

The Ghost

I had always been clumsy.

Running into walls was a daily occurrence.

Thursday morning, it happened again. But nothing happened to me this time.

I phased through.

It took three days for them to pronounce dead. But little did they know I was right there. Standing behind them, listening to their frantic conversations. They just couldn't see me.

I tried everything to let them know that I was still there. But every time they walked right through me, I lost a little more hope. Until there was no hope left. And there was nothing else to do except accept it.

I had become a ghost.

I was prepared to see the heartbreak from my friends and family. Yet when the officers delivered the news, it was me who ended up heartbroken.

My family grieved for two days.

My friends seemed like my disappearance didn't affect them in the slightest.

I sat on the roof of our house in the pouring rain, staring into the street below me. It was grey and lifeless. Tears streamed down my face, getting lost among the raindrops.

Did no one ever love me?

I roamed the school hallways, watching the chaos of student life. People screaming at each other across the corridor making plans for the afternoon, shoes shuffling on the floor, door opening with screeches. All the noise brought a strange sense of peace.

I had gotten used to not having a solid body. Standing in the middle of a crowded hallway, almost everyone passed through me. Most of them I ignored.

Until her.

I knew her, though I never considered her my friend, more like an acquaintance. Her name was Maya. She was older than me. We had crossed paths before, mainly through music.

Maya walked a bit further, stopping in front of my photo pinned on the wall. A few moments later, a boy joined her. It was Aiden – my best friend and the boy I had a crush on since seventh grade.

They started talking. I moved closer, trying to hear something over the hallway noise.

“Why does no one miss her?” Maya asked.

“I do,” Aiden whispered softly.

“Me too,” Maya admitted, her eyes suddenly sparkling. “I wish I would have got to know her better.”

“I can tell you all about her if you want,” Aiden suggested, not taking his eyes off my photo. “That way you’ll get to know her even though she is...” his voice broke. He coughed. “Not here anymore.” Maya nodded. They parted ways without another word.

Two people. Out of all the people I ever talked to, two of them missed me. But in that moment, in the crowded hallway with a heart filled with joy, two was more than enough.

I decided to stick to Aiden for the day. And since he was my classmate, I knew his schedule like the back of my hand.

I made my way to the History classroom. That’s where we, for some reason, had math.

The bell rang just as Aiden dragged himself through the door. He sat down at his usual spot by the window, next to Danny.

Mrs. J was my favorite teacher. Just as usual, she came three minutes late. It was always three minutes.

I sat down where I used to sit, completing the work in my head. I had loved numbers since I was little. And when we were assigned Mrs. J, my enthusiasm grew even more. She was the perfect teacher. Never made fun of us for the wrong answer, never made us feel small, which we all respected her for. She was energetic and cracked jokes left and right. But that day, as I sat there, everything about her was off. Her eyes had a blank expression, smile vanished. Although she tried to hide it, something was clearly wrong.

The bell rang.

I headed for the door right behind Aiden, mentally preparing for the next class, which I hated, when I suddenly walked right through him. I turned around, confused as to why he had stopped. That’s when I discovered Mrs. J waved him over.

“Aiden, just a word?” she called out.

“You wanted to talk about the assignment? I know I messed it up, I’m sorry- “

“No, Aiden. Your assignment was terrible,” she smiled, but it didn’t reach her eyes. “But that was not meant to be the point of this conversation.”

Mrs. J cleared her throat.

"You see... If you ever need to talk, I am here for you. I know you and Lee were close," she whispered, looking Aiden in the eyes.

Aiden's expression shifted.

"Unfortunately talking won't bring her back," he replied, his voice empty. "But thanks," he nodded in appreciation and turned around. One foot out the door, when Mrs. J's voice reached him again. "I miss her too."

My parents never took my room apart after I was pronounced dead. I secretly hoped it was because they still didn't believe it. But I knew I was wrong. They were just lazy. But if I was meant to be forgotten, I decided to at least make something out of it. So, I continued living there.

I went to school the next day. Not to learn, but to observe my subjects. Maya, Aiden and Mrs. J.

At the end of the day, I came to the conclusion that Maya will be the best one to set my plan in motion on.

Wednesday morning, Maya made a stop in front of my photo on the wall. There was a commotion in the hallway, all eyes locked onto the place of the supposed fight. And that was the moment I picked to deliver my message.

The day before I had written a short paragraph on a piece of paper.

Dear Maya,

I am sorry for not doing this sooner and causing you pain. Nevertheless, I have something to tell you. Please, meet me at the furthest corner of the library, the one where no one ever goes, at four. I will explain everything there.

