

The Sound

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The golden doors swung open, creaking and filling the empty hall with an eerie whisper that echoed around, hiding in every corner, ready to pounce on its victims. It was a fate worse than death to be devoured by this ever-hungry sound that only rested when it had swallowed every last living soul... every last *worthy* living soul. Being worthy may sound cool, but believe me you do not want to be worthy.

This is the story of me escaping the Sound's cunning whispers. I very nearly got drawn into its tricks. If you're worthy, you may not know until it's too late, or may know from the moment you were born and wait your entire life for the sound to seek you out. I don't know which is better, either way you're bound to suffer. No matter what you do, you cannot outsmart the Sound. Well, unless you're me of course, but even then, I was just lucky. I couldn't have outsmarted it if I tried.

I'm not your typical 14-year-old girl; I'm the girl who writes horror stories in her spare time and always wishes she could be in one. I never thought I could actually be living my own real-life horror story that unravelled in many ways you could never imagine. It spiralled out of control, it changed its mind halfway up a path and changed my life forever.

I will never forget the day my mother told me I was a worthling. I boasted about it at school until someone told me what it meant to be a worthling; how much trouble I was in, as I could be devoured at any moment by the Sound. I was horrified; how could this happen to so many innocent people. Most worthlings never got past the age of 15, and getting to that age was rare. I ran home crying from school that day; I hated being a worthling, but that was years ago – I was only 4 then. Now I'm 14, I'll be 15 next week, which means the Sound will find me and devour my body parts one at a time, starting at my toes, working its way up to my terrified brain, licking my blood off my face like a wolf. I couldn't let that happen; I had to stop it somehow.

"Wahh!" Alia, my baby sister, started crying, probably having another tantrum. I ignored her. My eyes wandered to my homework, sitting on my desk untouched. I'd been thinking, what if someone could outsmart the Sound? Eventually, I stood up and walked into Alia's room and found her standing up in the old cot, staring up at the starry blue ceiling, watching the stars twinkle.

"Shhh," I whispered, "Don't wake Mum and Dad."

My eyes flicked to where she was looking now – out of the window. Wait, not just out the window, she was looking at a silhouette of a person crouched by our treehouse. "Huh?" I whispered. We hardly ever have visitors, especially not in the dead of night... It might be nothing, but I can't take any chances not with what happened with Evie last time...

I sat on the floor next to Alia, watching her drift into a restless sleep. She wriggled around, constantly trying to get comfy.

I woke up on the floor, with the sun shining through the window, illuminating the small room, and reflecting off the mirror. Alia wasn't in her cot. "Alia?" I asked quietly, not wanting to alert Mum and Dad of her disappearance.

I peered behind her drawers, becoming more and more anxious by the second. Out of the corner of my eye, I caught movement behind the wardrobe and, "Alia?" I called cautiously, worried it could be the figure from the night before, but, thankfully, out came Alia, her cheeky smile radiating round the room. "Thank God!" I laughed and ran forward to check she was okay.

Walking into my room, I noticed that my blinds were open, Mum must have been in. How come she hadn't made me do my homework? I grabbed my school bag and flew down the stairs. Since when did I wake up so late? It was already eight o'clock.

I raced into the kitchen to find Mum pouring cereal. I stepped over Alia's pink Peppa Pig toys, grabbed some bread from the bread bin and tossed it in the toaster, all before Mum could say 'Good morning!' I sat at the table, and munched on my toast, before realising that I'd forgotten marmalade!

"Bye!" I called and ran out the open door into a hot, sunny day. I walked my normal route to school, but, as I walked down a dark, stinky alleyway, I heard freakish echoes coming from a window. My first thought was, 'It's found me!' and I raced to the end of the alleyway, took a left and sprinted to the bus stop. The next bus was in 5 minutes. I didn't care where it was going as long as it could take me far, far away.

I pulled all the money I had out of my pocket, and hurled it at the driver "As far as you'll take me," I stated, then went to find a seat. The driver flicked through the wad of £20s and nodded. My phone started ringing; it was Mum. The Sound could trace phones; I left it ringing. "Swoosh," in came a voicemail – "Maddie, are you okay? I just got a call from your school saying you never arrived. Call me back when you get this."

I wanted to call her back, I really did, but I couldn't risk it. An old lady looked up from her newspaper and eyed me suspiciously. I ignored her. Out of the window I could see cows grazing on luscious green grass; I wish I could be that carefree, instead I had the Sound chasing after me. The bus shuddered to a stop and a stream of people stumbled out, chatting and laughing. "This is your stop ma'am," the driver said to me.

"But...!" I exclaimed, "You've got lots more stops before you have to turn around." I stared into his eyes, daring him to kick me off.

"You didn't have enough money, ma'am." I knew I did, I'd checked before I left.

"I'm ringing the police," I lied and took out my phone. The phone beeped as I dialled in a fake number. I put the phone to my ear:

"Police, please!" and then I paused, pretending to be listening to the operator talk.

"No, wait!" the driver exclaimed, obviously not interested in being arrested. "I'll take you as far as I can." I smiled, pleased with my bluff, and said to the fake operator:

“I’m so sorry for wasting your time, the problem has been resolved.” I pretended to hang up. I sat back down in my seat and smirked at him; he sighed and walked to the steering wheel. I laughed, I liked this, I could ask him to do whatever I wanted and he would – well either that or risk being arrested.

There were a few people on the bus, but they were at the back and uninterested in my troubles. I took out a notebook and started writing a story, definitely fiction, unlike this. I smiled sadly; it used to be so easy before this Sound stuff. The bus shuddered to a quick stop and I looked around – there was no bus stop in sight. I could see everyone else was surprised and confused as well. In front of the window a black shadow was enveloping the bus, cloaking it in darkness. There were shrieking screams echoing from every corner. ‘This is it,’ I thought, ‘the Sound has finally found me.’

“It’s just a power cut.” The driver reassured the terrified people and pulled out an emergency battery-powered light which did absolutely nothing. I swear nothing goes to plan nowadays. Then, quite suddenly and completely out of nowhere the light flashed on and the Sound grabbed me and pulled me off the bus.

Lights flashed before my eyes and my ears rung as I woke up, finding myself in a strangely dark hall with golden doors looming over my head, casting suspicious shadows across the room. How could there be shadows when there was no light? I checked my watch; I’d been here nearly 12 hours. My mum must be worried sick. I put my hand to my sweaty forehead and felt a huge lump had formed.

“Maddie?” I thought I’d imagined my mum’s voice but there she was, standing right in front of me, her face full of concern. Suddenly the Sound appeared, grabbing me by the leg and pulling me into the air ready to devour me. I hadn’t noticed my mum had gone, but she came back, running with fist fulls of dirt. She threw one at the Sound but missed; she tried again, this time throwing over arm. The Sound howled as the dirt hit it, and writhing and squirming, fell to the ground and disintegrated.

I ran to my mum and gave her the biggest hug ever.

“Thank God you found me!”