

HAMARTIA

By
Raquel Rich



© 2018 by Raquel Rich. *All rights reserved.*

Words Matter Publishing

P.O. Box 531

Salem, IL 62881

www.wordsmatterpublishing.com

Photo by Christine Albee

Cover art by María Fernanda Avelar Sordo

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without the prior permission of the copyright holder, except as provided by USA copyright law.

ISBN 13: 978-1-947072-92-3

ISBN 10: 1-947072-92-7

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2018954236

For Gregory and Liam.
Repeat after me: “Yes I can.”

CHAPTER 1

NOW

For the tenth time, Kay nervously looks up at the departures hologram as we pass through security. Our flight details haven't changed since the last time she looked: Toronto to Las Vegas. It's like she's expecting them to spell it out: "Destination: 2000." What part of "secret mission" does she not understand? Everyone else is actually going to Las Vegas, as the hologram says. They're just not going back more than eighty years in time like we are. I wipe my sweaty palms on my sweater, again.

"So... You'd think when you're travelling back in time, the means of transportation would be futuristic," Kay says. "Where's my shiny golden hovercraft time-warp machine, emerging from the clouds?"

"Ya, I was thinking the same thing," I respond to Kay absently as I press my fingerprint to the scanner and smear it with sweat. I sigh.

The screen directs us to Gate 47. We go directly to the gate, anxious to get started on this journey. My stomach churns as I think about what cloning a new replacement soul for my son, Jordan, actually entails. I bite my lip, hard, trying to stop my fear from taking over the rest of my body as it has my empty stomach and nervous system.

“I don’t get it,” I say. “We’re boarding the plane with regular people? Where’s that assistant? She’s supposed to be here,” and just then, she surfaces from the gate, tucking her hair behind her ear.

She’s outfitted in an all-white dress suit, directing people to their seats on the plane. As we approach and she sees us, she smiles, winks and re-tucks her hair. I notice she’s wearing a nametag and shake my head in amazement when I realize it’s blank. “We’re all anonymous,” she had told Marc and me when she greeted us at Dr. Messie’s home office, right before we were given a chance to save our son’s life. But the blank nametag seems to intentionally rub in our faces that we don’t even know her name. This whole process has felt like a secret gamble rather than a mission. We’re not entitled to know anything, yet we’re expected to go along with everything. We’re just supposed to trust that a bunch of strangers hold the miracle cure to a disease no one has even figured out the cause of. Metagenesis.

“Ladies, please follow me.”

She leads us past the line of people waiting to board the aircraft. No one pays any attention, probably assuming she’s an employee. She matches all the other flight attendants; they’re all wearing white, too. Maybe she actually does work here, for this airline, or even at this airport. Or could those other flight attendants work for Dr. Messie, too?

We don’t put our fingers on the scanner to board like the other passengers.

“We don’t need you on the passenger manifest,” she tells us as we follow her to our seats near the back. “Most of the seats in this section are vacant. Right after take-off, before the seatbelt sign turns off, meet me in the bathroom.” And she’s gone to escort other passengers to their seats—doesn’t even give me a chance to ask any of my hundreds of questions, including the most recent one that just popped into my head: how long after take-off, exactly? Are we supposed to

just guess? Five minutes? Ten?

“Grace?” Kay interrupts my thoughts. “So, what’d you *really* think of that orientation?”

I shrug in response, not really wanting to talk about it again with her. I have nothing new to add about how I feel or what I think. Jordan is dying of Metagenesis, a disease that has plagued the human race for decades now. I’ve watched my boy deteriorate, his eyes become vacant as his soul slowly fades away, his breath laboured, making him weak and lethargic. I fear the day is near when his soul will leave him, never to return, and he will die just like the millions of victims this disease has already claimed. I’m still trying to accept that finding him a replacement soul in Marc’s past life, through a secret, illegal clinical trial is our son’s only chance of survival. So secret that Dr. Messie didn’t even see us off at the airport. Given that Kay and I are the first to travel to past lives, you would think he’d be micromanaging every step. Dr. Messie made no guarantees. We might not even make it back. So, either way, whether we do or don’t go back, Jordan could die.

I don’t feel up to small talk, but my former best friend is like a nervous dog looking to bury a bone. It’s been a few years since I stopped talking to her—I’d forgotten how chatty she can be. And so she babbles on.

“Don’t you think it’s weird that the test said Marc has no fears or phobias? He must’ve had peaceful deaths in all his reincarnated lives. Lucky guy.”

I almost chuckle at her calling him “lucky.” He’s lucky, all right. My soon-to-be-ex-husband is lucky that he can’t go on this journey with me. Dr. Messie warned that it would be hazardous for Marc to meet his past life, David Williams. Lucky Marc gets to stay by our son’s side, safe and sound, while I risk my life—risk getting stuck in the year 2000. Lucky Marc. I also think about Kay, wonder how the assistant or Dr. Messie approached her about being my supporter. If our reunion wasn’t days fresh, I’d ask her bluntly.

I know Kay is just trying to keep the small talk going to distract me or beat around her original question about the orientation—the whole soulmate thing, which is eating away at me. Although we know the name and home city of the donor whose soul we must clone, and Marc spent hours at the regression session, profiling his past life, the science can do only so much. The rest is up to me. If Marc is my soulmate, I will recognize him in his past life. Not by his looks, since our bodies change from life to life when we reincarnate, but by his soul, his energy. I will feel it. But I'm divorcing him. People don't divorce their soulmates, do they?

