

Kyla Fisher

Catch Me If You Could Even See Me

Short Story

Chapter one: A page away.

The world appears to me as dull black and white; colorless words across pages of a book. I was born with prosopagnosia, otherwise known as face blindness. I can see animals, yet never human faces. What else is there to look at? With no face, everything felt pointless.

I knew not to judge people like the covers of a book. My mother; maria, I find her to be cruel and twisted as white oleander. My father, Oliver, is different. He is as easy to read as any page of any book. He suffered from the same affliction as I do; yet his patience is a rare sight. His understanding could be something akin to peace.

While we trailed along the creek, he'd tell me how he saw his world before the color came. "It was tasteless—like someone had stolen away the seasoning from my palette," he'd say, pausing before the faintest smile emerged.

"That was before I met your mother. She changed me, Lloyd."

I couldn't understand how he could love someone so wicked. I think he always knew I wondered.

He picked up a rock and threw it ahead before adding, "Broken people find each other in many ways, Lloyd. I hope one day you'll find your broken piece and fix that crack, together." His words clung to my chest tightly.

My broken piece?

Why would I find a broken piece? Why do I need such a broken piece when I could fix it myself? So many questions left unanswered by him.

During my youth, I tried to grasp the reality of my condition. On my ninth birthday, Maria gifted me a blank book. I didn't understand why the book was blank. Was this another one of her strategies to disarm me? I bit my lip, blood splurting through the cut as my teeth pierced the skin. I refuse to ask her for help. Yet she saw through my pain and understood so easily. She lifted a pencil, and her hand danced across the page. Art and words. I gasped! I had always thought those big machines made art and words for us. I'd never imagined I could create such things as well.

Years later, I started high school, and kept the book with me everywhere. The number of blank pages disappeared as I aged. As I wrote tales of dead men and victorious war. By the time many people started to lose their imagination, mine was strong and wild. As the world blurred past Eveneven, at school, I was considered an outcast. The library was my haven away from all the chaos that the outside world brought. I would dive into the vast worlds and flowing words of authors and poets.

"Guide my words but not my eyes," I murmured, engrossed in another tale.

I sensed the watching eyes of a libaerin but felt no shame. Despite knowing these shelves well, I still can't find a book that mirrors my world.

"Excuse me," a little voice whispered
I peeked over my book to see who was speaking.

Clayden.

I've seen him a few times before this.

He reminds me of my father—honest, caring, and a little lonely.

As much as I am.

"You weren't in the way," The voice spoke again. "I just wanted to speak with you."

I turned away, confused. I suddenly felt ashamed—or maybe I was feeling something else entirely. I couldn't understand this situation; such social interactions are foreign to me. to

"Sorry," I manage, pitiful as it sounds. Suddenly, his hand grasped my shoulder. "I think you're enough." He said softly.

"Thank you," I replied meekly and emotionlessly.

Then I left, wondering how I could be enough? I can't even figure out if my face was mine— if my skin or body belonged to me. It all felt so undeserved.

Before I could reach the bathroom, a group of students shoved me down. My journal drops from my arms, shoving me down. Their voices mocked and jeered over my words. Their voices blurred into beating drums. I barely heard someone shout over the noise, "Enough!"

Then everything went black, even though I feel strangely conscious.

The chocolate war. That's how I saw that boy from the library. From what I'd heard, he was a kid from the projects; he had some history with gangsters.

Before I could properly process anything, the darkness swallowed the hallway. Then a bizarre world unfolded.

I was somewhere else entirely—a world that felt as if it belonged only to me. Faces there had color, soft and shifting, never clear enough to hold. It was beautiful in its own way, this world without definition, where I could finally breathe. For once, I didn't need to remember who anyone was, or pretend I could. I danced beneath a sky stitched with laughter, where music poured like sunlight. The birds were books, their wings whispering stories I could almost understand, and the words themselves seemed to hum against my skin—gentle, familiar, alive.

But then the color swirled, melting into the quiet hum of my breathing. The laughter twisted and then faded, then the music, until only the echo of cries remained. I tried to hold onto something—anything.

The warmth and freedom kept slipping from me, and I fell.

Chapter two: A new world

I step out of the library and freeze. The hallway feels suddenly too loud, too open. Lloyd is on the floor, his journal spilled beside him, pages bent and splayed like they were thrown without a second thought. A group of jocks stand over him, their laughter sharp as it bounces off the lockers. They read his words aloud between laughs, twisting them into something ugly. Words he poured his heart into—now treated like entertainment.

