

Sophia Gould 9P

Shattered mirrors circulated around her abusing the smooth leather seats with their harsh reflections. Warm extracts dripped down from the crack in the side of her head, tinting the tears that rolled from her eyes. The cracks of her reflection were filled red with blood that was not hers. She remembered him slamming her fragile body into the window. Perhaps he should have stayed at home, sober. Or listened to the warning signs that they so carelessly ignored.

One second.

How could he have hurt her? Abusive relationships were not specified in his profile. But she could not recollect his hands on her, nor the contact of his knuckles whilst they pounded on her skull. If this was the end of them. Of her. Where was the white light that so many had recalled?

Two seconds.

Among the swirling rapids of mirrors and metal debris, she heard a subtle whistle. The innocent whimper of an animal, it's collapsed lungs unable to inhale. It lay half dead on the back seat beneath a bed of glass and blood. Could it have been hers? With its fur soaked in blood and disfigured tail. It's scared eyes hidden by closed lids. The sight was enough to make her choke and splutter. The warm extract which had dripped from her temple now poured from the corners of her mouth. Perhaps one day she would rest in peace along side the creature she had buried.

Three seconds.

But what savage incident had caused the creatures skull to shatter and heart to bleed? Had it been him during his intoxicated rage? Had the alcohol, that spread distinctively through his veins and caused his bloodshot eyes, inflicted this blind murder? Ribbons of mirrors concealed the animals corpse, like police tape around a crime scene.

Four seconds.

Moving her hand to touch the splinter that dug deep into her neck, she noticed another that pressed into her palm. Why were the mirrors hurting her? Had he instructed them to? She pinched the glass that sunk deeper into her flesh, convulsing her fingers which tensed at the pain she should have felt. Her frame was punctured with splinters that cut into her thighs and cracked rib cage, she pictured the scars they would promote and flinched. Her mother would not be happy if she walked down the aisle with suicidal-looking cuts trailing behind her dress.

Five seconds.

Her head rolled back unintentionally but she continued to feel it pound and imagined the sight of the blood that she knew was trickling down her collar bone. She stared lazily out of the window that had cracked on her skull and pictured a girl, who stood from the other side of the glass, hand pressed to the crack. The girl's appearance, which reflected through the

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fracture, was similar to hers; the same distinctive brown eyes and soft brunette curls written in the DNA they shared. But her light freckled cheeks were stained with tears, her small lips chapped and she was smaller in height, too innocent to be in mourning.

Six seconds.

On the outside of the window,

The young girl pressed her forehead to the glass, shoulders shuddering. Her lower lip trembled whilst she hysterically wept. She cried for the body that lay behind the curtain in front of her motionless. She hoped that the girl she had been so close to could not feel the pain from the splinters that cloaked her conscious corpse. She outstayed the patients visitors who grew restless from the sound of the monitor growing weak at every beat. She even out waited the flatline that signalled the end of the fight. The girl who sat beside her dead sister. Waiting even after the hand she held had grown cold.

Seven seconds.

From inside the indicator had stopped clicking as the battery started to fail, moments after the young girl disappeared. She had watched the weeping girl who stood outside the window. She waited for her tears to stop and her breathing to calm. She watched as the girl gave up on her and drew away from the glass. The clouded remains of her presence, hand printed onto the crack. But then it faded, as fog does, whilst she lay there imagining the girl with a face full of freckles and soft brown curls, who had once visited her...

Eight seconds.

He was in the medical room when she died. His head bandaged with stitches to match her hospital dress.

If only he had stayed at home, he thought. If only he hadn't of had a drink to calm his nerves. If only he had slowed down at the speed limit. But she was so excited. Done up in her gown of honour, her bridal bouquet resting on her lap. She was beautiful, he was so lucky. But by now he'd taken his eyes off the road for too long, just to look at her.

Nine seconds.

The last picture he had of her. Screaming at the fox that ran out in front of them. Gasping as he swerved off the road. Though conscious, he knew before the flatline that she was already dead.

A corpse bride.