

The Screaming Hole

The hole had never been there, but this morning, somehow, it was. In the middle of the park. A black spot in a sea of green. A dead pixel in the aerial view.

“*Aaagroooooomn*,” the hole said.

Nearby, a boy dropped his ball. He stared at the hole, then approached with as much precaution as a kid could have.

Half an hour later, six other kids had joined the boy, staring down into the blackness. They all jumped when the hole made another *Aaagroooooomn*.

There was talk of a monster. One of the kids suggested they should buy some meat to feed it, but none of them had money. A girl threw a stick down there, then a rock. No sound came back out.

Over the next couple hours, fifty people had gathered around.

The hole was dark and deep. Bottomless, someone could surmise, although no one would go down there to check. A teenager called it cool. A concerned mother judged it dangerous. The horror writer wrote the word *abyssal* in his crumpled notepad. The pervert thought of a very deep vagina, one he could fit his whole body in.

For some, the hole was intriguing, for some amazing. Some found it boring and left after a couple of minutes. For some, it was a threat, for others a sign, for others a prank.

Aaagroooooomn.

Concerto of gasps from the crowd.

"Probably a gas leak," the skeptic said.

"This is dangerous," the concerned mother said. "Someone could fall. Think about the kids!"

"Maybe someone already has," the pessimist said.

"And no one noticed," the depressed said. "This person died alone and afraid, with no one around to help when he needed it the most."

The sadist laughed.

"We should sue the city," the outraged citizen said. She was the one who waited in front of city hall hours before the council started. Always the first in line for the question period, holding between white knuckles a sheet scribbled with sarcastic interrogations, reproach-filled remarks, and insistent suggestions.

"Did someone try to drop something in it?" the man who just got here said.

"We all did," the hostile elderly woman spat.

"I mean, to see how deep it is."

"Yeah. We get it. We all thought of it."

"If this isn't a sign from God," the priest said, "I don't know what is. This is judgment day, ladies and gentlemen. It's never too late for a quick conversion."

"I call aliens," the UFO enthusiast said.

"Can't you consider a meteorite?" the astronomer said. "You go straight to aliens?"

"We didn't hear a bang."

"We didn't see space saucers either."

"If it's a meteorite, how come you guys didn't see it coming?"

"The universe is infinite. We can't see everything."

"How about you focus on what's about to hit us in the face? You dropped the ball on that one."

"It didn't come from space," the geologist said. "This is obviously a geologic

phenomenon."

"No shit. It's a fucking hole," the jaded said.

"It's a rare rock formation. I could tell you exactly what it is if I had more money for the research."

"Whatever it is," the conspiracist said, "the government's behind it."

"Or the Jews," the racist said.

The feminist called it sexist and threw tampons in it.

"What if a man did that, huh?" the men's rights activist said. "Talk about double standard."

The satanist cut a squirrel's throat and dropped it in as an offering. The priest got on his knees and prayed.

Aaagroooooooooomn.

"It's so weird," the curious said.

"It's insensitive to call it weird," the sensitive said.

"That deep voice reeks of toxic masculinity and patriarchy," the feminist said.

"I've never heard anything like it," the zoologist said. "Must be a new species down there. I'll need more financing to investigate this."

"Can't we even acknowledge that it's unusual?" the curious tried.

"Can you acknowledge your white privilege?" the social justice warrior said.

"Yeah," another one said. "Why don't you let minorities take your place in the front row? You've had enough luxury."

"Someone should get inside," the horror writer said, ready to take notes.

"Who found the hole?" the journalist asked.

The little boy shyly raised his hand. The journalist held a microphone to his face and signaled for the cameraman to come closer.

“Could you say ‘I’m the one who found the hole’ for the camera?” the journalist said. “If you can cry a little, that’d be appreciated.”

“We’re here next to this incredible hole,” the vlogger said, holding his selfie stick. He got next to the hole and took a picture with himself in the foreground. “Don’t forget to like and subscribe.”

“Could you stand a little closer?” the horror writer said.

“This is obviously a terrorist attack,” the patriot said. He handed out handguns to people.

“I guess I gotta get my bunker in order,” the survivalist said. “Gather more supplies.”

He left. A handful of people followed him.

“We should make people pay to look at that hole,” the capitalist said. “There’s a fortune to be made here.”

“Everyone should be given the same time to look at it,” the communist said.

“Why don’t you shut up?”

“Why don’t *you* shut up?”

The capitalist punched the communist in the face. The communist hit back. The social justice warriors threw rocks. The patriot started shooting. The kids ran away. The journalist made sure the cameraman was filming. The conspiracist bit the journalist’s ear off, screaming about fake news. The feminists kicked the men in the balls. The horror writer wrote down *hysteria*. One feminist saw that and punched him.

“Oh Jesus,” the priest said.

“You mean Oh Allah,” the Muslim said.

“You’re both wrong,” the rabbi said.

“Of course, you gotta have the last word,” the racist said.

They all wrestled each other, hit each other on the head with large, heavy books. The Satanist stabbed the priest in the heart.

The vlogger reveled in how many views he’d get on his video.

Punches, gunshots, and stabbings colored the grass red. Fifteen minutes later, everyone was dead.

Aaagroooooomn.