

Most times when I wake up, I wish I didn't. If I do something wrong, afterwards I think of a crazy way to change it. Every night I think the same thing; tomorrow will be different. I'll make sure of it. But it never is. Why? I'm afraid. It's that simple. When I was in 5th grade, everything just fell apart on me. Long story short, everyone just grew up while I was enjoying being a kid. I never felt so out of place. Sometimes I still feel that way. It's similar here but I have less to worry about. Fact is, I want to show people how I feel, but the problem is the people themselves. They've got no sensitivity, no depth. Sometimes I get the feeling that I'm the only one like this. That no one sees things the way I do.

I see the world through music. Others see music as a way to waste time; I see it as a way of life. Lyrics always come easy to me once I know what to write about, but I never know if anyone will want to hear it.

This morning as I looked out the window, I could see a pretty clear outline of the day coming at me.

"Alright," I said to myself, "after school I'll get my work done first so I'll have more time to work on the song today and tomorrow during rehearsal.

"Talking to yourself already?" my brother says sticking his head through the open door.

"Shut up and get out of my room." I've got to get better comebacks.

"I'm not IN your room!"

"Just go you goof!" I REALLY, need better comebacks. Aw whatever.

Anyways, I never really look forward to school. It's not like everyone hates me, but I'm not totally loved. Might be for the best, I thought as our car pulled up to the building. I mean seriously, I plan what I want to do in 5 years, while my friends at school plan what they want to do before dinner. Literally.

As I walk into the building, I'm beginning to feel like I'm in a rut. I mean really, it's the SAME THING. You walk in the building, go to your locker, put your stuff away, go to class, listen to people talk, (and not just the teacher). Oh, and after that? Repeat. And repeat. And repeat. Was that clear enough? Sorry, I'm really bored.

“Hey!” I turn to see my friend Angie, running up to me with her usual ‘I’m-happy-because-everyone-expects-me-to-be-so-don’t-question-it grin glued to her face.

“Hey, what’s up?” I say. That being my usual response, but I can tell she’s going to ask me something.

“I was hoping you’d like to come shopping with me and the others?”

“Yeah sure when?”

“Tomorrow.”

“Oh uh. Sorry I can’t. I have plans.”

“Aw really.” Her glued-on smile turns into a very pathetic, very over-dramatic frown.

“What is it? A family thing?”

“No.”

“Well then what is it?” Ladies and gentlemen the girl of many annoying questions!

“You wouldn’t understand.”

“Is that your answer for everything?”

“Maybe,” I say simply. The real answer is yes, but no way was I going to give her the satisfaction. As I walked off, I couldn’t help but think how oblivious Angie is these days. Every time she asks me if I want to hang out, it’s always on a Wednesday and that’s the day I’m not available. My friends are all about their social lives and I’m all about music. And no matter how many times I try to tell them, they never hear a word. It doesn’t bother me though. Sometimes, you just need to see it to believe it.

“Hey, you made it.”

“Name one time I haven’t.” Dean Kephart greets me as I walk in the TMO, or Teen Music Organization. And yes, this is the reason I said no to Angie.

“The other’s here yet?” I couldn’t help but ask. “Oh yeah they’re in the studio.”

“Hey you get that song done?” June Westfield pipes up when I walk in. Unlike my friends at school who talk about dyeing their hair and plan every one of their conversations, June does dye her hair jet-black and could care less about what people say to her. She told me people at her school make fun of her for being Goth, but when she’s

on stage with that neon green electric guitar, it proves she's got more heart than all those people put together.

"Almost, I still need a bridge. And chorus."

"Just throw something together, it'll be fine." That's Dean's answer for everything.

"Dude, I can't do that."

"Why not? It'll save time."

"Well it won't work this time. I've got a really good feeling about this one. So don't mess with it!" I glare at June, who was digging into my bag for my songbook.

"So I'm guessing finishing it for you is out of the question?" I turn to see the last two band members: Amber Rachel and Willow Jennings. Amber being the very girly and efficient one. Like my friends at school only smarter and much less dramatic. Keyboard master and knows the musical history. Will, on the other hand, is very laidback and sporty. The drumming master, who slacks off and yet, always gets her work done.

"Yeah kind of," I said simply. "Or at least with lyrics anyways. As far as the music goes I am totally lost!"

"Alright then, we have a project!" Dean announces to the whole room, of five people.

"Okay? Well let's just hear what you have so far, and then work from there," Will says confidently.

