

Blind

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What it must feel like to be blind

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1 - Only Chapter

Short Story

I leaned back, my palms scraping the stone wall behind me. The planks beneath my feet were old but steady, not worn and splintered like the ones further down the valley, where we weren't supposed to go. The sun was shining. I could feel the baking rock beneath my fingertips and the warmth on my face.

I could hear nothing. The birds were too hot to hear. The lizards too hot to roll over, their scales scratching on the dirt and leaving ripples in the sandy roads beyond our house. I could hear mum though, humming to the radio as she washed up. Her slippers slapping the floor as she moved around and the occasional drip as a drop of water fell from her rubbery washing up gloves, onto the tiled floor.

I could see nothing. Not because there was nothing to see, like there was nothing to hear, but because I can't see. Not a thing. I have never seen my little brother. I know he's there. I can hear him now. Shuffling around on the floorboards and running his toy car over the cracks, the tiny, plastic wheels clicking as they bump along. But I have never seen his face.

I was born blind, but please, don't feel sorry for me. I don't actually know what shadows look like. I don't know the difference between black and blue, what green looks like, or what you're seeing when you look at me. I feel my way with my hands, hear things and taste things, but never see anything.

I scuffed my shoes in the dirt. The breeze ruffled my hair; air blew under my t-shirt to cool my skin. The toy car stopped clicking and I could sense my brother moving, stranding up. I could hear the click of his bones as he stretched and then his dusty footsteps as he ran off.

He came back later. I stayed in the same spot all afternoon. Leaning against the wall, my back to the rock, my head resting against the grainy stone. I stayed in the same position as the sun passed over, turning boiling heat to cooler shadow. Feeling the temperature change as I sat there, alone.

When he came back he wanted to play. He pressed a ball into my hand. I threw it, he caught it. He was only four; he didn't understand why I couldn't play. Why I let the ball fly past me. Why I couldn't catch or find the ball on my own. So he carried on patiently, throwing the ball and hoping I'd catch it just once. Just once so he could run inside and tell mum what new thing he'd taught me. But I couldn't do it. I stretched my arms out, tried to predict where he would fling it, but he had a clumsy 4-year-old's aim and his throws were wild and unexpected. I don't think even if I could see I would have caught them.

And suddenly my head exploded in pain. My world of darkness flashed and I sat down to control the spinning. I could hear him crying. Hear his guilty wail as he went to fetch mum. And I could feel my eyes fill up with tears of frustration. The burning anger that I could never play properly, that I'd always need help. The pain that I'd upset my brother, just because he had didn't understand and had tried too hard to

help.

I clenched my fist, so that my fingernails dug into my palm. Sat hunched in a ball, my eyes screwed up, salty tears dripping into my mouth, and cried because I couldn't see.