

Moving On

Eve's room was small with off-white walls and a single bed on which she sat playing with the tail of her cat, Vernon. Her stomach clenched as her eyes ran over the brown boxes which littered the room. Most of Eve's life was packed into them and soon the room would be entirely empty of her.

Vernon got up, stretched and walked slowly to the open window. Eve joined him. They stared together at the house across the road. It was an odd old place, grey against the blue sky, with boards in the windows and ivy climbing unhindered up the walls. Eve watched the green leaves recede back into the ground as the house grew ten years younger in her mind.

The garden was still a mess but there was glass in the windows and noise issued from the half open front door. Grey noise, but sometimes black noise. Screams and curses and classical music hovered in the air around the house like a heat wave, blurring its edges. Her best friend Daisy lived there with her parents.

The most memorable part of Daisy was her hair: it was long and blonde and everything Eve wished her short dark bowl-cut would be. Every day it was in a new style and everyday it glowed golden against Daisy's fair skin.

Most of their first days together blurred into one joyful moment of swings and teddy bears and wisps of blonde hair. But the black noise issuing from the house grew louder as time passed. It consumed the nights, blotting out starlight and keeping her awake.

Once, when she and Daisy were playing on the landing of the house Eve tripped over a doll and fell down the flight of wooden stairs. She had tried many times to recall the hours that followed but couldn't. All she could remember was grey hospital walls, unforgiving white lights and the beeping of a heart monitor for the boy in the opposite bed. He had been in a car crash. She remembered that.

The experience hadn't been all bad and time dulled the pain. Eve got everyone in her class to sign her cast with brightly coloured marker pens and Daisy's mum had felt so bad that she baked Eve a cake with the word 'sorry' written on the top in icing, Daisy and Eve ate the whole thing between the two of them, giggling the whole time.

During their days together nothing was ever said about the darkness which escaped nightly from the windows of the house across the street and Eve, after talking to her mum, decided the politest option was to not ask. Then one night it stopped. The stars came out and the only sound Eve could hear was Vernon purring quietly as he slept at the end of her bed.

But a few weeks later Daisy was ripped from Eve's side.

The day before they left Daisy and her mum held a big party in their house. Brown boxes lined the walls and the food was handed out on paper plates. Eve's mother had let her use makeup for the first time and she and Daisy spent an hour trying out the different shades.

Eve had a framed picture from that night. She looked at it when she was sad. The picture, held in a small wooden frame, was of Eve and Daisy clutching each other's hands with big

grins and matching blue eyeshadow plastered across their faces. They were small and happy.

But after that picture was taken things spiralled out of control. The pink paper cups from which the adults drank made them act differently, like they weren't in control. Then Daisy's mum had started shouting. She heard her own mother's voice, quiet but not calm, as the room turned grey around them. Eve hid behind Daisy's neatly brushed golden hair.

The darkness permeated the air, staining it, and Eve ran into another room where fairy lights hung from the ceiling. She stayed there for a long time watching them glow, letting the loud music from the speakers fill her ears and block everything else out. Eventually she felt a tight embrace around her left arm; her mother was dragging her from the house. Through the doorway into the kitchen Eve saw Daisy with her arms wrapped tightly around her mum. They looked up as she was pulled down the hall. The sight of Daisy's mum stopped Eve in her tracks. Tears ran down the red blotchy face and as their eyes met her composure crumbled and body shaking she buried her head in her daughter's fair hair. Daisy caught Eve's eye and smiled reassuringly but blue smears of makeup stained her face. It was the first time Eve had ever seen an adult cry and it broke her heart.

A few days later they left. She didn't remember the goodbyes but her memories of the following weeks were dull. When she was older Eve learnt that Daisy's dad had been kicked out. They couldn't afford the house on her mum's salary.

People visited the house for months and eventually someone bought it. Eve fell in love with one of her new neighbours and her first kiss was in Daisy's house. But it wasn't Daisy's house then because they had painted the walls white and put carpet on the stairs. Then about a year later that family left.

It wasn't anyone's house now. As Eve watched, ten years of ivy climbed the walls and the dull bricks started to crumble. Her nearly-adult eyes wondered at how tiny it was- the small memorial to her young life. Eve felt a pang of sadness grip her as she waved good bye to it from her open window.