Bridge

I walked across the bridge, just a girl on a bridge. There was nothing weird about that.

I looked around me, the area was empty, there were no cars around and nobody was standing or walking in the area. I walked over to the edge of the bridge and clutched my hand onto the railing.

I felt the cold chill of the metal on my hand, it was freezing but it was all I had felt for a very long time.

I looked down at the still water below me and my brain did the strangest thing. “Maybe you should jump.”

What the hell was my brain doing? Did it want me to die?

No that wasn’t it, it was a curiosity thing, it wanted to know how falling would feel it wanted to feel the impact of the cold water rising up through my body and easing my joints.

I wanted to know if the cold would kill me or if it would make me feel amazing, whether it would be euphoric or catastrophic.

I tried to snap myself out of it, I shouldn’t have been thinking this, I had a good life, people who loved me I shouldn’t have been taking such an obviously stupid and catastrophic risk.

What would my parents think if I did such a thing? How would my friends react?

I couldn’t die that day; I couldn’t die for a long time. I needed to finish my novel, I needed to fulfil my lifelong dream of winning the Nobel Prize in literature.

But still my brain kept telling me, that I had nothing to lose if I did it, that everything would be fine, the current wasn’t strong, I could easily swim back to the shore.

But then I would have gotten wet and I would have been cold, maybe it would have been better if I had stayed down.

It wasn’t like my life was perfect in fact parts of it were pretty crap, I’m divorced from the man of my dreams and I’m not exactly JK Rowling, only about two hundred copies of my first book have been sold in the past three months.

I’m barely making enough money to get by and I needed to get a stable job in order to pay the bills but the only places that would hire me needed me to dress up in things I wasn’t comfortable wearing. I couldn’t stomach living with my parents again, the humiliation would be debilitating.

I looked at the water again, it was so still, so inviting and I knew that I needed to get away from the bridge, I walked away from the area and towards my destination.

I was going to a party to celebrate my friend’s graduation, he’d just qualified as a doctor.

I spent a few hours at the party bored out of my mind, I didn’t really know anybody there except for him, and they were all doctors.

My parents would have encouraged me to connect with them to schmooze with the nice doctors and land myself a husband that was rich and handsome.

But I was not in the mood to do any of that, I just wanted to sit in silence and try to calm down.

My mind was racing for an answer to tell me why I wasn’t enjoying myself. But the answer was always the same, the water was what I wanted and needed. It was calling to me even through the confines of the house, nothing else seemed to be able to draw me away.

People tried to talk to me: I ignored them. People invited me to dance: I shook my head.

People offered me drinks: I accepted (in moderation)

I left the house and looked walked back home, I tried my best to avoid the bridge, but I couldn’t; all of the other routes were blocked off, due to roadworks and as much as I didn’t want to cross the bridge, I didn’t want to cross a busy road more.

When I was 100 metres from the bridge I just stopped and stared at it, the area was still deserted, but that wasn’t why I was staring.

I was staring because this bridge had become my personal gate between good and bad. It was the one thing protecting me from the drop, the one barrier between myself and drowning.

I slowly and cautiously trudged towards it, while clutching my chest, my heart was beating rapidly. It felt as if it was trying to escape my chest and dash away from the bridge.

I didn’t blame it, I wanted to run too, but I couldn’t. If I did that I would have to sleep on the street and it was freezing that night.

So I kept moving towards it until finally, I was close enough to feel the cold steel of the railing again.

In that moment I lost control of my body and I was moving my body upwards and hoisting myself on to the top of the railing using the side of the bridge as a support.

I looked down, the bridge was a lot higher up than I had first thought I wanted to get down but my body wouldn’t let me.

“Please let me down!” I pleaded but no words left my mouth, the words were just in my mind.

My body leaned forward. “No, No, NO!”

Then it happened, I fell into the cold and murky depths of the water.

I hit the water with a splash and struggled to get back up but my body wouldn’t let me, it couldn’t resist the freezing chill of the water, in fact, it found it inviting; then everything went dark.

I woke up on the bank by the river and looked around disoriented. Lying next to me was a man, he was panting softly and said to nobody in particular. “That wasn’t very fun.”

I stood up and smiled at the man, “thank you, for saving me.” I was still shaky so it might have not come out but he replied. “You’re welcome.” “What the hell were you doing in there anyway?”

“I fell off the bridge,” I lied.

“How?”

“I don’t know I think my body just stopped working.”

He sighed. “OK, as long as you’re safe that’s the main thing.”

“I am,” I replied. But I didn’t really know if that statement was true or not.

He turned to me and introduced himself.

I wasn’t really listening so I didn’t hear his name, I just nodded in appreciation and walked towards my home.

I might have seemed ungrateful but I didn’t care, I just wanted to get away from the bridge.

I could still hear the water, calling me to the deep, calling me to my salvation.