

Speechless

We like the silence.

People cannot fathom our relationship. Jeremy and I have not changed. Yes, daily life is certainly altered, but we married one month ago in that hazy, white-washed, stony chapel for better, or for the worse we are most certainly experiencing now.

Lily is my world. We met on that glorious, sunny day one year ago, after she stepped off that Broadway stage from the Phantom performance. Her melodious voice still ringing through my ears, I, the young, up and coming prop designer from Brighton, nervously approached her. "Hi...um...hello, I'm..." she smiled with radiant beauty, "Jeremy isn't it?" she replied in her soft and gentle manner. She knew my name. That was the thing about Lily, she really took the time with people, she genuinely cared and got to know even those least important around her. There was a moment of silent calm, she gazed into my transfixed eyes with her own deep dazzling blue. Without saying a word she picked up a corner of crumpled paper, scratched down those numbers and simply handed it to me. She wandered away and I stood dumbfounded at the events which had just occurred.

The rain tumbled out of the dull, grey sky on that horrific day when we were confronted with the awful burden of bad news. I had just opened as Jenna the month before in Waitress, belting out the words to "She Used to Be Mine" to the busy, buzzing crowd of theatre fans on that golden stage. Jeremy couldn't even look at me, I watched his eyes prick with tears but he withheld them for my sake. I didn't want him to repress his emotions for me, to be the 'man'. This was *our* battle, not a single soldier war.

I married a singer. A sparkling, playful performer. But the fresnels always fade at the end of the show. The glaring, obtrusive, unforgiving lights of the cold grey hospital. A final "I love you." and I gently brushed away the briny teardrop running down her mild, glowing face. Her hand fell out of mine as she was wheeled away to be prepared for surgery. I was left alone amongst the crowds in the waiting room all eagerly anticipating their loved ones' names to be called. I dreaded Lily's return. I stormed to the bathroom - I couldn't take this, the waiting game. I roared at the top of my lungs, then a pang of guilt rushed over me. How could I be so selfish, so self-pitying, wasting the gift I had, it was her loss after all.

I awoke to agony. I don't think I have ever felt any other experience quite so soul-crushingly unbearable. My eyes wandered around the sterile, dreich, pasty blue hospital cubicle. Eventually they met with Jeremy's comforting gaze, the love which burned in my heart for him was the only thing which could warm me in these cold, dark, depressing days.

I clasped Lily's hand in mine. It was our first outing since the surgery. The Christmas city lights sparkled and gleamed, streets full of red, gold and green. Little children skipped around, their screams and laughs so incredibly loud in comparison to our noiseless home. I felt her grasp tighten and I could sense the sting in her heart as we wandered past the theatre, that held captive the joy once felt by Lily.

I never told anyone, even Jeremy, but my Saturday night was always spent at the theatre. One single ticket, seat L43, hidden away from the world. I would observe the performance with great pain. My heart ached in the deepest parts of my chest feeling the vibrato of the singers shake my whole body in a sore desire for one last song. I don't know why I continued to put myself through this mental torture on a weekly basis. I just longed for the expression that could only be found vocally, more specifically in musical theatre. The character always used song to simply explain to the audience their deepest thoughts, feelings and desires. I felt robbed of basic self expression, letters could never equate to the dynamic liveliness of music.

After weeks and weeks of trying to constantly fill what I saw as awkward silence, I surrendered to the quietude. Lily had her paper and pen, nothing could replace that sweet voice. She was intrinsically altered, her smile lost and a bittersweet sadness ever present in her sorrowful eyes.

We would go out and Jeremy would act as my interpreter. Bless him, he never really got it right. His heart was in the right place though, his intentions pure. It's just...well, how much do you really deeply know a person after thirteen months? There were things I had always intended to tell him but I never got that opportunity. The little things, the childhood secrets and the funny stories. The deep problems I faced growing up, the constant pressure I felt. Jeremy didn't really know who I was and he had no way of discovering that. The sole body part I needed for my livelihood, my career, my happiness, had been sliced and torn out of my body. There was a gaping hole in my neck and one in my sense of self as my voice was the victim of abduction.

We hate the silence.

It drove us both mad. But who would be the one to say it? Not me obviously.

She looks so downhearted all the time, there's a despair I can never fully empathise with.

He looks so confused all the time, like he's trying to analyse me like a piece of literature. I'm still me. I'm still human. It is infuriating.

She seems enraged and hot tempered, but how can I tell without the words, the expression of emotion?

I have married a man who does not understand me on a fundamentally emotional level.

We are stuck, glued together, in a mismatched, broken place. There's no escaping when you can't say, "We need fixing."