Something tightens in my chest, slow and painful. At first, I don't move. I just watched. Lloyd doesn't look up. His eyelids droop, his shoulders slump, as if he's trying to disappear. Their

laughter presses in on me until I step forward. My voice breaks through before I realize I'm speaking.

"Enough."

The word hangs in the air. One by one, the laughter fades, replaced by uneasy silence. I kneel beside Lloyd, careful as I gather the fallen pages, smoothing the creases with my thumb. The journal feels heavier than it should. I scooped Lloyd up, his body tense in my arms, and turned away from the stares that followed us.

We move through the hallway in silence. Each step to the nurse's office feels longer than the last. Lloyd's eyes stay shut. When I finally set him down in the office and know he's safe, the nurse returns. She checks him and says he can leave when he wakes up, but to put ice on his head for the swelling. Then the nurse turns to me.

"Were you injured too?" the nurse asked me.

"No."

"Then leave. This isn't a place for you to be hanging around. I've got work to be done."

I hesitate—then turn away.

The stairwell nearby is cold and quiet. I sit on the steps, letting the noise of the school blur into something distant and dull. Slowly, I open his journal. I take my time with the first page, then the next. His words aren't loud or perfect—but they are honest. With every page, I realize I'm holding a world far deeper, far more fragile, than anyone else ever bothered to see.

I kept reading. I tell myself I'll stop after one more page, then another, but I don't think Lloyd's words move carefully, like he was afraid of taking up too much space. Some lines trail off, others are crossed and rewritten, as if he never trusted the first version of himself. I pause often, letting the silence style, letting his thoughts breathe.

Then I turn the page and stop.

A poem sits alone in the center, shorter than the rest. The handwriting is steadier here, deliberate. My eyes trace the first line, then the second, until they rest on one sentence that refuses to let go: *Guide my words, not my eyes.*

I read it again, and again. It feels like a quiet request—maybe a prayer, maybe a warning. I close my eyes for a moment, the weight of it pressing into my chest. Lloyd didn't want to be seen for how he looked or judged by how others stared at him. He wanted to be heard. Understood. For his words to speak where his eyes never could.

I hold the journal a little tighter, realizing this isn't just a book of poems. It's a map of everything he's never said out loud.

I close the journal carefully, my thumb resting on the page with the poem as if I might lose it if I let go. The stairwell feels colder than before. For a moment, I just sat there, listening to the distant hum of the school, letting Lloyd's words settle where they landed.

Then I stood.

Each step back toward the nurse's office feels heavier than the last. The hallway is quieter now, emptied of laughter, but the echoes linger in my head. I passed the lockers, the same walls that

watched everything happen and did nothing. I keep the journal tucked close to my chest, as it belongs there.

When I reach the nurse's office, I slow down. The door is slightly open. I hesitate, hand hovering before I knock, unsure of what to say—or if words are even necessary. Lloyd doesn't explain. He doesn't need apologies spoken on behalf of others.

I step inside anyway.

The room smells faintly of antiseptic and is quiet. Lloyd lies on the bed, still and small beneath the thin paper sheet. His eyes opened, shifting towards me, cautious, searching. I meet his gaze and hold it this time. I don't look away.

I offer the journal back to him gently, as if returning something sacred. And in that moment, I understood what the poem meant all along— not just for him, but for me too.

The bell rang, I zipped up my bag, and rushed out of the room into the hallway. My mind replayed the event over and over. Those bullies harassing Lloyd made me angry. Lloyd wasn't like other people, even though he couldn't see our faces. He seemed more normal than anyone else. To me, that felt like a gift.

When the bell rang, I wandered into the library. Lloyd was already there, buried behind a stack of AP books that looked heavier than he was.

"I see you're a smart one," I joked, stepping closer.

"Can I ask about your condition?"

He looked up—just long enough to meet my eyes.

It startled me.

"I'm not a zoo animal," he said, " and I'm busy, if you can't already tell."

His voice sounded too professional for a high schooler, and I couldn't help laughing. Lloyd quickly pressed a finger to his lips.

"Library," he whispered.

I clamped my own mouth shut dramatically and waited while he scanned shelves, my legs going numb. After a moment, he pulled down a book.

