

Speaking is a rush. Noise, filling up every corner of the room, until it feels like you are drowning in it. Is that fun? Feeling your head grow heavy, as you try to keep up with each word with one of your own, desperately trying not to be left behind. One misstep and you are falling. Your voice fades into the background, and all you are is a buzz in a room full of words. How anybody finds that fun is beyond me.

To me, silence is the true key. There is much more to be said in a single glance, a single twitch of the body. In the silence you can hear everything and nothing at all. Words shatter to pieces before you, revealing their true meaning. “At work” now means “At the bar,” “Working on homework” to “playing video games.” That is why silence is the true way to discover the world. When you are not fighting for the last word like a hunk of meat, when you sit back and watch the scene unfold like a movie, that is when you understand. All it takes is a step back.

Take my case today, for example. I sit at the middle table closest to the cafeteria door. I am enclosed in noise from all sides. To my left is a group of basketball players raving about their next game. Most of them sound so fearless, so confident, but from where I am sitting the trembling in their voice gives their feelings away. To my right is a group talking about the latest novel. They all sound excited, praising the author and crying over characters that only exist on paper. The girl to the left of the table, the one with the keychain of a teddy bear, is laughing and smiling along with the rest of them, but I know for a fact she did not enjoy the book as much as her friends. There is some strain in her voice.

I am getting off-track. These tidbits of information are useless to me, and they are useless to you, too. You would much rather know my name, or my real case. Maybe even my favorite color? No, who am I kidding, you do not care about that.

My name is Esther Dolm, though no one calls me Esther. It is either Essie or nothing, unless you have a death wish, then be my guest. I have a superpower, as my dad proudly calls it. I do not agree with his description. Superpower makes it sound like I help people. In a way I suppose I do, but not in the way a hero might. I prefer the term ability. It is just something I have always been able to do. I read people easily. One look and I can tell what you are feeling. Give me a bit more time and I can find enough information to make you tremble. Give me free range and I will find every skeleton you hide away.