

Living in the Fog

I've always wanted to be invisible.

Ever since the day I was born, people have bothered me. Not in the usual way you may be thinking, like a sudden urge you may get to move hastily when somebody on the bus approaches you. Nothing like that. People called me reclusive and a great deal of that would be true, but that wasn't the full picture. Nobody could fathom the severity of my notions. It wasn't the whispers or the constant stares. Not even the ceaseless and relentless name-calling and the special "surprises", like two dozen eggs cracking on the aluminum siding of my house.

None of those could compete with the awful, heart-wrenching sounds that came out of *all* of their big mouths. It was worse when a group of them would talk. It was like a cacophony of sandpaper to the ears, I swear I could feel them shut even just a little every time one spoke. I would have dreams of sewing the edges of my ears closed so I would no longer need to bear those wretched noises. Except I couldn't hear anyone's words, not clearly at least. I heard voices though. Faint whispers crumbled into my tired ears, destroying my memory of the familiar voices of the people I knew. I missed hearing every word spoken to me. Some days they would be quieter, but even then there was always a dull clamouring that would interrupt my thoughts and throw them to the floor.

They would twist my brain until every ounce of human emotion I felt had vanished into an abyss of nothingness.

I don't recall exactly when they started, but I know it was after he died. The voices began softly like a hum in the wind. Back then, people were tolerable because the hum stayed itself, not consuming me. Until a cool summer day, when the sun was at the middle point where you need to squint but not bright enough to wear sunglasses. My friend and I said goodbye and I turned around to go home. I was already running late for dinner so my mind was in a whirl. Between my racing thoughts and turning around too fast, I had to stop for a moment to catch my breath. My mind cleared, and I thought I heard a noise.

"What was that Rose?" I inquired, as I cocked my head over my shoulder.

Nobody replied. Rose was two blocks down and I could see her figure swaying in the distance. I was confused but I thought *my ears are just playing tricks on me*.

As the years went by, I lost all my "friends" and the voices got louder. *No*, they were the same volume but now they were ubiquitous murmurs. Everything I heard was made up of those noises. I have never been so sick of something in my entire life. My life was composed of sheet music

and there were no rests in this piece, only a repetitive, discordant melody that went on forever. My mind was littered with those horrid notes; they rooted their stems deep inside a crevice in the shell of my head with no passage to escape. I tried my best to get rid of them of course- oh trust me I did. I could run so far until my lungs were empty but even then, I could never outrun the voices. When I caught a glimpse of myself in the mirror one morning, it wasn't me staring back. In my reflection, her eyes were sad and her face was pale and her shoulders slumped so deeply it was like she had shrunk. There are remnants of who I used to be, but it wasn't me at all. It wasn't.

So I decided to smash every mirror inside the old house. I would never have to look at her again.

I know what people thought about me, or at least I could imagine. I was a lonely girl who lived alone now that her dear brother had passed, and she was spiralling into a dark episode and talking to herself. I can't explain what's going on in my head. If I could, the words are buried too deep. They see tears, but they won't hear screams. They see sadness but they don't hear the voices. If I could be a different person, I would be. But I can't.

I have so many questions that will be unanswered until the day I die. However, on a

gloomy day about two months ago I saw him. Up in the attic. I am not sure if this answered any of my questions, rather now I had countless more. While looking for a photo album, I lit a match with so much force I almost set the house on fire. It was right at that moment, that he appeared. Not the entirety of him, just his distinctive, beautiful eyes, although this time they glistened in the candlelight. His eyes were a golden amber but the rest of him was imperceptible. I stood in shock, completely frozen in time, not daring to make a move. It couldn't be real. His eyes shone more brightly with every passing minute. Rage filled me starting at my toes and ascending all the way until it reached my throat. The cork on my bottle popped and I finally spoke.

"I can bear this no longer; you need to stop," I told him. "Get away from here. It wasn't my fault, I told you not to go."

Moments of the longest silence passed and I could hear the candlelight flicker in disbelief with me.

"Do you hear me?" I said as calmly as I could. "Do you hear me? It wasn't my fault you have to understand I never meant to hurt you. Please."

I burst into the ugliest tears, falling helplessly to the floor.

“Leave me alone!” I screamed even louder than before. So loud that it radiated in the room, through the walls, and the trees out the window rattled as the birds scurried away. As soon as I released my rage, the voices rushed in, permeating from the center of the room where he floated. I stumbled down the stairs trying to escape them before they flooded my brain permanently. I never ever visited the attic again.

A few weeks later I decided to go on a walk and attempt to clear my head. It was one foggy day indeed. I took a step outside and the brisk air bit at my ankles. As I walked up the street, I noticed it was so desolate. Usually, my neighbourhood was filled with excitement: children would be playing, dogs would be barking, and cars would be roaring. There was complete silence. This made the slightest noise resonate vehemently in my brain, something even as delicate as a leaf could produce an earthquake. The way ahead of me was unclear. Nervousness and excitement hugged me tightly. While I walked up the road the fog surrounded me, swirling at the tips of my fingers and pulling my hair into the sky. In a matter of minutes, it was much hazier. My only hope for navigation was the skeletons of tall dark trees on either side of the street. I was nearing the top of the hill when two lights appeared in the distance. The soundless car emerged closer and closer. I tried to take another step out of the road but was stuck. I panicked all at once. Then, that storm of panic turned to calm and then it was cleared

altogether. I was calm. I shouldn't be calm. I didn't try to struggle, I knew my fate. I kept my stance and the car drove into me. I felt searing pain all throughout my body as the car moved through me. Then immediately the pain stopped and I opened my eyes. I looked down to see any signs of broken bones but there was nothing to see. I was gone, completely and utterly lost in the world. And there was a stillness. For the first time ever, it was quiet. I soaked it in, cherishing its lovely tranquillity. When I looked down again, two orbs of gleaming light followed my gaze around, just like the ones I saw in the attic. The fog around my feet dissipated.

My soul was unseen but my spirit never died. I no longer felt earth's soils or touched earth's heart. I never witnessed another sunset or saw my flower blossom. But I heard the rustle of the grass in the wind, the patter of the rain on its home, the crash of the waves on the shore, and I was invisibly free.