

Copyright © 2026 by Mica White

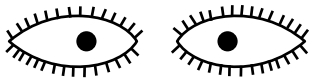
Any resemblance to actual persons or events
would be very disappointing.

First edition

The Lightened Black

Mica White

The Lightened Black



I had been awake for nearly 23 hours now, and yet I was still dreaming.

Oh Teresa, how I miss you. As hard as I've tried, I could not get you out of my head. I want you to come back. But I needed you to go away.

Every time I closed my eyes I saw you. I would blink and in the darkness, it is your face I saw.

I always wondered what should I have done? Is there something I could've done to keep you here? Oh, if only I could go back, I'd think of something to keep you beside me. To think I let you go so easily. I wouldn't let it happen again, I swear!

I wished I could just stop thinking of you. I thought it might be better if I had never known

Mica White

you? All those memories feel so tainted now. For a time, I did not want them. I went through so much trouble for you, and I could go through so much more, but I've never felt anything like what I felt after you passed.

This night went on for a very long time and it showed no sign of stopping. I couldn't sleep, for if I did, I'd dream of you. I did everything I could do to stay awake. I tried taping my eyes open, but the tape always comes off. My hands held them open. My eyes strained to stay open. If I so much as blinked, I'd regret it dearly.

Ding!

My phone went off, startling my eyes to send me into darkness. Into a nightmare I tried so hard to avoid.

The Lightened Black



I found myself stretched out across a couch. The sun was shining bright that day. I had to cover my eyes to keep it out. I let out a yawn, and stretched out my arms and legs. One of my legs bumped into something. I looked ahead to see my beautiful Teresa, looking back at me.

“Good morning, Frank!” she said, in the sweetest voice I have ever heard. “Did you have a nice nap?”

“Yep,” I groaned, as I got myself sat up next to her. She had a sketchpad in her hands. It contained a half-finished drawing of what looked to me like a teenage boy, but I’ve never been good at telling that sort of thing. “What are you working on?”

Mica White

“Oh?” She looked down at the sketchpad she was just using. “This is my brother. His birthday is coming up, and I thought this might make a good present.”

“Oh yeah, Jeff.” I was still struggling to wake myself up from my nap.

Teresa put down the sketchpad on the armrest next to her, then turned towards me. She always has the best smile on her face. She could get excited over literally anything. My waking up was probably the highlight of her day. “So, did you get those tickets?”

“Huh?” My brain was still waking up. “Oh yeah, those. I got them yesterday.” We were planning a trip to Spain as a summer vacation. We both loved to travel. I guess we both liked to see the different cultures and learn from them. “I also checked, and the hotel we were looking at is pretty close to the airport, so we shouldn’t have trouble walking there if we need to. I also got the hotel reservation.”

The Lightened Black

“Great!” Teresa practically squealed with excitement. She leaned over to hug me. “It seems like you got everything covered for us. It’ll be a great trip!” She left a kiss on my cheek, in exchange for my proactivity.

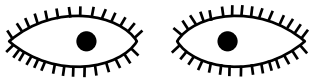
“As long as we don’t get stranded at the airport again...” Our last trip had us up all night, waiting all night. There was nothing I could do to prevent that.

“Oh, quit your worrying!” She stroked my cheek. “That’s not gonna happen again!” That was just a one-time thing.

With the benefit of hindsight, she was right, but I wasn’t convinced at the time. “Alright,” I said reluctantly. “I’ll stop worrying.”

It was then, when I jolted up from this dream.

Mica White



Test