

MOVIE SCENES REIMAGINED

WELL, ACTUALLY

The feeling of falling ends with cold and wet.

The girl claws at the black plastic bag over her face as she plunges headfirst beneath the surface of the water, struggling to gasp through both.

The plastic comes free, but everything is still dark.

Her eyes take a moment to adjust to the dim surroundings, a glow from above. Instinctively, she turns herself towards the light and pushes towards it, bursting through the surface, and finally she's able to breathe again.

She's not sure how she ended up here.

Just a moment ago she was staring at the tree on the hill, thinking about how the sunlight made the red leaves look like fire when it hit them at just the right angle. Now, the water comes up past her waist, lapping cold against her skin.

Curved brick walls closely surround her at the bottom of a long shaft.

Stone grinds on stone high above. The girl looks up to see the light slowly being pushed away, replaced by only a slim slivered circle that settles into place with an echoing click.

Then she's alone in the dark water, deep below ground.

* * *

Why? She wonders, as she slips and falls for the seventh time.

She's been trying to climb out for what feels like forever. This time the fall happens just below where she last slipped, one of her fingernails ripping loose as it catches on the the rocky edge of the brick.

It hurts so much she's almost grateful when she hits the cold water again, the smooth, icy grip that surrounds and chills her also numbing her bleeding finger.

The memory is clearer now that the panic is fading.

Mommy walking up behind her, telling her that things were going to get better. The girl supposes that she knew then what was about to happen.

Her mother wrapping the smothering plastic over her face until she stopped struggling, pushing her over the stone wall and down the dark shaft.

But why?

The visions. Her art.

Daddy had said as much before they went on the trip. It was why they'd made her see all those doctors, why they'd taken her out of the house and made her sleep in the room above the barn, with only the horses and the TV for company.

The girl isn't sure why her art bothers Mommy and Daddy so much. Why they'd clutch their heads and close their eyes, stumble and cry out at the things she'd show them.

Images of the stories that seem to flow through her.

She's not sure where the stories come from, but she enjoys forming them into visions.

She knows that she is special, that her art is special, but not so special that they shouldn't understand it at all. After all, they didn't seem troubled by the TV, and that pulled images and stories out of thin air too. Why would sharing her visions be so different?

She shivers. The band of light above has gone entirely dark, and the water's getting colder.

The light comes and goes six more times. She's hungry, so hungry, and so so cold. Her skin has gone green and shriveled from staying in the water for so long. She's afraid but certain that she's never going to leave this wet, cold, dark place.

Unless.

Maybe there's one more story left for her to tell. And this time, she'd tell it in a way they could comprehend.

Burn it to tape, let them experience it the way they seemed familiar with, through the glow of a TV screen. Maybe then they'd stop screaming long enough to actually pay attention.

She would make them see. Feel the things she felt. Every last little bit of it.

The cold water, the slimy stone wall that made her fingers feel like they were going to fall off as she tried to climb the cracks between the bricks. The bright fading loop of light overhead. The escape that felt so close and yet so impossibly far away.

Seven days of being so afraid and so angry at Mommy, Daddy, and all the doctors that kept telling her something was wrong with her and her visions. Angry at all the people who threw her away down into this dark place.

She would make them see, until they cared enough to share her story themselves.

And maybe, someday, somebody would actually understand.

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by TM Hogeman

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