

AWAKE

BY ROSE SHEEHY (aged 11)

I awoke and saw my mother's concerned face before mine.

She asked if I felt ok, what I could remember. I tried to recall something, anything from that day, from my life, I didn't care. I wanted *something*. It was all a blur. Then something came. It was a shape. A man.

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The room smelt of pine and suddenly I was in a wood. It was a cold day, but warm enough that the sun was smiling at me like a baby playing peek-a-boo. I recognised this place. I saw a shadow in the distance before the world faded away.

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Someone was whistling in the corridor. I felt the soft breeze of the woods again and heard the wind blowing through the trees, although I could still make out the sound of a song. Where had I heard this before? I could not grasp why it felt familiar. I moved toward it and saw a figure. I just could not reach them.

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Trying to recall the soothing tune, I hummed what I had fathomed so far. Then I saw him. His face, charming smile, enchanting eyes. He made me feel warm and safe. But who was this man? He couldn't be the shadow, surely? Then again, who else could he be?

I awoke and saw my mother's concerned face before mine.

She told me to eat, that I must be famished. Honestly, I am not sure I was. Holding up a bun, she smiled and told me how brave I was being. I did not believe her at the time.

I do now.

I took the roll from her pale fingers. I could smell the yeast and took a bite. Not a big one, like when you have the first mouthful of lunch, the only food since breakfast. More like when you are recovering from a terrible cold and your body is just getting used to having to digest something.

It happened again, only this time I was in a house. There was a man. Why was I with him? More importantly, *who was he?* We were mixing, kneading and cooking something that smelled heavenly.

I awoke and saw my mother's concerned face before mine.

Deciding to ask her about my memory, I sat up with much difficulty. The words couldn't have come out faster. She was questioned about my father, where he was, why he wasn't here with me. She cast her eyes down. I could tell something was wrong in the way that she quickly asked if I had enjoyed the bread. I narrowed my eyes. She looked away. The doctor entered the room; Mum was obviously relieved.

I awoke and saw a police officer's concerned face before mine.

He waved a bit of fabric in front of me. I grabbed hold of it, rubbed it against my cheek and sniffed it.

I'm in the wood. In the distance, I hear voices. I edge closer and realise one is younger than the other. The young one is on the old one's back, giggling and grinning from ear to ear. He is running around with his arms out. It happens too fast for me to properly understand what is going on.

She starts to fall, almost in slow motion. He tries to catch her. She slips through his fingers. He looks down on her motionless body with anguish, realises what he has done and runs away. Now someone is calling my name, a woman, but they aren't talking to me. They're talking to the girl. Her eyes are closed. This is when it hit me.

That girl is me.

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