

She walked passed
an alley and could
see what was going
to happen next
almost as if she had
already watched it
in a movie

**Was it
nostalgia?**

Audibly Invisible

Gaia was feeling disoriented, her heart was pounding hard, and her mind was racing

Was Oliver really dead? When she was younger she would've done anything to see Oliver dead, she could have even killed him herself, but now she was feeling a different reaction to his death. Was it sadness, grief, or was it nostalgia to something they had? It couldn't be, she thought, she had never grown that close to him. As she stepped out of the pub that posed as the disguise to the CIA quarters, rain started pouring and she started to laugh, what a serene moment for it to start to rain

In fact it was atypical for her to finally be having a normal life, spending time with her dad, having fun, enjoying herself, and then have something like this happen... something to ruin this.

She started walking to her old haunts, feeling her feet guide her while her mind was in another place. The woman that had cried for her uncle kept reappearing in her mind, the woman who had been touched by his death, someone that genuinely cared.

That's when she realized what she was feeling, she too had genuinely cared, the tears started flooding her eyes and she felt moans rising in her throat, she was breaking down. She reached the entrance to Washington Square Park and ran to the nearest bench; she quickly looked around and realized she wasn't alone. There were some college guys and homeless men sitting at the chess tables, they weren't playing; they were just talking amongst themselves. She stopped crying, or at least tried to; the tears were still rolling down her face against her will.

She was crying because she felt sorry for Oliver, he had been manipulated by some of the greatest influences in life; knowledge, money, and power, all becoming a mechanism for more evil.

She now saw him for what he really was, a victim. He had wanted to become fearless, like her but there was no way that could be possible-she wasn't just fearless, she was an entirely new species, the transformation seems merely impossible. The rain started pouring harder, thunder roared so loud that the men by the chess tables scampered off to find shelter. She wanted to express herself; she needed to get the emotions she was harboring out. She was in New York, the one place she had missed the most, and not just because she loved the city itself, but because the person she had once loved and trusted like no other was also here. Ed.

But she couldn't just jump back into his life, it would be intrusive, and she didn't know if he wanted anything to do with her. She wished she had Ed's companionship so she could tell him what's happened and how she felt but she stopped the wishful thinking, there was no way she could just have life return to the way it was. Ed was a person of the past, a character in chapters of her life that had long passed, there's no way she could drag him back. She got up and started walking to the hotel; her life was such an ongoing tangled mess.

When Gaia turned the corner she noticed that there were two men behind her, not necessarily following her, but these guys clearly weren't together... the bulkier guy was tailing the skinnier guy. She looked at the street; there was no one on it except them, and with it being a Sunday the shops had already closed. She walked passed an alley and could see what was going

to happen next almost as if she had already watched it in a movie, she could hear their body movements, the college guy's steady pace, and Mr. Bulky's shuffle as he fastened his speed.

It seemed like her life was destined to be a repeating movie reel of bad guys trying to take down good guys, while she stepped in to put a stop to it.

She felt the adrenaline in her veins increase as she heard Mr. Bulky take a deep breath; time seemed to turn into slow motion. Her steps were so light she herself could barely hear them, **she was audibly invisible**. As her posture straightened, she heard what could only be a man being taken down.

"Hey!"

She turned around to see the college guy on the ground looking up at Bulky.

"Give me your wallet!"

"Are you kidding me? I'm not giving you my wallet!" The guy stood up and he assumed a fighting stance, but this was what Bulky did for a living and he knew how to beat the bloody pulp out of a guy, especially one that was so young.

"I said, *GIVE ME YOUR WALLET!*" Bulky said with a meaner tone as Gaia walked slowly to the scene. Bulky pushed the college guy into the alley, the college guy took a swing at him, and before he knew it Bulky started kicking him; he knelt down to reach into the guy's jacket.

"Hey!" Gaia yelled. Bulky looked up at her, it was a glance. He then continued searching for the wallet.

"Hey leave him alone!" Gaia yelled, she ran to him and Bulky straightened up, he was planning to stick her one right in the face. She dodged to her right and pushed him on the ribs, hard.

He fell to the floor; she had knocked the wind out of him. He looked surprised, a look she had seen on unsuspecting muggers before.

"Hey, thanks a lot, but get out of here, this is too dangerous!" The college guy was straightening up; his hair was standing up on the side. She rolled her eyes, and as Bulky himself got up, the college guy got in front of her. She knew it was supposed to resemble chivalry, but when Bulky swung at college guy she knew a replay was coming. She pushed college guy to the ground, grabbed Bulky's arm, and flipped him. Bulky wasn't having it though.

