, and
we all went outside to look at the
sky. It was blue. No one said
anything. And that's when I heard it.
Birds. They were singing again.

Effects.

GRACE (cont'd)

And that's the day everything went
back to normal. But not normal.
Because the peace talks came after.
The riots stopped. Everyone was
suddenly interested in philosophy and
religion. There was talk of a world
government. People were quoting my
father's last words. They thought
when he said, "Oh God you're
beautiful," he was talking about God.
But I know the truth. I know what he
saw on the last day. What we now
call, *The First Day*. The day it all
changed. Because of what appeared in
the sky one day. When God came to
stare at the earth. And my father
sent an angry needle into his eye.
And left us here to look for him. In
the sky.

Rocket takeoff sounds. At climax, transition to outro music,