PS: come alone.

I folded the note and dropped it. Maya picked it up with a confused look on her face. She read it, frowned and tucked the paper into her pocket.

I waited and waited. At three thirty, I made my way to the library and waited some more.

For a moment I was scared she wouldn't show up.

She did.

My heart started beating like crazy. I knew full well the chances of her believing me were slim, if not zero. But I had nothing to lose.

Maya sat on the bench, eyeing the small whiteboard in front of her with suspicion.

I took a deep breath and picked up the pencil. Maya opened her mouth in shock.

I hurriedly scribbled something down.

Please, don't scream.

“What the hell!?” Maya murmured.

I rewrote the message on the whiteboard.

I am sorry for scaring you, but there was no other way to contact you. Also, I can hear everything you say, so just answer me out loud.

“Well, you can’t blame me for being scared,” Maya shrugged. “It’s not every day that a marker starts to write on its own. And what do you mean by no other way to contact me?”

I promise I’ll explain everything.

“You better do so. But now let’s get to it. What’s the purpose of this?”

I looked at her. She seemed almost bored. It threw me off. That was not the reaction I expected.

Did I choose the right person for this? I tried not to think about it.

Focus, Lee.

Lee Williams is not dead.

Maya stood up. “Okay now that’s enough. Does it seem funny to you motherfuckers, playing with people’s feelings like this? Do you seriously have no common sense? This TikTok content is seriously getting messed up. Where is the camera?” she demanded to know, speaking loudly. Almost every head at the library turned to her. The lady behind the counter glared. I bit my lip. So that’s why she was acting so strangely. She thought it was a prank.

There is no camera or other recording device. This is not for TikTok.

“Yeah, sure. Like I am gonna believe this shit,” Maya snorted. “I am outta here.”

I panicked. I couldn’t allow her to leave. I scrambled for a way to stop her. In my manic state I grabbed a chair and practically threw it onto her path. Maya went white.

I shoved the whiteboard in her face.

Please don't leave, I need to talk to you.

Maya swallowed, eyes darting. After a solid minute, she slowly moved back, sitting down in her previous seat.

"You have my attention," she whispered,
I smiled and began writing.

Lee Williams is not dead. And I know that because I AM Lee Williams. I turned into a ghost. It has been six days. Yes, I know this sounds absolutely insane, but please, Maya, you have to believe me.

"Prove that you're Lee," Maya answered, eyes fixed onto the whiteboard, slightly shaking.

Once, you asked me for an opinion and told me you like opinionated people, to which I replied my opinions are the same as the people who I am talking to.

Maya covered her mouth, her eyes watering. "Oh my God."

She sat there absolutely stunned for almost ten minutes.

"So, this is the only way you can communicate?" she finally asked.

Yes.

"How did this happen?"

I have no idea. One day I just walked right through a wall and since then it's been like this.

"This doesn't make any damn sense."

You're telling me.

I chuckled.

"I missed you, you know," Maya smiled sadly.

I know.

"Oh, aren't you confident," she snickered.

I mean, I have been listening to your conversations.

Maya exhaled sharply, almost looking offended. "You eavesdropper!"

That's me. Sorry!

"Apology accepted," Maya smiled. Then she frowned. "You have to tell Aiden. He has not been doing good these past weeks."

Of course. Bring him tomorrow at four exactly here. I'll be waiting.

"Got it." A pause. "So, bye for now I guess?"

Meet you tomorrow.

After the library closed, I went straight home. Quite literally, since I didn't have to dodge anything.

I paced around my room like a lion in a cage, with every passing minute getting more and more anxious. How will Aiden react to the announcement?

I couldn't sleep. I turned so much I toppled down from the bed. Finally, at four a.m., I fell asleep.

Morning came, then lunch. It turned three p.m. in a heartbeat. At that point I was so anxious I could not stand still.

When three thirty rolled around, I made my way to the library, just like I had done the day before.

The wait felt insanely long.

Maya and Aiden came exactly at four.

Both sat down on the empty bench. I put the whiteboard on the other one so they wouldn't sit on me.

Aiden looked really confused.

“Why exactly are we here?” he asked Maya, seemingly thinking that she had lost her mind.

“You’ll see,” she replied. Then she nodded. A signal for me to start. I picked up the marker. Aiden exhaled in shock, his eyes almost popping out of his head.

Hello Aiden.

“What the fuck?” he jumped up, tripping over the table leg.

“Sorry. I should have warned you. But I wanted to see your reaction,” Maya shrugged.

