

## Useless

I heard them before I saw them. Actually, I never saw them. Because, just as I was about to turn around, they grabbed me and pushed a rag into my face, and I fell into darkness...

When I wake up, I am cold, hungry, and alone. I have no idea where I am or what time it is. I appear to be in a room, with a concrete floor, but it is too dark to be sure.

I cry and shiver; the only sound is my echo.

'Is this my end?' I whisper to myself, shaking with fear.

I stand up and rub my hands together to stay warm. I walk carefully around and feel for a door. I don't find a door, but I find what feels like a vent. I crouch in front of it and try to find a spot where I can wedge it open. There doesn't seem to be any weak points so I just strain on the bars as hard as I can. I keep on pulling but it's useless.

This is useless

useless and impossible

so many memories

people telling me

that I'm completely useless

all the time

making me believe it

and making me

become it.

I shake away the uneasy feeling from the cold memories and focus on saving myself from whatever may happen if I don't try.

'This is impossible,' I feel around the floor for anything that might help me get out. I find nothing.

I continue to pull on the vent; it is my only chance to escape. After relentless pulling, the vent begins to give way, begins to come loose. The endless tugging rewards me, it comes free.

I begin climbing through the vent. I bet all the people who ever doubted me don't even realise I am gone. That means no one has noticed.

Because no one

really cares

and anyway what

does it matter?

I was born like this

useless

and just in the way.

I shiver and try to push the dark thoughts away, but my mind is just a loop of memories, memories of people yelling at me, telling me off. Memories of having no one that cares.

This is what happens when you live between foster homes, moving from one uncaring family to the next.

I see a light ahead and I race towards it, but then stop, and think about what will happen when I come out.

Who will

believe me?

No one would even

think to look for

me

and finding someone who

cares for me

would be like

breathing underwater.

Impossible.

I ask myself who cares anyway? No one cares so why I should I care? I should learn just to cover up and not show how much it hurts. Maybe then I'll get through life.

I crawl towards the opening and squeeze myself out. I step into the bright daylight and brush myself off. I step onto a busy street, and I am not surprised to see that nobody is interested to know what I had been doing in a vent.

I walk down the street as if nothing at all has happened. I have my new face on, a mask that covers up how I am really feeling. All I need is to get home. Or more accurately, the house I sleep in, because a home is where you live with people that love you and want you there.

It takes me hours.

Hours of mindlessly walking around with no idea where I'm going. It is nearly sunset when I turn into a familiar street, I know my way from here. As I head to my house I decide to walk in as if I hadn't been gone. But as my house comes into view, I stop.

From here it looks like police cars are parked outside. I step towards them cautiously, wandering what happened.

'Hello there!' An officer calls out to me.

Another asks, 'Are you Miss Anastacia?'

'Yes.'

'Can you please come with us?' A female officer asks. Kindly.

I nod and follow them into the back of their car. My mask slips away, and all my emotions show on my face. I am scared. Have I done something terrible?

'Hello Anastacia, we are taking you to your new guardian, she is waiting at the police station for you.' Her name tag reads "Rebbeca Wills."

I groan internally and lean my head against the window, all of their words just sloshing around in my brain, not really registering.

We pull up to the station and I step out. I see a short woman standing there smiling at me. She runs to me and embraces me in a big bear hug.

I have never

felt anything like

this before

never been hugged

before

never felt love

before

and I suddenly want

all her love.

Words I can hear but can't at the same time sound like 'mother,' and 'biological parent.'

None of those words matter.

I have what I thought to be

impossible.