Anastasia couldn’t seem to get the voices out of her head. At first she thought of them as nothing more than the voice of her conscience, her subconscious thoughts beating at her time and time again, until she realized the voices she heard weren’t her own, but that of those around her. Her mind was all over the place, even more so than it was before all of this had happened.

She could hear every little bit of it, and if she concentrated enough, she knew she could hear the hundreds of voices of the minds of all the people walking around her. She heard the 8am nags of peoples’ subconscious, telling them all in an annoying sort of naggy tone that they should have gone to bed early and they could have missed class since it was only the second week of the quarter. She heard the judgmental voice of an angry girl who was almost run over on the bike path by a careless biker whose raspy voice laughed as he sped on by. She heard all the concerns students who had upcoming tests and midterms and piles and piles of responsibility that they knew were going to packed onto their schedule within the next week.

Anastasia heard it all. It wasn’t like tuning into a radio station and simply listening to the voices in her head and her own thoughts anymore. She was involuntarily tuning into hundreds of radio stations at once to listen to the thoughts of everyone around her. But the weird thing about her newfound power was that she heard them all so clearly—even though there was so much going on at once and so many thoughts rushing through her head, her mind was able to understand every single person’s innermost thoughts and concerns.

“Maybe this isn’t such a bad thing,” Anastasia said to herself, trying to make the best of a rather bizarre situation. “Maybe I’ll be able to use this to my advantage.”

That night, Anastasia came home from a long day of school extremely flustered. She realized that all the business and the thoughts in her head made it so that she wasn’t able to pay attention in class. She had no notes from lecture because she had such a difficult time focusing her attention on one thing. There were a million voices in her head now and it made it so that she couldn’t even focus on the most important one, which was her own.

Anastasia sighed a sigh of frustration and decided to simply go to bed, but soon realized that she would not be able to get a good night’s rest with the anxieties, burdens, the culmination of thoughts of everyone racing back and forth in her mind. It seemed as though her mind was never at rest. It was constantly running at what seemed like a hundred miles per hour. She felt as though she was trapped in a sea of thoughts and she didn’t know how to swim.

“I just want some peace of mind,” she sighed to herself as she wrapped her blanket around herself the next morning. Anastasia wasn’t able to get a blink of sleep. It seemed as though everyone’s thoughts were all over the place and she had no time for rest. Everyone’s anxieties and worries, all of their thoughts became HER thoughts, and she realized there was no escaping the prison she was confined in. Their lives became her life and she couldn’t help but to picture herself in everyone’s situations.