

ALONE

by

Magdalena A. Król

INT. LABYRINTH OF MIRRORS - NIGHT

TAMARA (24) has finally completed the arduous stage of her education - journalism studies - and seems ready for the next step into the proper adulthood. After receiving her diploma, she celebrates with her friends, ending up in the amusement park, wandering through the labyrinth of mirrors. The alcohol buzzing in her head, the kaleidoscope of faces, the cacophony of screams and laughs – all of this causes her to have a panic attack and realize a sudden need to be alone - absolutely and indefinitely alone. Despite her friends' insistence, she decides to go home.

EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT

She walks through the city, avoiding encounters with strangers, passing by crowds of pedestrians, tourists and unpleasant individuals. She treats her apartment as a sanctuary and when she locks its door, she is so overwhelmed with relief, she almost faints. Moment of peace is disrupted by a call from her **MOTHER (48)**, who is brimming with pride over her daughter's academic achievement. Tamara, however, hastily ends the conversation. She can't stand seeing a human face – even her own – and she looks away from the mirror hanging in the corridor.

INT. APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Tamara draws the curtains shut, turns her laptop on and greedily drinks cola, not caring for it flowing down her formal shirt. For comfort, she removes her skirt and, with music playing in the background, collapses onto the couch.

INT. APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

After a night spent watching TV series, she lies in a trance, listening to music, surrounded by empty food packages. When she reaches for her phone, she finds out it's already morning, and many people have tried to contact her. While holding the phone, her boss, the **EDITOR (50)**, calls and assigns her to write a review of a theatrical performance, ignoring Tamara's meek protests and notion that she works in the music column. After losing the fight, she cries.

INT. APARTMENT/CORRIDOR - DAY

In the evening, Tamara attempts to go to the theatre but doesn't even step out of her apartment - she hears the sounds of a neighbour's quarrel and the shouting of arguing children from the stairwell, which frighten her so much that she panics and decides to stay home.

INT. APARTMENT/KITCHEN - DAY

The performance has already begun. Tamara's phone constantly vibrates with missed messages and calls. She decides to answer a call from her mother, only to inform her that she might not be reachable for a while. After the conversation, she plays the audiobook of the original play she was supposed to review.

INT. APARTMENT/BATHROOM

She listens to the audiobook while taking a bath. The mirror is covered with an old sheet.

INT. APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM

In a room so dark that night and day are indistinguishable from each other, Tamara watches a film adaptation of the play.

INT. APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM

The level of dirt surrounding Tamara gradually increases and her food supplies dwindle. Preoccupied with plagiarizing the review of the performance, she accidentally puts a spoonful of mouldy yogurt in her mouth. She immediately spits out. Her abandoned phone continues to vibrate. When it stops for a moment, Tamara mutes it completely.

INT. APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tamara sends the finished article. She could allow herself a sigh of relief if not for the annoying light seeping through the curtains. She tapes them to the windows.

INT. APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM

Tamara watches an Italian film, not understanding a word. She goes to the kitchen for a snack and her silent phone only signals its presence with a blink. Tamara cuts some bread, and the sound of the landline phone rings. Startled, she walks, still with the knife in hand, to the apartment door. There, she drops the knife and desperately presses on the receiver to silence the phone that finally stops making sounds, like a strangled child. Tamara doesn't release her grip.

INT. APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM

Tamara lies on the floor, listening to music. Her peace is interrupted by the sound of the intercom and knocking on the door. Tamara tries to ignore it, but it's impossible - she recognizes the voice of one of her friends pleading for her to show a sign of life. Tamara cuts the intercom and phone wires with the knife, then rushes to the cell phone lying in the kitchen, its screen lighting up. The person standing at the door finally gives up and then Tamara is overcome with a sense of shame, prompting her to call and assure him that everything in her life is fine. It's hard to say if he believes her but he has no choice but to leave her alone.

INT. APARTMENT/BATHROOM

Tamara prepares a bath, still holding the cell phone - it finally rings, but only angry shouts from the Editor who has read Tamara's article, come out. Frightened, she drops the phone into the water, and its life ends with one last glitch. No more messages or notifications come through. There is peace. Tamara, watching it with fascination, takes it out of the bathtub and places it on the floor. Watching it closely, she enters the bathtub.

INT. APARTMENT/BATHROOM

Tamara lies in the bath with a smile.

INT. APARTMENT/CORRIDOR

Tamara dances towards the fridge, finding out it's empty. Initially surprised, she returns to dancing.

INT. APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM

There is no food in Tamara's apartment. Just empty packages, empty drawers, empty shelves. Hunger finally gets to her, leading to her desperate crying as she curls up in pain.