"Alright" I say as we begin to set up. I glance over at Dean. The only boy in a group of five, and not once has he complained about too much drama or being bored with us. Blond, bold, and goofy, the kid could play bass guitar all day without care in the world.

"Okay," Amber begins, looking at me, "you start with what you have and we'll add on."

"Gotcha," I say before plugging in my electric and begin:

“While you wait for a miracle, just like all the rest. You think it’ll make everything better, to create a mess. You tell me it’s okay, to live like a ghost. Totally hidden from the world, at the very most.”

Will starts a crazy fast beat, exactly like the one I have in my head. Amber begins with a techno-like melody that seems to click, but she’s still trying to catch on. The song’s pretty fast, and very different from previous ones. I continue:

“Years from today, you will ask yourself. ‘Why on earth did I try, to be like everyone else’. Right now! I’m telling you, to stop and look around. Why? ‘Cause if you don’t soon, you’ll see you’ve fallen do-o-own.”

Two hours later:

“That was awesome!” June screams for about the ninth time in the past ten minutes.

“Dude, you were right. That was so much better than throwing random words together!” Dean exclaims. For the record, this isn’t the first time he’s been proven wrong.

“You’re right Dean. In fact, it was so good that I think you kids are ready.” I turn to see Carlos Brand, owner of the TMO and mentor for all the students in this program. He’s actually only one of the people behind this project.

“Ready for what?” Amber asks in her curious child-like voice. Carlos continues, “To have your own show.”

After a long series of: “What?” “Are you serious?” and, “Don’t trip me man!” we were able to calm down enough to respond.

“Carlos, are you crazy?” I burst out. “If you think I’ll be able to take a whole two hour show, you’ve got another thing coming man!” “You’ve performed before.” Carlos said looking at me like I was a crazy person. “Well yeah, but that was like a twenty minute show and other people performed before us.”

“Okay, I’m going to stop you right there,” Carlos said stopping me mid-rant,

“Guys I know this is a big thing to ask of you, but look, you’re one of our best groups, and I think an individual performance would be good practice for you.”

“Do you really think we’re ready for this dude?” Will said ecstatically, “Because if we are, Amber is in charge of wardrobe.”

“I did not agree to that!” Amber began to argue, but Dean cut her off.

“I’m in.” You could tell he was already pumped up.

“Me too.” Said June while giving him a high-five and grinning

“Four to five,” said Carlos. “You in or not?”

I look around at the group. Dean and Will looked like they were ready to do back-flips off the walls. Amber was on her way to doing her happy dance. And June, looked ready to scream. (For what reason, I’m not sure. She just really likes screaming.)

“Okay, I’ll do it.” The second I said that the others cheered and screamed enough to set off a car alarm.

“Could you be any louder? I don’t think China could hear you.”

“Aw, lighten up girl. It’ll be fun.” June says punching me in arm. “What’s the worst that could happen?” I can think of many things right now.

The following day, all I could think about in class was the concert. Carlos had booked it for next Saturday, so we had a week and two days to rehearse. Angie and Stacey didn’t even notice when I wasn’t listening. They occasionally caught me spacing out and would poke me so I wouldn’t miss the end of the story were Stacey left her purse at the exotic ski lodge and had to drive all the way back to go get it and, adding two extra days to their vacation

“Why didn’t you want to come shopping with us?” Angie asks me for the twelfth time since lunch started. Oh my god. Do you ever stop talking?

“For the last time, I never said I didn’t want to! I said I couldn’t. I had plans. Gosh!”

“Why would you make other plans?”

“I can think of several reasons why I’d make other plans! I’m never available on Wednesdays! Sheesh!” I grabbed my things and left the table.

“Where are you going?”

“I’m going!” I knew better than to tell them anything. They don’t even care. The most they can do is replace me. And I’m totally okay with that.

“Is this a studio or a sauna because you look steamed?”

“Dean, you really need new comments!”

I couldn't help it. I was still worn out from what happened at lunch. Long story short, I ended up eating my lunch in the bathroom. Strange, but it's true. The other three were already there, so naturally, they heard that.

“Whoa, girl. What's up with you?” June started off.

“Nothing. What? Nothing. Why?”

“Probably because you're having a meltdown.” Amber pipes up. They were going to be relentless, I could already tell.

“Guys, I really, don't want to talk about it, okay!”