I was here by Gayle Forman.

"What's it about?" I asked.

He flipped the book over and read the summary aloud. His voice was calm, steady—the kind that made ordinary sentences sound important. When he finished, he lingered, thumb resting against the back cover.

"My dad used to take me to the creek near our house," he said quietly. "He wanted me to see the world the way he did."

He hesitated. A sharp snap echoed in the silence.

"I never listened then," he added. "Just like that... he's gone."

The library seemed to hold its breath.

"I'm sorry," I said softly. The words felt small, but they were all I had. For a moment, I thought the silence would swallow us again. Instead, something in me loosened.

“I get it,” I said after a pause. “Not the creek part—but the losing someone while they’re still supposed to be here.”

He glanced at me, waiting.

“I grew up in the projects,” I continued, keeping my voice low. “Sirens were like background noise. You learn early what streets to avoid, what colors not to wear. My father... he was in a gang. Still is, I think.” I shrugged. “He was around, but not really. Always half-gone.”

Lloyd didn’t interrupt. He just listened.

‘My ma, she did everything she could,’ I said. “Worked late, came home tired, still found a way to make sure my brothers and sisters were fed, homework done, lights on. She wasn’t perfect, but she never quit. Not on us. Not once.’

I swallowed. “She had to be both parents. And I had to grow up faster than I wanted to.”

The silence returned, but it felt different now—lighter, shared.

Lloyd nodded slowly, like he understood more than he let on. And for the first time, the library didn’t feel like a place full of strangers’ stories. It felt like a space where two of them finally overlapped.

Chapter Three: glued pieces

I didn’t realize how quiet the afternoon had become until Clayden stopped talking.

For a while, I’d just listened. Not the polite kind of listening my father used to scold me for—you’re hearing, not listening—but the kind where you let the words settle, let them choose their own place inside you. Clayden talked about difficult things at first: his past, then hardships. But beneath all of it was something careful, something unfinished. Like he was circling himself, waiting to see if I’d stay long enough to notice.

I did.

When he finally trailed off, I said the first thing that felt right instead of the first thing that sounded clever.

“Do you want to see a movie?”

He looked at me, surprised. “Now?”

“Yeah,” I said, shrugging. “There’s FNAF 2 playing. *Afterschool.*”

Clayden smiled, small and unsure, but it was real. “Okay.”

The theater was nearly filled, the kind of place where the seats creaked, and the screen hummed softly before the previews started. We sat close enough that our arms brushed, close enough that I noticed the way Clayden breathed when he was thinking. The movie unfolded slowly—quiet scenes, uncomfortable silences, moments that didn’t explain themselves. I feel Clayden tense beside me at certain parts, then relax again, as if the film was reaching for something he recognized but hadn’t named.

I didn’t interrupt. I remembered my father’s voice, low and steady, from years ago:

“Broken people find each other in many ways, Lloyd. I hope one day you’ll find your broken piece and fix that crack, together.”

And because of that, I knew where I wanted to be.

When the credits rolled, the lights came up too fast. Clayden didn't move right away. He just sat there, staring at the screen as if something important had been left behind.

"Hey," I said gently. "You okay?"

He turned me—and that's when I saw it.

Not all at once. Not magically. But slowly, like a picture assembling itself piece by piece.

His eyes, first. Clearer. More certain. Then his mouth, a smile emerged, not fake but in an honest way. Vulnerable. His expression shifted as if invisible puzzle pieces were sliding into place, each click quiet but final. The parts of him that had seemed scattered—guarded, unfinished—were coming together right in front of me.

"I think," Clayden said softly, "I get why that movie hurt."

I waited.

"It wasn't about what happened," he continued. "It was about how nobody noticed until it was too late."

The last piece clicked.

And suddenly, I understood my father.

All those years ago, when I'd asked him why love such a woman like Maria... he'd looked at me and said, "*She changed me, Lloyd.*"

I hadn't understood then. I do now.

Clayden wasn't asking me to fix anything. He wasn't asking for answers. He just needed someone to be there long enough for him to see himself clearly.

"I'm glad you asked me," he said.

"Me too," I replied.

We walked out of the theater together, the evening cool and open in front of us. Nothing dramatic happened. No grand declarations. Just two people moving forward at the same pace.

And for the first, I knew exactly what my father meant.

Some things don't fall apart,

They come together.