INT. APARTMENT/CORRIDOR - DAY

Tamara finally decides to leave the house. Shielding herself from the sunlight with a hoodie and sunglasses, she heads to the supermarket, ignoring the deserted, unnaturally quiet streets. Only after filling her cart and standing at the checkout does she notice that there's no cashier. After calling out unsurely, she enters the empty backroom where no one responds. She opens the back door and sees empty, motionless, silent city with a church towering in the centre. Tamara walks along the main street and grabs a colourful spoonful from an abandoned ice cream stand to see if anyone would scold her. Nothing happens.

INT. JEWELRY STORE - DAY

Tamara enters the store and touches diamond jewellery, expecting to trigger the alarm and alert the security. Nothing happens so she puts the jewelry on and looks at herself in the mirror. She is frightened and then fascinated by the vengeful smile on her face.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

Tamara, dressed in diamonds, walks into the market square with a spring in her step. She decides to enter the church to make final attempt at finding other people.

INT. CHURCH BELL TOWER - DAY

The bell rings, put in motion by Tamara as she screams for anyone to come and find her - but no one comes and she eventually flees from the thunderous sound.

INT. STAIRWELL - DAY

Tamara runs up the stairs to her apartment, dropping the jewellery along the way. She is full of energy, as she pounds on the neighbour's door without waiting for a response that doesn't come anyway. She opens her apartment door and sees the mirror covered with an old pillowcase. After a brief moment, she passes it by without a word.

THE END

INT. LABYRINTH OF MIRRORS - NIGHT

Through the narrow corridors of the labyrinth a group of six laughing young adults is running. They are dressed elegantly, a little tipsy, and holding each others' hands as they speak one over the other, laughing. The one leading the group is GUY WITH PIERCING, behind him we see GIRL WITH LEATHER JACKET, GIRL WITH TATTOOS, GIRL WITH COLORFUL HAIR, GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR and, at the end of the line, TAMARA (24).

GIRL WITH TATOOS

We're lost!

GUY WITH PIERCING

I know! This is what we paid
for, right?

GIRL WITH TATOOS

I should be leading now! You
can't be trusted with
anything!

GUY WITH PIERCING

(twisting his neck to look
behind his back)

Shut up! I'm telling you, this
is the right...

He hits the mirror in front of him and the rest stumbles one onto another.

GIRL WITH TATTOOS, GIRL WITH COLORFUL HAIR AND BOY WITH BLEACHED
HAIR

Dead end!

Group bursts into laughter and Guy With Piercing turns the whole line around, making no changes to the order of people but making them go into the opposite direction. Now in the foreground we see Tamara walking at the end of the line. Her smile slowly fades away from her face along with colour. She looks around the multiple reflections of their group, voices echoing from the walls that sound like incoherent noise. Tamara swallows when everyone starts running, pulling her along. Tamara wipes the sweat off her forehead with her free hand.

GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR
Everything alright?

Tamara looks at him absently. Guy With Bleached Hair stops abruptly and Tamara stumbles onto him.

GUY WITH PIERCING, GIRL WITH LEATHER JACKET, GIRL WITH
TATTOOS AND GIRL WITH COLORFUL HAIR
Dead end!

Tamara almost falls but laughter, run and pull in a completely new direction bring her along mercilessly. Her eyes slide along the mirrors' surface in panic, she breathes deeply and sharply. Guy With Bleached Hair glimpses at her with concern. That's when the group rushes

OUTSIDE

into the night air filled with carousel sounds and joyful

shouts of children. Members of the group separate and laugh.
Tamara bends over in half, her legs trembling. Guy with
Bleached Hair stays by her side, worried.

GIRL WITH COLORFUL HAIR
(losing breath from laughter)
...can't... breathe...

GIRL WITH LEATHER JACKET
Get up before they call us
junkies again.

GUY WITH PIERCING
Hey, why is it so dark all of
sudden?!

GIRL WITH TATTOOS
There was no sudden, idiot! We
were sitting there for like two
hours!

GIRL WITH LEATHER JACKET
We were doing anything but
sitting in there. My legs are
about to fall off. Let's go
eat something!

GUY WITH PIERCING
You know, this is how quickly
time passes when you have fun.

GIRL WITH TATTOOS
Right...

GUY WITH PIERCING

What? We can go again if you
think you'll be a better
leader!

GIRL WITH TATTOOS

(springing to her feet)
Maybe I-

GIRL WITH COLORFUL HAIR

Hey, Tamara, what's wrong?

Tamara straightens up fixing her hair.

