

Have You Seen Them?

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Have You Seen Them?

by [orphan_account](#)

Summary

Fran investigates a disturbance one rainy evening and encounters an odd sort of friend.

Notes

Reviews are appreciated!

The nearly tangible shadows swirled slightly about her fingertips as Six tried her best not to lose herself.

Tall buildings framed the darkening sky. The last vestiges of the earlier rainstorm dripped from the gray clouds high above.

How long had she been running? So many nights, from sea to port to dark, dirty city. Now the small, fragile, immensely powerful girl sat shivering in the dark corner of an alley. To her knowledge, no one had seen her, and if they had, she doubted they would have cared.

Perhaps that was lucky. The presence of a warm, living body might have proved too much for her, after all, and there was no telling what her new shadows would have done.

At the very least, there was little for her to fear. Anything that posed a threat she could have destroyed with only a single, focused thought.

Six was freer than she had ever thought possible. However, free didn't keep her warm, or give her shelter, or put meat in her belly. These were all things she would have to get for herself.

As of now, though, there was little she could do.
So she waited.

Not much went on in the alley. The steady dripping of water from the roof of the building drummed out a comforting tattoo on the ground. There was the occasional sound of motion as someone walked past, which left her shaken and curled up into a tight ball (stay hidden, lest you be devoured)

The world outside was so loud, so alien. What purpose could someone such as herself find here? How could she ever hope to mix with the masses of people, smiling, laughing, enjoying the company of others?

Six let out a breath she hadn't realised she was holding in. Tilting her head back, she could see past her hood, into the endless expanse of grey.

Her hands were cold; she tucked them under her legs in an attempt to warm them.

The shadows swirled, brought alive by her discomfort. They were comforting, in their own way, but perhaps only because of the lengths she had gone to in order to obtain them. There was a familiar emptiness inside her belly that seemed ever-present. She could ignore it for the time being, but was only a short while before she had no choice.

A subconscious shudder ran through her frail body, and she huddled against the trash cans, curled up in a tight ball.

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Fran hopped from puddle to puddle, soaking her shoes. The water splashed in all directions, turning thick and dark as blood where she stepped.

That wasn't really the case, though, and she quickly blinked away the idea.

What a shame the rain had to end, she thought, but I suppose everything would swell up and die if it continued.

A sound and slight motion from the nearby alley caught her attention.

Perhaps it is a homeless man, she thought. Although, if he lives in the alley, is he homeless?

She decided to investigate.

She took a step. Then another.

Oh. It isn't a homeless man, after all.

There was a scrawny little girl hunched over by the trash cans.

Her lovely raincoat was all she seemed to be wearing (wasn't she chilly?) and she had thick, dark hair that covered her eyes. Fran wondered privately how she was able to see.

Of course, there was also the issue of the shadows.

There was the blood, like always, and there were strange animals; a big torn-up rat and some kind of red-spattered gray creature with a pointed hat. It rocked back and forth, seeming oddly disconnected even compared to all the other strange entities.

And there were the shadows. The huge wall of blackness that surrounded the small girl, curling into wraithlike tentacles and puffs of dark vapor.

Oddest of all, a shadowy entity all its own stood in close proximity to the raincoat-clad child. This would not normally have been surprising, but Fran was struck by how much the creature resembled the girl herself.

It whispered almost inaudibly to the empty air, and Fran did not care to know what it was saying.

Overall, she thought it would be best to keep her distance; perhaps the girl didn't want to be disturbed.

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Six stole surreptitious glances at the girl standing a ways down the alley.

There was something odd about the way she moved. Her blue eyes darted from empty space to empty space, dark pupils dilated and drinking in sights that didn't seem to exist.

As Six watched, the girl swayed in place, before turning and staring intently at a spot about three feet to her left.

She then whipped around and murmured something to another empty space, this time to some unseen thing next to the trash cans.

Six tilted her head to the side, perplexed.

She could have killed her. The shadows swirled with greater intensity, and it would have been simple, natural even. It was reasonable; no doubt the girl was a threat.

She could have reached out with one hand and taken everything.

Stripped meat from bone, and soul from body.

There would have been nothing left to be afraid of.

But something about the girl's thin, pale face gave her pause.

She was straggly and slender, much like Six herself.

They were both yellow-clad blotches of color in a dark, dark place. There was an odd sort of comfort to be found there.

But what was there to be done? She could run from the taller girl, but the thought of leaving the relative safety of the alley was too much.

"Are you alright?"

Six's eyes widened imperceptibly behind her bangs.

The other girl was crouching a few feet away, a look of confusion and concern in her large blue eyes. How odd.

They sat in silence, observing each other for a few moments. Then the taller girl gave a start, as though rousing herself from sleep.

"Oh! I'm sorry, I didn't mean to disturb you, if you were resting."

The girl's eyes darted to another unseen form a few feet away. Her gaze seemed to pull at the empty space, seeking to tear away the veil that rendered it invisible to all others.

"This doesn't seem like a very nice place to sleep though, if you don't mind me saying so."

Six tilted her head slightly at the other girl's words, a bit confused about this stranger's interest in speaking to her.

Regardless, the presence was oddly welcome in a way, since she could listen to someone else's voice without feeling obligated to contribute anything.

"My name is Fran Bow Dagenhart. I've been walking around here for weeks now, but I'm sure I don't remember seeing you before."

