

Mags Grabber

3/20/19

Address

Contact Info

Brown Eyes

I don't remember when my nightmares started, but I remember when one first came to life.

I was a happy enough kid with good parents and friends, no clear cause for the horrible dreams I experienced every night. Always the same dream- a girl my age, with dark brown hair and brown eyes. She would slowly walk toward me as I screamed and cried, my terror building the closer she got. Deep in my stomach I knew she would hurt me. I knew she would destroy me with one look from those eyes. I always awoke before she reached me, my heart pounding and tears running down my face.

The dreams I could somewhat handle- my parents thought they were regular childhood nightmares, my mother often coming into my room and patting my hair until I could fall asleep again. What I couldn't handle was the day I saw the girl while awake. I was in fifth grade, walking home from school. I grew up in a small city, my house a few blocks from school with some shops and restaurants in between. I was walking down the busy sidewalk when I saw her. That dark hair, skinny arms peeking out of a T-shirt that was too big. I knew it was her without seeing her face. I shrieked in terror and she turned a bit at the sound. I could see just a bit of her brown eyes, looking at me. I ran as fast as I could, bumping into worried grown ups and tripping on the sidewalk, finally getting to my front door and my living room, slamming the door. I sat

against it, my hard breathing slowly turning into sobs. I was still there when my parents came home from work.

My parents thought maybe I just had an overactive imagination. Perhaps an anxiety disorder. They took me to a therapist who said that I seemed fine, if a little nervous. But I was becoming withdrawn from my friends, failing in school. I kept thinking I could see the girl- in class, on the street- and the moments before I could realize it was some other person my heart would beat so fast I thought I could die.

Eventually, I was able to re-adjust somewhat. I still had the dreams but I stopped imagining she followed wherever I went. After a while I wondered if it had just been my imagination after all. My grades improved, I talked to people more, and I was doing alright again. When I was fifteen i even had a boyfriend- his name was David. I liked to sneak up on him ruffle his curly blonde hair and run away when he tried to get me back. The first time we held hands I couldn't stop smiling. I was with him the second time I saw her.

We were at the beach, a few weeks before sophomore year. I was finally, truly coming out of my shell again, enjoying the sunshine and salty air and feeling a little nervous about being in a swimsuit around a boy. David had left to get us popsicles, and I was sitting on a beach blanket. I heard the crunch of sand behind me and I turned around, expecting a rocket pop being held out to me, but instead a girl was leaning down, about to tap me on the shoulder. I glanced up at her brown eyes and immediately screamed. I covered my face and when I looked again, the girl was gone. David came back with two popsicles and found me curled up on the towel, breathing hard. I sobbed for him to call my parents, crying louder when he tried to calm me

down. He sat in the car with me as my father drove us home and didn't say anything- he never said a word to me again after that.

I was broken hearted but I understood- who would want to spend time with someone who could seemingly lose their mind at any moment? After what he saw I must have seemed insane. I kept to myself after that, cutting everyone out. I almost didn't graduate high school. I was ashamed of myself, and of how I'd let this problem ruin my life. I didn't see an escape to the constant nightmare and I didn't want to bring anyone else into it. It was a part of me now, a bad part that was slowly making me awful too. My parents were the only people I spoke more than a few words to, but I couldn't stand their worried faces. It only made me feel worse. Some time after I got my diploma I decided to move out into a crappy apartment, finding one in need of a roommate to help with rent, and got a job as a secretary. My plan was to disappear into a routine and seem just busy enough that nobody would bother me or worry about me, but between my persistent roommates and a few especially friendly coworkers I began to finally open up again. I've always kept the girl to myself, though. To be honest I wouldn't know where to begin.

I'm twenty three now. The dreams have continued- she walks to me, slowly. She's gotten older too, and she looks like she's about to say something but it always ends before she reaches me. I still always wake up crying. I've seen her a few more times while awake, too- I saw her a few months ago, through the window of a bank. My heart pounded and my stomach twisted at the sight of her dark hair, and though I wanted to run I slowed my footsteps for a moment as I passed, about ten feet apart and separated only by glass. She glanced at me, smiled a small smile, and looked away. I hurried away. But something was different- for the first time, seeing her face hadn't made me afraid. I called my mom for the first time in a long time that night. I told her that

I was sorry and that I'm trying to be happy now. She said she loved me and would no matter what. It felt good to hear.

I have a feeling I'll see the girl today. I'm not sure why but I've felt that knot in my stomach all week. Today I'm getting groceries- I'm walking down the sidewalk and it's just a little cloudy, and my heavy shoes make pleasant *clunks* on the cement. I'm thinking about whether to pick up orange juice- and I see her.

She's at the corner outside a Starbucks , petting some girl's dog. She smiles as they walk off and then she looks at me. She stands and leans against the brick wall, face neutral, as my feet seem to move themselves towards her. I feel my heart beating harder and harder, my stomach like a cat's cradle. My chest feels like it'll burst. I've reached her, and I step a little closer. Our noses are almost touching.

I'm looking into her soft brown eyes and I think- for my whole life, I thought that these eyes would kill me. But as she huffs out a little laugh, leans in, and kisses me, I've never felt more alive.