

# Look at Us

By C. Jade Wyton

*Kia was rescued -could she call what happened rescued?- by a group of mysterious alien creatures. She has no idea what they want from her; only that they want her to look them in the eye and let them into her mind.*

***Contains some horror and supernatural themes.***

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It had been two days, Kia guessed, since she'd been captured.

Rescued?

Should she say rescued?

It didn't *feel* like she'd been rescued....

They'd saved her life, she supposed. But it felt more like she'd been captured.

The never-ending waiting was consuming her whole and the feelings of loneliness and boredom were only broken by the bouts of anxiety she felt when she heard footsteps approaching her room.

But of what must have been hundreds of times she heard then pass the door; only twice did they come in.

Two days.

Two visits.

Two meals.

She was hungry. And not just for food.

She needed more than this.

At least the bed was comfortable. If she could even call it a bed....

It was more like a nest. Round, with a lip on the edge.

Definitely not designed for a creature taller than it was wide, but still big enough for her to stretch out in.... Just.

*Footsteps.*

*Anxiety.*

*Relief.*

She let out a breath.

They were just passing by again.

The thought of one of those... things, coming into the room again was enough to make her hair stand on end.

She wasn't sure what was creepier.

Their pulsing gelatin bodies? Or their writhing tentacle limbs?

She shivered when she thought of the one that had returned her smile.

Their teeth weren't pleasant, either.

Whatever they were, they terrified her.

She rubbed her arms and sat up, looking out the window into the yawning black beyond the metal wing.

Could it be called a wing?

Maybe?

*Probably not.*

She spied speckles of light in the distance. Tiny glimmers.... Barely there.

If they were stars or other ships she couldn't be sure. But when she looked at them her skin crawled and they made her sure that the worst thing about the creatures were their eyes.

Their eyes scared her most.

There were so many, and they never stayed in the same place for long.

Should she sleep again?

She was bored.

*Footsteps.*

*Anxiety.*

*Pause....*

They were lingering outside the room, now, and Kia could barely hear their gurgled mutters over the beating of her own heart.

*Keep walking.*

*Keep walking.*

*Oh, please, keep walking!*

The door spun open, and Kia swallowed down her cry and buried her face into her misshapen pillow so she wouldn't have to see the creature's face.

She could hear as it approached, its slimy long limbs slapping the ground with fast and heavy steps as it came to a stop at the bed.

She dared to peek at it, and caught a glimpse of a second one as it came into the room. It was smaller than all the others she'd seen so far. It would probably only have stood up to her shoulder, if she'd had the courage to face it.

*Strange.*

But she didn't want to think about it.

'Look at us,' the words were garbled, like static from a radio, and Kia wasn't sure if she was hearing them or just hallucinating.

She felt as if she shouldn't have understood it— As if it wasn't speaking the words she heard. But thinking about it made her skin crawl so she looked away and pushed her face deeper into the bed.

'Look at us!' a second voice snapped, scratching like a skipped record.

'Be patient.'

'Look at us!'

'Be patient.'

Kia dared another glance, and saw the small one scramble to the chair she'd never sat in.

'Make it look!' it demanded.

'Be patient.'

She had a feeling it was young. Just a child.

'Look at us!'

'Be patient.'

Kia turned her head a little more. Just enough to see the larger of the two had turned its back to her. But then as she stared, welts bubbled on its skin and eyes appeared from nowhere, and Kia let out a cry and buried herself back into the bed.

'Don't look away.'

She didn't dare look back.

Something curled around her wrist and she could only guess it was a tentacle.

*'What are you?'* she whispered into her pillow. *'What do you want?'*

*'I am the—'* it replied, its inhuman voice skipping and warbling like a radio being tuned as whatever was making her understand their speech couldn't translate the word. *'—And I want you to look at us.'*

Its grip tightened as it pulled her closer, and she knew she had no choice.

Trembling, she turned, and caught sight of the child's staring eyes.

As soon as she saw it she felt a stabbing pain burst through her skull, like a hundred fingers had been jammed into her brain.

She heard screaming.

Deeper and deeper the fingers pushed, forcing their way into her mind.

She realised she was hearing herself.

*'Gentle,'* the big creature said. *'Not so deep. Not so quick.'*

*'But it's in there! I can find it!'*

She was still screaming.

She couldn't stop it.

She couldn't look away.

And she was still screaming.

*'Enough,'* the older creature shifted, moving in the way of the child.

As soon as its gaze was broken the fingers pulled out of Kia's head and she was left with a throbbing feeling that would have made her sick if she hadn't been so hungry.

*'Gently. We search gently.'*

Her head was spinning as she fell back and hid under the blankets.

*'Look at us.'*

A whimper escaped her as the creature found her ankle.

*'Look at us.'*

*'No!'* she cried, yanking her leg away.

*'And you've made her resistant,'* she heard the older one say. *'You have to be gentle.'*

Kia felt her blankets being lifted away, and she let out a cry and turned her face to her pillow— But that was removed, too, and she was left with nothing to hide in.

*'Look at us,'* the creature ordered.

*'Please no,'* she breathed. *'No.'*

*'Look at us.'*

She didn't want to.

But a tentacle wound around her and she swallowed as she was pulled up and made to sit.

*'Open your eyes.'*

She didn't want to.

*'Look at us.'*

The tentacle was around her neck now. Softly lifting her chin and stroking her cheek as if trying to be tender.

*'Look at us.'*

She dared to peek, and felt the child's fingers back in her head.

Not so deep.  
Not so quick.  
But still there.  
And still painful.

Kia struggled, closing her eyes and letting out another cry as the larger creature let her go and she fell to her side, her empty stomach heaving nothing onto the bed.

They let her catch her breath before she felt the tentacle on her arm again.

‘Look at us.’

‘It hurts,’ was all she could manage.

‘Look at us.’

She couldn’t stop trembling as the creature held her up again.

‘Look at us.’

It took all of her effort to do what she was told.

She met the large one’s eyes, this time, and felt softer fingers in her head.

She winced.

It still hurt.

She blinked.

The fingers disappeared. Then came back.

‘Keep them open,’ it told her, and she could tell now that the voice was inside her head like the fingers.

She could feel the creature shifting her thoughts around. Pictures flicked in and out of her vision like bright lights as it went through her mind, memory by memory.

*What was it searching for?*

She tried not to blink again, though she felt her eyes water.

If it found what it wanted, maybe it would stop.

She hoped it would stop.

She *prayed* it would stop....

Then it grabbed something in her mind and she felt a hard tug before the fingers disappeared from her head. As it left her it pulled something out with it, leaving her dizzy and sore; and the knowledge of what she had been doing before the creatures picked her up completely vanished from her memories.

*Her entire body ached.*

The creature put her down carefully and she groaned.

The pillow wasn’t soft enough for her aching head, and the blanket that was laid over her wasn’t warm anymore, but she was glad it was finally over.

‘Did you find it?’

‘Yes. I found it.’

‘Finally!’

Footsteps, from the bed to the door, and something clicked and spun. But Kia didn’t dare open her eyes to check what it was.

‘What do we do with her, now?’ the younger creature asked.

The old one hesitated as the door whirled shut.

The footsteps started down the hall before it finally answered, its voice faint and far away.

‘I’m not sure.’

—END—

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