She couldn’t take it anymore. This time she ran far, as far as she could until she could escape it. She kept it to herself in fear that she was going crazy. It was the voices. For the last week Michelle had woken up every morning and gone to bed every night hearing whispers, voices, overlapping phrases and broken words and she didn’t know why. But oh how it made her head spin, these voices taking up every corner of her mind. It was the worst in lecture when the voices filled up every crevice of her mind and she felt like screaming out to silence these demons.

Finally now, at the very edge of campus, she was alone. Alone in the world, alone in her thoughts. Until one, single voice called out “This is your power. I can help you.” This voice was calm, reassuring, and clear. She couldn’t tell if it was a voice in her head or a voice in the darkness but she followed it. She knew maybe she shouldn’t but at her core she felt a magnetic pull that she just couldn’t ignore.

Three steps to the left, now four steps forward. It was closer. “I know what you hear.” Five steps to the right, stop. Only the sound of grass swaying in the breeze. As her eyes strained she saw in the distance a dark figure walking towards her. Her legs fought her to run away but confidently she stood her ground, awaiting this mysterious answer to her pain.

“You have acquired my great power,” said the ever-looming figure. “But I see you cannot control it yet.”

“What do-“ “What do I mean? What do I want from you?” Said the figure cutting her off, mimicking her exact thoughts.

“How did-“ “I read your mind?” The smiling face now appeared in the moonlight. She recognized this face, but perhaps in a far off dream.

“Because,” said the old woman standing directly across from her, “you are my child, and you can read minds too.”

Michelle backed way slowly, distraught yet relieved, confused yet enlightened. “I never thought I would have the chance to understand…so you’re saying that I can read the thoughts of others? Of anyone”

“Anyone’s mind is yours for the picking, that is, if you clear the channels out. Here, let me help you.” She grabbed Michelle’s right hand and lifted it to her own temple. “Take a deep breath in, and on its release, focus on me, on the space behind my eyes, you must really look past the outer shell and be a bystander to my thoughts. You cannot change them, but you may observe meditatively as one observes the words on a page.” Michelle did as she was told, harnessing her focus on the imaginative canvas of the woman’s mind. And like a solo harmony, she heard every word ring clear “See? Here I am thinking for you, and only you, in this practice. When the voices are too many, focus on your own blank space. You are the gatekeeper, you decides who comes in.”

As fast as she had run to this point she ran back home to hone in this newfound power. She started with her roommate making dinner. With a calm focus she