

# A Lone Sailboat at Sea

The painting is a lone sailboat at sea, colored in several shades of *gray*. At least, that's what it looks like through *my* eyes. In reality, it could be covered with various reds or oranges or purples, or perhaps a rainbow. Not that I would know what those colors, or any color, would look like. To me, my favorite painting will always look *gray*. That's just what happens when you have Achromatopsia. Your whole world is a painting coated entirely in isolating, suffocating *gray*.

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I have only known the color gray. Silver, platinum, charcoal, cinereous, they're all just words made to sugarcoat the blandness that is just *gray*. People say my eyes are "faulty," and some would describe it as a filter that lets you see everything like it's a black-and-white movie. Which is a really bad explanation to a person who *literally* cannot see colors and doesn't know the difference between a black-and-white movie and a "regular" movie.

It amazes me how people can take colors for granted and that an important part of describing anything involves color. They can't imagine others not understanding the difference between red and green. Things like this come naturally to them. They think it's something expected out of life.

How I envy them.

It's really hard to enjoy your life when people are constantly telling you you're missing out.

As a kid, I assumed that everyone saw things the way I did. That everyone's eyes hurt when they were outside in the sun. That everyone saw better when the lights were off. Well I got punched in the face by reality at age five when a doctor explained to me I had Achromatopsia. It's like color blindness, only worse, because it's a condition that is its namesake, making me incapable of seeing anything other than the sickening gray I've grown used to. It also has a side effect: my eyes are sensitive to light. Especially UV light. Also known as the light the sun produces to keep the Earth from freezing. Basically, being out in the sun *really* hurts my eyes.

Anyone would be bitter if they felt like they've been cheated out of something that everyone gets. They didn't do anything. They were just born like that. I wasn't bitter about it. No, bitter is the wrong word for it. I loathed my "disability," as some would call

it. If I weren't born like this, maybe I could see all the beautiful things in the world. I could see sunsets, the ocean, and I would get to know what colors my eyes were without someone having to tell me. If I weren't born like this, I could truly admire my favorite painting in the entire world. The painting of the lone sailboat at sea.

I yearn to see the painting's true hues. When I look at it, the sailboat reminds me of myself, all alone, yet aching to set sail and go on an adventure. This painting is so *beautiful*, even when it's just *gray*, the color I've grown to despise. This painting gives me refuge from all the pitied looks I get wherever I go, all the whispers that say "See that girl over there? She has a special kind of blindness. She can't see colors! Can you imagine that? A person who can't see colors? Poor girl, God rest her soul." This painting gives me faith that someday, I'll be able to go out somewhere and experience a thrill. This painting gives me hope that somehow, someday, I'll be able to see it for its true worth. That someday, I'll be able to admire each and every remarkable color on that painting.

I'm grateful that at least one of my wishes were fulfilled. I wonder if that makes me a bad person. I honestly can't decide if my family's sacrifice was worth it.

I truly did love them. They cared for me. They made me happy. I wish I had told them how much I appreciated them. As the saying goes: *You never know what you have until it's gone.*

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It started with the scream. The piercing, the ear-splitting, the *painful* scream. A scream that would break the soul into a million pieces, leaving nature to pick up whatever's left.

I turned my head towards the ground and saw my parents, my sisters, my brothers, my *family*, laying there, unmoving, with what I have to assume is their own blood encompassing them.

*I pricked my finger on a needle and saw blood coming out. "Mother, what's the real color of blood?" "It's the color of red, darling."*

I realized the screaming was coming from me.

Even so, I couldn't stop.

"I can hear a girl screaming. You left someone alive! Moron," a man with a deep and angry voice yells.

*If they find me, I'm dead. I need to hide.*

I run to the kitchen to look for a hiding place. My best bet would be the pantry, since it's really hard to notice. I open the pantry door and see my aunt Eloise lying on the floor in her own blood. I notice the butcher knife lodged into her back.

I just stood there, looking at her mangled corpse, as if staring at it would help me wake up from this terrifying nightmare.

I should've moved on, looking for somewhere else to hide.

"Well looky here. You're a slippery one, aren't you? Made the boss angry when I didn't kill you," a voice from behind me grunted. I don't know why, but I turned around. My eyes immediately went toward the sledgehammer the thief was carrying.

I ran.

I wasn't fast enough.

As soon as my feet tried to carry me away to safety, I felt an excruciating pain on my back, which knocked me down to the floor. I tried to get up, but I felt the pain on my back again, along with my legs. I close my eyes to cope with the throbbing. It takes a while for me to understand that my bones are being crushed. I felt the sledgehammer come down on my feet. *He's crushing my toes, one by one*, I think.

I open my eyes and see something different. Instead of gray, a color I loathe, I see... Well, I'm not sure what to call them. I think they're colors.

I turn my eyes towards a painting, my *favorite* painting, and my eyes start to water. I wasn't crying because all I could feel was the torturous agony of my bones being crumbled into pieces. No, I was about to sob my eyes out because I finally understand why people think colors are a necessity of life.

The painting that I hold so close to my heart, painted by Leonid Afremov, a brilliant artist, was *ravishing*. Colors that were really different practically ran into each other, and instead of it looking awkward, it looked *graceful*. Everything about it was enchanting. Before, I thought this painting was beautiful. Now, beautiful doesn't *begin* to describe it.

I finally got what I wanted. I can see the world, I can see this *painting*, with color. And all it cost was my life, along with the only people who loved me.

Was it worth it? I'm not sure.

Regardless, I can now leave in peace. I smile to myself. *I'm finally getting to go on an adventure. And the best part is, my family gets to come too.*

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The sledgehammer smashes her skull.

"Boss! It's over! The little brat is dead," the thief shouts. As he exits the kitchen, he notices a painting of a sailboat with many colors, ranging from exquisite reds to magnificent blues.

He removes the painting off the wall to sell at an auction and runs back towards his boss.