“Talk woman, you know full well this is going to keep going until you do.” Will has a good point, I thought. They were different. They'd understand. I told them everything. About my school, my friends, and me. Now that they knew, I almost felt better, considering they knew, I'd be an easier person to understand.

“. And you blew up at Carlos,” “Because I'm afraid of what people think of me.” I said finishing Dean's sentence. “It's not that I don't want to do the show, I'm just afraid I'll do a bad job. You guys were all excited, I couldn't say no.”

“Dude, you think you're the only one who's nervous? I haven't slept in four days!” That is a typical June Westfield outburst.

“Carlos told us about the show yesterday.” Dean cut in

“Yeah, what's your point?” I'm not even going to try to respond to that.

“My point is; girl you're not the only one with issues like that. I don't even have friends at my school. Apparently 'emo' was in style in the year two thousand and never.” June said imitating spoiled kid. “Everyone thinks that because I look different I'm a brainless violent freak”

“Join the club sister, Will and I can't even look at each other at school.” Amber blurts suddenly. That was one of the last things I thought I would hear. “You heard right,” Will said conferring Amber's sudden announcement. Before I could ask why, Amber already had her answer ready:

“I’m a cheerleader and Will’s a jock, we’re in different in crowds so we don’t really have a reason to even act like we know each other.” “We’re always together outside of school, but at school we can’t even say hi, let alone be friends.” Ouch. I thought my friends and I had it rough.

“More to the point, if we did talk, we’d be freakier than that janitor who talks to his mop.” Will finishes. They had a good point.

“Speak for yourself ladies, I don’t even have friends!” Wow. Dean actually said something serious. Well, there’s a first time for everything. Wait, what’d he say?

“You heard me, and yes you were thinking out loud.” He said answering my next question.

“Sorry, please continue.”

“Thank you. Anyway, at my school I’m the weirdo. The only time people talk to me is if they have to, or if they’re about to beat the crap out of me. Which is everyday. Just saying.” Ouch. Dude’s got it worse than the rest of us combine.

“Okay, you know what guys?” I began, “I’ve got an idea, but it’s only going to work, if we’re on the same track here. Now, who’s up for rehearsal?” Things could only look up from here.

The following Monday, I put my side of the plan to work. Angie, Stacey, and the others were at their usual counter in the bathroom comparing earrings. No, I don’t know why and I don’t really want to.

“Uh, Hey, guys! What's up?” Wow. That was less painful than I thought.

“Nothing, why?” Stacey said simply. So far I'm good.

“Guys, I know I wasn’t happy with all your complaining, but I want to make it up to you. There’s a concert at the mall this Saturday, I bought tickets for all of us, if you’re available. So. What do you say?”

“Oh man. It’s a full house out there!”

“June, stop screaming already!” This girl really needs to see a psychiatrist. Note to self; Call Dr. Stan. Kidding. Anyway backstage, we were already set up but we didn’t go on for another ten minutes. In order to get away from Angie, all I had to say was that I had to use the restroom. If she were smarter she would have known I should’ve been

back ninety-three minutes ago. Seeing my friends in the crowd from backstage was probably one of the scariest things I've ever seen in my life. The others had pointed out their friends from school. Amber's friends were actually creepier than mine. It looked like they lived on nothing but cell phones and glitter. Gross. My nerves hadn't gotten to me until now, which made sense considering we were on in ten minutes. In my case it resulted in me playing with the zipper of my yellow leather jacket. At least I could breathe, June's outfit just looked painful. Faux leather leggings and vest. How is she alive? Anyhow, for the show we all wore something in red to keep the vibe exciting. Five minutes left. The opening bands were just about done. All of the chords and lyrics scrambled up in my head and I couldn't do anything about it. We got in position. Dean gave me a look assuring me it'd be okay. That was all I needed. I was ready. I could hear Carlos finishing his intro.

“So without further ado, please welcome, Double Take!” The curtain rose, the lights flashed. My guitar in my hands. I'm ready, time to sing.

““While you wait for a miracle, just like all the rest. You think it'll make everything better, to create a mess. You tell me it's okay, to live like a ghost. Totally hidden from the world, at the very most. Years from today, you will ask yourself. 'Why on earth did I try, to be like everyone else'. Right now! I'm telling you, to stop and look around. Why? 'Cause if you don't soon, you'll see you've fallen do-o-own.”

“You're the one you should feel sorry for. One more word you won't have it anymore. I know who I am, and that is me. You're on your own, Believe me. For one minute look around and see, you're on your own, Believe me.”