That was to be expected; Six had only been here a short while, and living in the Maw had drilled the ideals of *stay hidden, careful, be alert, remain unseen* into her brain.

"You don't have to tell me who you are. I'll understand if you don't want to say."

This, too, was something Six welcomed.

She sat, seemingly uncaringly, on a slightly damp patch of asphalt. In order to occupy herself she patted the ground rhythmically and scrunched up her grimy toes.

Suddenly, a skittering sound echoed from somewhere near the trash cans, making her jump. Fran giggled softly. The raincoat-clad child let out an audible breath, head whipping around to stare at her.

“You’re an odd little thing, aren’t you?”

As Fran spoke, a slight smile on her face, Six froze suddenly, fists clenched. She could sense the beginning of an awful, familiar feeling.

She was right.

All at once, Six felt the familiar trembling weakness, and at the same time felt the icy rush of dread crawl up her spine. Her stomach contorted painfully in on itself, and a full bodied growl echoed out, signalling her desperate need for food.

Six knew at this point that the sound was a warning of sorts; telling her that she had very little time before her urges consumed her.

She tried her best to bite down the rush of panic she felt.

Powerless. Enslaved by primal desire. Her belly was a dark god, moaning and wailing from deep inside its temple and demanding bloody sacrifice.

She lost her balance, falling on her knees. The next rumble seemed to tear itself from her gut with savage ferocity.

She was unable to keep herself from crying out in pain, hugging her midsection tightly in a futile attempt to quell the horrible, aching *hunger*.

She tried to pick herself back up, but the shadows swirled wildly around her again and it was all too much.

There was another small skittering sound from the nearby trash can, but this time it fully grabbed her attention.

It was a sound she recognised, and in her current state was very glad to hear.

Slowly, Six crept over to the metal can, tiny hands reaching for the lid. She took heavy breaths as the emptiness in her belly threatened to overwhelm her.

Touching the lid, she readied herself for a moment. With one lightning fast motion, she tore the cover from the top of the can.

Fran was barely able to see what happened next. Even under the lasting effects of her medicine, there were holes in her perception, and Six moved much too fast for her to make anything out.

After only a split second of motion and loud metallic clanging, the moment of confusion was over. Six was breathing heavily again, standing next to the overturned trash can, and there was a large, weakly struggling rat in her grip.

The animal looked dazed, as though it had hit its head fairly hard. Fran supposed it had been swung by its tail into the can's side.

Six stared down at her prey, all her surroundings forgotten. Under the shadows of the hood, her eyes were wide. Slowly, she lifted the creature up to her face.

There was nothing else, no city, no sky, no water, no Fran-

-CRUNCH-

The small girl's jaws closed around the front half of the animal, tearing into its flesh with a wet *squelch*.

The creature squealed once and died almost instantly.

Eagerly she lapped up the blood that spilled, caught up entirely in her starved frenzy.

She tore at the rat's carcass like an animal, gobbling up its flesh and crunching its bones.

It was over far too soon, and where there had been a living thing, now there was nothing but scraps of fur and a smear of blood.

She sucked in a few shallow breaths, on her hands and knees as she recovered from her moment of weakness.

A painful bite of fear and disgust welled up in her chest, though it wasn't what she was expecting. There was the self-loathing, the how could you, of course, but that was familiar to her and had been for a long time.

No, this was something else.

There was a moment of absolute quiet, and then Six remembered Fran.

Her eyes went wide again, this time in terror. Six was facing away from Fran, and every fiber of her being resisted the idea of turning around.

She could not. She knew that Fran was there behind her, and she had seen *everything*.

Her breath came in short gasps. Sweet, kind Fran, who had asked her if she was alright and spoken to her, and she had *seen*.

There was no sound from behind her, surely because she was too horrified to speak, and what would she think of her now?

Six whimpered. She was disgusting, a disgusting glutton. Unable to survive without the promise of blood and a vast abundance of meat to fill her belly every moment of the day.

There was still no sound. Perhaps Fran was no longer there. She had most likely fled, and who could blame her? It was only natural that she should flee from monsters like Six-

Suddenly her thoughts dissipated as a small, thin hand touched her shoulder.

She spun around wildly, and met Fran's wide blue eyes.

Fran removed her hand quickly, drawing back as the smaller girl stared at her. Six was breathing heavily, and as she watched, a few tears slid past the obscuring bangs and down her face.

The taller girl started a bit, raising her hands in an attempt at comfort.

“Oh, you mustn’t cry! I’m not offended, if that’s what you’re worried about. I was never all that fond of rats in the first place. Well, that one whose hair I brushed was quite friendly, but I’m fairly certain that wasn’t the same one. This one didn’t talk...”

Fran continued to ramble on, but Six was no longer listening. She was having trouble understanding what was being said to her, but one point seemed to permeate the haze of ambiguity.

Fran was still there, and she wasn’t recoiling in disgust, or screaming at her, or running away in terror. She was there, and she was smiling and speaking to her, and she *wasn’t afraid*.

Even through the vestiges of her tears, Six gave a shuddering breath of relief. Fran reached out tentatively, trying to supply some comfort to the smaller girl. Six, in turn, sank into the taller girl’s arms, nearly shaking with exhaustion and happiness.

For hours, the two sat there together in the damp alleyway as the sky turned black and a few stars made their light visible. There was no certainty for either of them, but it could be said in those few hours that they were not alone.

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