Thoughts Matter

Inky blackness encroaches, chasing away the last dregs of a hot summer’s day. Streaks of pink and orange still mar the darkening horizon, lingering long, reluctant to leave. Tall grasses whisper against each other fondly, softly, like slow piano music flowing on the warm breeze. Their golden fingers reach up to sky, fading to grey, their colour consumed by shadow. Small stars of periwinkle and forget-me-not close their vibrant petals, saying goodnight to the waning moon.

I view this, from behind a translucent pane of glass. It is thick, and cold to the touch, an icy wall separating me from the beauty and calm of the night. I want to get out of here. I want to leave this room, this house, with its deafening noise and irrepressible tension. Light shines out from my window, pushing away the comforting tendrils of darkness. I want to climb out of my window and become part of the indigo world outside my bedroom, instead of staying here, listening to my thoughts and the angry, deranged shouts. I just want to get out of here.

Something ceramic shatters loudly in the lounge room. A viciously thrown insult, a mumbled angry word, that sends a shiver down my spine and another shard of glass through my failing heart. The curses rise in volume. An unnecessary retort, escalation. It's her fault. It's my fault. She’s just like her father. Maybe I am. She ruins everything.

Yes, I do.

I stare at the window's latch. It's white and small, and it has a smiley face drawn on it in black permanent marker. Maybe. But not tonight, because I'd probably get in heaps of trouble. And then they’d be shouting at my face, once again, just like every other night. I rise to my feet and walk to the door, feeling the soft rug between my bare toes. The rug is large and black, it covers a lot of the floor, concealing the dark, honey coloured wood beneath. The wood matches the door, which I open with numb hands. It swings away from me with a screech of rusty hinges.

I hear them arguing in raised tones, their words clear and echoing down the hallway. The voices distort, the words writhing and clawing inside my head. It’s my fault. There's a painting of a wilting rose opposite me, its petals red and white. The artist’s strokes are clumsy and rough, unblended and undefined. The rose is jagged-edged and harsh; where there should be beauty, there is only a kind of twisted sadness. I stare at its curling leaves, falling into the swirls of green, black, and bright, bloody crimson.

I'm losing myself in the weeping depths of my brain, it's a dark labyrinth that closes in on me, suffocatingly. I'm sinking to the depths of the deepest ocean, water filling my lungs, my struggling body begging for oxygen. My skin burns with an invisible fire, and I tear at my flesh, wanting to rip off my skin, wanting to escape myself. Red and purple marks appear on my arms and legs, trailing after my sharp fingernails. I'm silent, but my mind is full of one deafening, all-encompassing thought.

It's my fault.

Thoughts matter. Especially the bad ones. The ones that circle around in your brain, riddling you with self-doubt and pain. The ones that never let you go, that always hound you, telling you that it’s your fault, you made a mistake, you aren't worth it.

Miwa Clark

Year 9, Taroona High School