“Are you kidding me? So, you had asked me to go to the library to see my reaction to a self-lifting marker?”

“Oh, no,” Maya shook her head in a way that cracked me up. “She wanted you to come. I’m just the owl,” she lifted her hands in defense.

Sorry for scaring you. Your reaction was really funny though.

“What?” Aiden stared at the whiteboard, then at Maya, probably wondering if he should call an ambulance in case he had hit his head.

I chuckled and began writing.

This is Lee Williams. I am not dead.

Silence.

Aiden shifted uncomfortably. “Maya, this is not funny.”

“It’s not meant to be,” Maya assured him. “I know how it looks, but I swear, this is not me messing with you.”

She paused. “I would never joke about something like this,” she added gently.

“So, this is actually real?” Aiden asked hesitantly.

How would we even stage this, Aiden?

“Good point...Lee,” his voice slightly cracked on my name.

I knew you would believe.

I had gotten used to plot twists in my life. But nothing could have prepared me for what happened the next day.

After convincing Aiden my communication whiteboard was not a sick prank and going through the same conversation as I'd had with Maya, we made plans to meet up again the very next day.

Both my friends arrived exactly at four as scheduled. I noticed Maya's distress right away. She looked awful. Dark circles under her eyes, face whiter than the wall next to us.

Maya, are you okay? You don't seem so good.

Maya looked at the ground. Something about the way she had moved sent chills down my spine. "Haven't you seen the news?" she asked, lifting her head back up.

No, why? What's going on?

I replied, getting more worried by the second.

She didn't answer, just showed me a video. A clip from yesterday's evening news.

The death of fifteen-year-old Lee Williams, who has been missing for six days now, has just been confirmed. Her body was found less than two kilometers behind her hometown. The police say she was likely kidnapped and strangled a few hours after. Her body has been moved to the local morgue.

Dead silence.

Maya's eyes were filled with tears. So were Aiden's.

"We were wrong, Lee. You haven't turned into a ghost randomly. You did because you died."

I had died.

I was destined to stay invisible for the rest of my life. For the rest of the universe.

Maya was now crying.

"Are you still there?" Aiden asked.

Yeah. But I am leaving.

“Where are you going?”

To the morgue.

I phased through the door. The air inside was stale, filled with unease. My feet made no sound on the cold floor. The silence was deafening. I swallowed hard, trying to resist the urge to run back out.

In the wall on my left were a dozen capsules, all labeled by name and a date. I slowly moved along the terrifying wall, shivering.

My eyes stopped on every label, scanning the information. The one I was searching for was at the very end.

LEE WILLIAMS, FEBRUARY 11th

I reached for the handle. A loud thud echoed through the place. Freezing air spilled out of the capsule. A metal board slid out. And there lied my body.

I screamed in horror.

They had closed the eyes, which would look like sleep, if it weren't for the horrifying appearance.

“Oh my God,” I whispered, frozen in shock.

The body was somehow deformed with abnormally stretched, grey skin. The hair was matted and covered in mud, completely missing in some places. A wound ran along the hairline. The whole forehead was covered in blood that had already turned black. Once full, pink cheeks were sunken and blue.

My attention shifted to the neck.

I almost threw up.

The neck was disfigured and covered in small wounds, oozing clear, thick liquid. The skin was mostly yellow with a stripe of blue and green and black.

I turned around and closed my eyes, but the horrifying image was etched into my vision forever.

A second passed.

A weird, nagging feeling washed over me. I turned back, facing the disgusting body that had once belonged to me.

The urge grew stronger. Something in me wanted to touch the corpse. I had no intention of doing that.

However, the more I tried to resist, the urgent it became.

I caved.

I gently placed my left hand on the chest, where the heart should be beating.

A radiating blue light blinded me.

Everything went black.

I shot up, inhaling sharply.

My heart was beating fast against my chest.

I breathed rapidly, pain following after every breath.

Confusion clouded my mind.

I slowly lifted my arm, eyes pinned to the ceiling. My hand reached my neck, gently patting it.

The realization hit me like a freight train.

Human skin. Under my fingers.

I looked down.

Scream echoed through the morgue. I was looking at a human body. A body that was supposed to be dead.

I jumped from the metal board, my feet slapping onto the bare concrete, my legs somehow surviving the impact.

The door flew open, three men standing there. I hurriedly grabbed a white cloth laying nearby, covering my naked body.

They men stared, not knowing what to do. One of them fainted, the other ran away, screaming about a zombie. And the third one just stared at me blankly.

Because Lee Williams was very much alive.