

## THE HUNGER

I have never considered myself to be someone out of the ordinary. I've never had any special talents, nor have I ever been into hobbies. I've attempted a handful of endeavours, each time exhausting the ambition as quickly as it came. I was happy enough though. My life was simple.

Still, there was something nudging at me—an invisible force—much like the wind. I had felt there was more to life, more to myself, and surely more waiting in the future. I could never place a finger on what I was feeling, but it was like a hunger pang that wouldn't go away. I had eaten, and eaten well, but there was still a hunger lingering. Though this feeling was subtle, at times it was all I could focus on.

As a child, this same sensation often came over me. It was never provoked by anything, yet when it came, it was undeniably real. This consciousness—as strange as it was—played tricks on my mind, leaving me to wonder if I were real. Not just the voice in my head, but the flesh on my bones, the beat of my heart, and the warmth of my blood. It was as though my soul were restless and trapped inside a stagnant, borrowed body. Was this really me? Was I caught in a dream or was this some form of altered reality?

I was a child, for heaven's sake, only seven years old when I began to have these experiences. Why would a seven-year-old feel as though she were a visitor in her own body and surroundings? What would make a child feel this lost?

As the years passed, this perplexing state of mind continued to trouble me, at times making me almost dizzy with confusion. I remember shaking my head as if to shake the rain off my hair, when actually I was trying to shake this feeling away. Sometimes I was uncertain whether I was alive, or dreaming, or even supposed to be here—on this plane, in this realm.

Eventually though, I trained myself to pay little attention to these feelings. I let them be what they were: confusing and uncomfortable. Before long, I grew into a teenager, faced with new sensations. Like the other girls my age, I became awkward and unsure, desperate for the attention of some special boy. My focus now was on trying to look pretty, surviving my gym class, and struggling to keep my head above water in my school work.

I lost those sensations from the past, those that made me feel as though my body were a temporary uniform, given to me for this term of life. They had all disappeared.

Until now.

Here I am, at twenty-three years of age, working for a multimillion dollar energy corporation. My name is Evangeline May Sinclair. Most know me as Evy. I spend my days as an industrious junior analyst on the twenty-ninth floor of a lofty skyscraper in the heart of a concrete jungle.

I've advanced my way to a four-cubicle bullpen next to a window. I share this space with two other analysts and the department supervisor. Our window looks out at other towers, with other employees sitting in their cubicles, also looking out at their view. We are mirrored images of one another.

With three weeks' vacation, an impressive title on a sharp-looking business card, and the privilege of underground parking, I should feel blessed in my career. The only problem is that I don't.

I never intended to be ungrateful, but I don't know what I'm doing here. I know what my job is, and how to get from A to B in my eight-hour day, but do I really know what the bigger picture is? Why am I here? How is this job relevant to me? Am I making a mark on this company? More important, is this company making a mark on me?

Day after day, I leave work feeling devoid of purpose. There is no energy behind what I do, no sense of accomplishment or contribution. I am not present. I am not mindful. I walk the halls with my eyes glazed over. In conversations, I nod and smile, not even listening to what the person is saying. I look at the papers on my desk, the phone messages, the emails, the spreadsheets on my computer screen, and I feel nothing but indifference.

I know I am young and still have my life ahead of me, but this is more than the feelings of an unfulfilled young woman. No matter how hard I try, I cannot ignore the overwhelming feeling that I'm supposed to be somewhere else. I may be one of many who feel this way, but it doesn't stop me from asking myself the same old questions: What am I doing? What am I gaining? And the most difficult question of all, what am I giving back?

But it is the bigger picture that scares me. Often I feel I'm on the outside looking in, as if I were a ghost, floating down the halls of existence. I look around and see thousands of other people also floating. We are bumping into one another, and no one knows why. Sometimes I wonder, when the fog settles, if I may be alone in this. Maybe I am the only one who feels there has to be more to life than this. It's hard not to wonder when I see countless others going about their days with their joker faces on. Are they honestly happy? For their sake, I hope they are.

Now, a young woman, I'm having the same experiences I had as a child. Once again, I am shaking the rain off my hair, feeling as though I'm in a skin-and-bone uniform, dressed for occupation in an alien world. I feel foreign as I wander through life, smiling at everyone I pass. No one understands that I am only trying to snuff out this cloud of confusion around me.