"You've got tricks girly, and I don't wanna hurt ya, so just get out of here before I take your wallet too!" Bulky said as he got up.

"Sure, go ahead, try me," She smirked. Bulky got mad; he certainly wasn't going to let a girl show him up. He ran to her in full force, she performed a back kick which struck him directly on his head causing him to land head first.

"Hey! What's going on here?" Gaia and college guy turned around to see what could only be a bigger version of Bulky, no doubt a friend.

At that moment Bulky took her down, while Bulky-number-two towards college guy. Bulky's weight was immense; he probably weighed 3 times what Gaia weighed. He was holding her head and right arm down, with his knee tucked deep into her lower back. College guy ran towards Bulky to push him off her, at that moment Bulky-number-two got a hold of college guy and started punching him.

Gaia stood up like lightning and grabbed Bulky-number-two by the hair and pummeled him to the wall, Bulky ran at her and she did a spin as she kicked him on the chest. Bulky-number-two grabbed Gaia's feet; she fell and Bulky-number-two got the opportunity to punch her on the side of the head which made her feel like she had fallen down a really big cliff. College guy then stepped in and started punching Bulky-number-two, Bulky one was still trying to fight, he charged at her and started kicking her while she was down. It was a cowardly move, she thought. She grabbed his foot and twisted it, causing him to fall. **Cowards will receive what they deserve**, she thought while standing up and kicking him near his collarbone. Bulky was knocked out.

College guy seemed to be doing himself more harm than good, he was getting his eyes pummeled by Bulky-number-two she grabbed Bulky-number-two's shoulders and pulled him off college guy. He grabbed her by the arms and shoved her to the ground, he swung at her but she dodged the punch as she got up, she elbowed him in the face-spun to punch him-and did a roundhouse kick.

They were both out, the Bulkies were both lying down unconsciously, and college guy stared at her. His features were all displaying awe; her knees gave out beneath her.

"Are you ok?" College guy ran towards her.

"Yeah... I'm just, tired," She managed to say, she tried to get a leg up again but only failed to do so; she was about to land on her face when college guy grabbed her.

"Do you want me to call an ambulance?" He asked her.

"No, just, I'll be fine."

"But you're looking pretty banged up," He said.

"No hospitals. I just gotta-" The words never left her mouth as she passed out.

When Gaia had left, it seemed like the following six months of my life was rehab.

You see when she left that night, the realization of what was happening wasn't hitting me, and I really didn't think that she was going to be leaving. I knew something terrible had happened, and that she was different. But I never thought that she was seriously leaving.

The next day it was all over the paper, Jake Montone had been murdered and there was no evidence as to how he died. He became one of those stories you hear on the news of cold case murders that never get solved, and they're even more tragic because he was so young and talented, he could've aspired to be anything he wanted to be.



I looked for Gaia at all of her favorite hangouts and asked several of the guys at the park to let me know if they see her but they never did see her, or if they did they never told me.

Eventually I would wander on for hours around the city hoping to see her, and I mean it, hours. It was all I would do. Every day I would wander off and walk around the city like a zombie, I would wander to places that I had never even see her go in to, but I would do it because all of the places she would usually be at she just wasn't at. But then

after a month of stalking the city, I became upset because I knew I couldn't find her anywhere. I was by all means depressed; I was becoming paranoid and fathomed that she might be dead. So then I just stayed home, I would just occupy myself with Internet articles, newspapers, and 24/7 television news. I knew that if I went out to look for her I would just end up being disappointed because she wouldn't be there, and then I became paranoid about leaving the house in case she came up on the news. It sounds bad, right?

Well it got even worse, I had received my acceptance letter to NYU but I wasn't even interested in going. My mom was the one who forced me to go to registration, isn't that pathetic? **I had become a cripple after the wheelchair was gone**, I can't help but laugh at that thought.

But once I started school, the old me started to come back. I started occupying myself with classes, homework, projects, everything that I did revolved around school. Eventually I met Bailey; she really helped me come out of it. She was the rebound that I needed, but I wasn't that ready to date anyone at all yet. Bailey gave me the signs all the time, I knew that she liked me and I knew that I liked... her company. It wasn't until three months into school that I was finally moving into what a normal life could possibly be like, I still thought about Gaia every day, but not twenty-four seven like before.

Once I started dating Bailey, everything changed. She made me go out to parties, hang out with people, entertain myself... she compelled me to do something.

But now I feel like bringing up Gaia wasn't the right thing to do, talking about Gaia makes her more real, it makes me miss her like I haven't done in a long time because she was really real- she's not just some figment of my imagination.

Gaia left me without closure, and all I wish is to have some.