

## **I should have listened**

I should have listened to her. She should have listened to her. If I listened to her, maybe I could have saved Charity. If Charity listened to her then maybe she would still be here. She should have listened, but you see, she can't.

An old record player sat unused in the middle of the room, covered in cobwebs and ancient dust particles that must have been untouched for the past decade. The record had been a useful item years ago, that helped the family in times of need of song, a beautiful harmony or a soothing tune. Then everything changed.

A skinny, lonely child named Charity, wandered into the attic, and saw the record player and she suddenly felt drawn to it. It was like something she learnt in science, 'everything, is attracted to everything else'. It was like a magnetic pull was tugging at her. She walked passed me, and took no notice. But aside from the marvelous feeling of being wanted by it, she felt scared. A scared feeling that she had never felt before. And with one final gaze at the record player she turned her small head and tip toed down stairs, and into the kitchen.

At dinner, as usual no-one spoke or talked. The girls mum sat with a face as tense as anything and her mouth looked like it was drawn tight with string. The girl snuck a glance into her mother's face but her mother showed no recognition that Charity arrived at the table. She showed no emotion like always. No love, no sympathy, no heart.

Many years ago, Charity was found by the side of the road. She was a lively little girl. But from the day she was found, right up to the present day, she was thrown around adoptive parents and fosterers like a ball, until she rested with her true adoptive parent. Her mum, and me. Although, she's never seen me. I stayed where I am, and move for nothing.

Her situation had shown Charity that she was nothing. An unwanted child. A meaningless girl. She didn't talk, she didn't sing. But that was about to change.

Sometime during the night, when her parents were sleeping, Charity snuck into the attic. The record player sat there, humbly waiting for its tune singing times to come back. Charity carefully picked it up and moved it to a small stand in the middle of the room. But the same thing happened again. She felt an uneasy vibe around it, as if it was calling her. She tried to fight her thoughts, she tried to find what thought was true. Her mind deceived her, and with her thoughts somewhat confused, she ran back down stairs. She threw herself into bed and began crying.

Little did Charity know, that as she weaved in and out of her restless dreams, the record player began to spin. And with that, a sad small squeak came out. Followed by a small tune of melody. The song was slow and sad, and one would think it as funeral music. But in Charity's dream she dreamt of a record player, the exact same one. It played the exact same tune. But the thing was Charity couldn't hear anything. Not even outside of her dreams. She couldn't because, she was deaf.

Charity went through nights and days, still having the same dream, still going to the attic. She still couldn't hear the record player. Her mother still ignored her. Until one night she went to bed, and dreamed something different.

After nights of the same dream, her dream had changed. She woke with a jolt and beads of sweat gathered on her forehead. She realised she was breathing fast and heavily. As she willed herself to calm down, a flash of her dream came back. She was listening to music (although she couldn't hear anything) and then everything became still. Then ever so slowly it started to shake. *Everything* began to shake. Then, out of thin air a small woman wearing rags appeared, slowly dragging her feet behind her. But that wasn't what scared her. It was the slow tune the woman whistled; and, the fact that Charity could hear it.

Charity then came up to the attic. This time, she saw the record player, and she felt determined to turn it on. But she didn't see me. In three big strides she reached the record player. She closed her eyes and pushed away any thoughts of negativity. She brought out a slow shaking hand... and the needle was already on the record. She was instantly scared. She started turning around when a flash back of her dream last night came back. After she heard the lady, the walls of dream started to vanish and then Charity appeared in the attic. She was about to put the needle on, but it was already there. She started to turn the handle... Charity willed herself out of her daydream, and stood there. She had a piercing pain behind inside her head and screamed out in pain. She tried to get out of the attic, but the door was locked.

Charity wrench on the handle, but it wouldn't budge. She turned around looking for a way out. As she glanced behind her, she saw the woman from her dream standing in front of her. She mouthing something, beckoning to something, whispering something. I could hear her whispering something. But Charity couldn't hear it.

But she should have listened. The woman whispered to her "you have to leave, he is coming." I heard her, and I should have listened. But I didn't, I waited until she disappeared. I tried to find Charity but she was nowhere. The man had taken her. Then he took me.

So, I know two things;

She should have listened

I should have listened.

***By Bridgette Cooper, Pacific Lutheran College***