

Void: Amy Hutton

The girl could recall the exact moment she died, and how utterly unremarkable it was. No last gasp or life flashing before her eyes. No ball of white light. To say it was anticlimactic would be an understatement.

She drifted between the huddles of people all dressed in black, as they wrung their hands and whispered, 'so young', as if it would've been less horrible if she were older.

When the stranger's blade first entered her body, she'd been shocked not only by the searing pain, but by the squelching sound the metal made as it easily tore through her flesh. But it didn't last long. Her death had seen to that. It must have been quite something when they found her—the crimson of her blood splashed across the freshly fallen snow. It must have been beautiful.

She stood at the window and watched the mourners leave, returning to their undefiled lives.

Why the stranger chose her, she didn't know. Maybe it was bad luck. Or maybe it was fate. She wondered if she should be angry at him. Angry she'd never go to college or travel the world. Angry that she was left in a discarded heap, as if she were meaningless. But she wasn't angry. Because she didn't feel anything at all, and she wondered if being dead was like this for everyone—empty of not only blood, but void of everything that once made her human.

She lingered in a corner of the kitchen and watched her mother and brother pick at a leftover casserole.

Tomorrow they'd eat reheated lasagne, and the next day a sandwich, until before long, they'd sit down to a full meal and discuss the events of their day. Her mother would return to work, and her brother to college. Eventually, her mother's broken heart would stop, and there'd be another funeral and more mourners dressed in black. Her brother would finally pack up her room, keeping one thing, a photo of his long-dead sister on her fifteenth birthday, just days before a mad man stabbed her thirty-eight times. She would watch as her house was sold, and a new family moved in, then another, and another. Family after family, all the children growing up and moving out to live their lives.

All except the girl. Forever there. Watching everything. Feeling nothing.

She should be angry. But she wasn't.