

## Buried

I opened my eyes, my vision blurry as I situated myself, the dreams of the night prior quickly becoming a distant memory. As my vision cleared, I looked around the room, but the light had just begun to shine, leaving the room dim with barely enough light to make out any details. I could still see her, however, standing in the center of the room, looking blankly towards me, her eyes a bright green I could never forget.

I studied her for a short while trying to remember if anything had been forgotten. Her hair and eyes were as I recalled, but her face all I could make out was an amorphous thing where her face had once been in my mind. I tried not to remain on it for too long. I studied her hair. I remember it was a gorgeous dark brown. I had always thought it was the most beautiful hair you could ever see, or was it light brown? I know I always loved her hair, and I know it is a shade of brown. A memory floats in my head of her hair being light in color, but it felt wrong.

No it was dark brown it had never been light brown what was I thinking? I examined her again, finding the dark brown hair I remember. Her ears looked the same as everything I remembered. It's strange you never focus on details like the ears yet sometimes they remain even when everything else is lost.

As I finished examining her and was about to move on, I heard a voice from somewhere from where or from who, I couldn't tell. The voice sounded eerily like hers, but I could somehow tell it was not exactly hers, almost as if the voice was slightly distorted in ways I couldn't tell "You don't remember, do you?"

I quickly turned around looking for anywhere the voice could have come from. Other than her standing in the center of the room nothing else was there. At first after looking around for a short second I had reasonably assumed she had spoken.

That couldn't be possible though the lips were long forgotten. I examined the room and looked to see the window open, the chilling breeze making the hairs on my neck stand up. I ran to the window to see if whatever had spoken had somehow used the window to run.

I looked out the window, but all I saw outside was a great amount of white. The texture of the ground was enshrouded, barely visible, and only appeared as smooth, small hills. I looked into the distance, squinting to see if I could make out anything. All I could see from my room was a tree, bare from the cold, its branches flowing in the wind.

I couldn't see any possible person or thing that could have made the noise I heard. Guessing my mind was getting to me, I closed the window tightly this time, hoping the wind or something else could not easily open it again. I was walking back to my seat when I heard the voice again: "How could you not remember?"

I stopped for a moment feeling a deep anger begin to rise within me. I turned to her, still standing in the center where she stood always. How could she talk? She hadn't for years I studied her closely and there was somehow something missing when compared to this morning.

How was I forgetting so quickly? I swear her hair was a different color this morning. Her eyes lacked any color, almost turning into just a stark white sphere with black circles in the middle. What is the beautiful color I know she had?

"You have forgotten her," she spoke again, the voice sounded like her I think, but I was looking at her, and nothing moved. She remained completely still. Where were the words coming from? I looked around the room, anxiety sending spikes throughout my body. I said in a mix of fear and anger, "I remember! I would never forget her. I will never forget!" Anxiety quickly evolved into anger as I screamed the end of the sentence at the top of my lungs.

I searched my room everywhere I opened drawers violently, pencils and pens falling out as I searched, but I didn't care I would find whatever was speaking. I grabbed a knife to cut into my mattress to check the inside. They must be somewhere and I would find whoever was trying to copy her voice.

As I was about to cut into the mattress, a knock came from my door three slight taps that were barely audible. Despite that I heard it and began walking towards the door. Right before I answered, I realized that answering the door with a knife might seem bad, so I hid the knife behind my back quickly before answering the door with my other hand.

As I opened I saw my neighbor, a shorter man. He was older than me by a decent bit though we were never close enough for me to know his exact age relative to mine. He looked at me a bit strangely as I answered before saying "Hey so I was just getting ready and I heard some noises coming from your room. Is everything alright?"

If I actually explained, I knew he would think I was crazy. Thinking quickly, I responded with as nice of a fake smile as I could present to appease him. "Yeah, I just can't find my keys. I must have been a little too loud. Sorry, I will try to keep it down."

"Are you sure I could have sworn I heard screaming coming from your room a little while ago," he asked clearly not really believing what I was saying but being too polite to simply call me out on my lies.

"Yeah, sorry. You know how it can get everyone arguing over where it could be and stuff," I gave a lame excuse. I had never been really good at talking to people and was an even worse liar. After I said that, the old man looked puzzled for a second, and after going on his toes to look over my shoulder, he looked at me even more strangely.

"Who were you arguing with? There is no one in the room with you." I looked behind me; she was still clearly there but she made no movement to show my neighbor that, and I couldn't really ask her to show him she existed. Instead, I came up with another middling excuse: "I was talking on the phone. You know how it can be if you lose one thing and all your plans fall apart."

My neighbor seemed weirded out even further, and I didn't know what to say. The truth, I knew, would make me sound crazy, but after a short pause where I think his brain may have ceased functioning and resumed again, he spoke: "It's just almost every day now. Could you possibly try to keep it down a little?"

Every day? What could he mean, every day? The voice only came today; otherwise, it's just been me and her. I would have voiced this complaint, but I was too deep. I wanted this conversation to end sooner rather than later so I could resume my search for the voice "Yeah, sorry, it's just always so hectic right now, but I will try to keep it down."

As I said that I began going for the door, and as the door closed my neighbor whom I still don't know the name for quickly went "wait!" before the door shut in his face and I locked it behind me to make sure he couldn't come in. I assume he gave up, because after I closed the door no one made an attempt to open it again.

I didn't hear her voice again for much of the day. I don't know what my neighbor did, but it apparently made whatever had stolen her voice from me leave me alone for a while. I attempted to return to the various tasks I had to do throughout the day, but my mind was kept by the voice I heard earlier, making doing anything else challenging.

What could it have been? It definitely wasn't her. I remember she never sounded like that, but I do know it did sound like her. I continued speculating on the origins of the voice, my train

of thought being interrupted as I again heard the voice, sounding even more like a distorted version of her actual voice “You don't even remember the name, do you?”

I looked around, I knew I remembered her name. I knew her name started with an A, Aubrey? No, that didn't sound right. What was her name? I could never forget her name.

I tried in vain to remember her, and as I did, I continued looking for the voice. Eventually while I was near her looking around the room I screamed, “Who are you? Please just leave us alone.” I tried to summon as much authority and threat in my voice as I could.

I am unsure if the voice didn't hear me or if it did and just didn't care to respond, but there was no response for a short while until a knocking came from my door yet again. This time, however, I didn't go to the door, as before I could even react, the knocking began to spread and a shaking began. At first it was slight. I had a hard time even noticing it, but then it got worse.

I quickly hid under the desk, unsure of what else to do, but as I sat there under the desk, shadows began spreading in the room. Slowly, as it grew, my heart began beating quicker and quicker within my chest.

Each light, first from the door, then from the lights within the room, went out until only one light remained from the window, which shone perfectly on her and her alone. It made me pause and stare despite the terror that was rising up within my body.

I quickly got up and ran towards her, the only solace within the room, but as I did, the window light finally gave out, and with no more light within the room, I quickly lost my footing despite my best effort and fell on the ground.

Winded, I could no longer see anything as the voice, closer than it's ever been near my ear, screeched in a voice I could scarcely remember, “Has her voice left you already?” As the

voice spoke those words, my head began feeling like knives were being stabbed into it and pulled out.

Slowly, my eyes began closing, the pain stopping all thought, but I was left with a feeling as if something was missing that had once been there. I couldn't place it, however, and it was just for a moment before my eyes completely closed, passing out from the pain.

My eyes groggily opened and the dream I had previously had was quickly becoming a distant memory. As I woke up and slowly stretched my body in bed enough to feel ready I went over to her to study her. Her eyes were almost gone, a shiny white her hair a black just like I had remembered it.