TAMARA

Nothing, just...

So many pairs of concerned eyes drilling into her. She cannot
bring herself to look at them. She trembles.

TAMARA (CONT.)

It got... crowded in there.

GIRL WITH LEATHER JACKET

Crowdy? It was just us.

TAMARA

I know but... I don't feel good.
I have to go home.

Everyone protests.

GIRL WITH TATTOOS

What? You can't go now!

GIRL WITH COLORFUL HAIR

Tamara, we're celebrating!

GIRL WITH LEATHER JACKET

You're going to feel better
in no time!

TAMARA

No, I'm already so tired... I'm
really sorry...

She wipes her eyes with her fingers and picks up her bag.

TAMARA

Bye...

GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR

We can at least walk you home...

TAMARA

No, I really have to be...

She walks away.

GIRL WITH TATTOOS

Tamara, come on!

GIRL WITH LEATHER JACKET

Give it a rest. I almost puked
myself because of these fucking
mirrors. Hey! And where are you
going?

Guy With Bleached Hair walks after Tamara, paying no mind to his friends' shouts. Huge groups of people coming to the theme park mix with the ones that are leaving - and Tamara disappears in the crowd.

(Scene at the peak of Tamara's isolation.)

INT. APARTMENT/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tamara is lying on the floor staring at the ceiling with a shadow of a smile. There's MELANCHOLIC MUSIC playing. Tamara's mind is possessed by darkness and peace. Her eyes flutter shut in bliss.

Her trance is interrupted by the sound of INTERCOM and KNOCK on the door. Her eyes open wide in fear. She doesn't move, paralysed. Her eyelashes flutter as in convulsions every time INTERCOM or KNOCKING comes back. It finally becomes BANGING on the door. Tamara's eyelids squeeze shut and two streaks of tears escape them. She wipes her eyes and gets up. She has white dirty summer dress on, her hair is full of tangles. First, she turns the music off, then she enters the

CORRIDOR

stumbling as if in pain. KNOCKING and INTERCOM don't stop.

GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR (OFF)

Tamara, I heard the music,
open up!

Tamara picks up the knife off the floor.

GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR (OFF;CONT.)

Please, open up, everyone's
worried...

Intercom RINGS with brain-drilling aria making Tamara hyperventilate. She approaches the receiver and tries to cut through the wire. First one hand, then the second, until she finally succeeds. There's a moment of silence. Tamara observes the door with horror.

GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR (OFF;CONT.)

Please, give me some sign
you're alive...

TAMARA

(whispering)

Leave...

Three brutal BANGS on the door. Tamara presses her hands to her ears.

TAMARA (CONT.)

(whispering)

Leave, leave...

GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR (OFF)

Pick up the phone, please...

TAMARA

(whispering)

No, no, no!

She grabs the cable for the landline phone and cuts through it, too. She wipes the sweat off her forehead with a smile of relief but suddenly she rushes to the

KITCHEN

where she grabs the vibrating cell phone and drops to the floor, curled up in fetal position. After a while, the phone goes silent. Tamara tries to hear more sounds from behind the door.

Finally, she hears muffled FOOTSTEPS going down the stairs. She sits up, looking at the door.

When she gets up, her cell phone is pressed to her heart like a picture of a saint. She slowly walks into the

CORRIDOR

while tears are flowing down her cheeks. She stops in front of the door, looking at it before bashfully turning her eyes away. Suddenly, she chooses the number in her phone and presses it to her ear.

GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR (OFF)

Hello?

TAMARA

(with hoarse voice)

Hey, you were calling me.

GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR (OFF)

(after a pause)

Yes, I was! For like two
hundred times for the last...

TAMARA

Yes, I'm sorry, I had a lot of
work and my phone is kind of
broken... I'm at work right now,

actually, I'm hiding from my boss. He doesn't like people chatting on company's time.

GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR

(annoyed)

Right. I was just under your door, I think the intercom broke. Everyone's worried about you, you know? When we last saw each other, you left so suddenly-

TAMARA

Yes, I know, I'm sorry. Seriously, as soon as this slaughter at my work ends, I'll fix my phone and I'll make it all up to you.

GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR (OFF)

Sure. You always have a computer, after all.

TAMARA

Mhm... Listen, gotta go, boss is onto me.

GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR (OFF)

Sure. See you.

TAMARA

See you. Thank you for
worrying. You have no reason
to but thank you.

GUY WITH BLEACHED HAIR (OFF)

Yeah.

TAMARA

Bye-bye.

No one responds. Tamara hangs up. She bites her lips,
pressing phone to her chest once again.