Kay rambles on, "I never really gave it much thought, but I have a phobia of clowns. How does someone die of clowns? Or was I a clown who was murdered? Or, what if I was a clown who died from suffocation while crammed into one of those little itzy-bitsy cars with twenty other clowns? But then I'd be claustrophobic, right? Not just afraid of clowns, but of tight places and stuff, right? I mean, at least for you, your weird obsession with avoiding turtle-necks, that makes sense. You were probably strangled to death in your past life. But *clowns?*" I feel her glance over at me, seeing if I'll bite at her attempt to engage me in conversation, but I don't reply. "I hope they're right," she says after a long pause, but not to me. I think she's talking to herself. "I hope you and Marc are soulmates."

The engines roar up, and Kay quiets down, leaving me to contemplate.

There are a lot of things riding on "if"s. If Marc is my soulmate. If I find his past life. If we make it back home. If Jordan hasn't lost his soul to Metagenesis while we're gone... I feel that churning in my stomach again, forcing a chill up my spine yet making me sweat. If all those things fall into place, maybe Jordan will be the first survivor of this disease, and then the whole world will benefit from the cure. Metagenesis could be abolished. I don't trust Dr. Messie—all the

secrecy I'm bound to terrifies me. Yet I have to trust he'll cure my son because I feel mankind is counting on me; they just don't know it. I am desperate to trust someone, though: Kay, the assistant. Anyone.

Kay and I don't speak during the take-off. I stare outside, watching the world speed up through the oval window. Wondering about the whole idea of what we're about to do: time travel—or, actually, life travel. Travelling back to another life already lived, nearly eighty years ago.

I sigh deeply, trying to release my worries and fears as we ascend into the sky. Instead, I focus on right now, the trivial, left-out, tiny little detail: how the hell are we even getting to Marc's past life from an airplane thirty thousand feet in the air?

Kay interrupts my nervous internal self-chatter: "I think it's time."

I feel weird about disobeying and getting up while the seatbelt sign is still on. When we undo our belts, with that metal-on-metal click as the flaps open, one of the passengers a few rows up looks back at us, gives us a disapproving look. We duck back into our seats and wait a few moments. When no one else pays us any attention, we head to the bathroom together.

"OK, now what?" says Kay after latching the door shut. "She's not here. Maybe it's the other washroom."

I look around the small room—which smells like bowl cleaner—as if somehow Miss-No-Name is hiding in this tiny little stall. I spot a small backpack hanging on the door, with the same logo from Dr. Messie's clinic and his hologram-boards.

"That must be our kit they talked about," I say. I open up the backpack and find all the stuff described in our orientation: a ceramic pig, a phone book, a pager. "Well, this has to be the right washroom, then."

I put the lid down and sit on the toilet, my knees banging

into the wall. How does anyone taller than a munchkin pee in here?

We hear a rustling noise above our heads. I look up and see one of the panels moving out of the way. I have to blink to keep the falling dust out of my eyes. Behold: there she is, tucking that hair behind her ear. She is looking down at us, stretching her hand out. Miss-No-Name.

“Well, grab on and come on up!”

Kay and I exchange a look. I shrug as I rise and clasp the assistant’s hand to go first, climbing out of the little bathroom. I step on the toilet lid and then the bitty little counter, clumsily trying to fit my feet into the teeny shelves, using them as footholds. When I climb out on the other side, I reach back and take the bag, then pull Kay up to join us.

We’re lying on our bellies. I look around, but there isn’t much to see or far to go. It’s dimly lit by small openings beneath us, probably vents to the cabin, but the vents do nothing for us up here. It’s hot and stuffy; even the hum of the engine seems muffled by the air we’re sucking in. I taste overpowering metallic filth when I breathe, making it difficult not to cough. It’s like we’re in the airplane’s attic; there’s no room to stand or even crouch, much less manoeuvre.

“Where are we?” I ask, but the assistant hushes us.

“The ceiling isn’t so soundproof—your not-so-‘Grace’ful exit from the bathroom was loud enough,” she whispers. “People might hear your voices below. We’re almost above the galley, which should be empty, but I’d prefer to exercise caution.” She crawls away. “Let’s go.”

I want to tell her it’s impossible to be quiet, and if discretion is important, then perhaps they should consider installing a ladder in that pee-hole. “Not-so-‘Grace’ful exit,” I mock to no one. Back in Dr. Messie’s office, I decided I liked her, but now I’m finding it hard to remember why.

We snake along on our bellies toward the back of the plane, further and further. I can feel the dirt getting in under

my nails, and the dust almost makes me sneeze, but I hold it in. A wall comes into view right ahead. It looks like we're heading toward a dead end.

"Where are we going?" I whisper-ask.

She doesn't respond. Instead, when we reach the dead end, she disappears. What the...?

It's not a dead end. It's a drop-off, but I can't see where it drops off to. It's pitch-black darkness.

"Just go!" Kay urges from behind me. I hear her suppress a sneeze.

I close my eyes and snake up quickly, and then the ground starts to give way. The next thing I know, I'm accelerating downward as if on a giant slide at a playground, only steeper, more slippery. I feel like I'm skating on my belly on a sheet of ice. I open my eyes wide, trying to see what I'm sliding toward, but there's nothing to look at, just thick blackness. I stop at the bottom with a bang. Kay crashes into me from behind. I get up on my knees, afraid to bump my head, and brush myself off; my adrenaline is pumping from the unexpected ride and relief that I survived it.

"Hello?" I call out, trying to keep my voice quiet.

"Right here. You don't have to whisper anymore, and you can stand up." Just then, a bright light comes on, pointing right at my face, blinding me. "Sorry, sorry. Here..." the assistant throws something at us, "...these are your outfits. You can't go in what you're wearing; you'll stand out. You need to fit in. Leave all your personal belongings here—no accessories, nothing."

"This is exactly what Dr. Messie told us to wear," Kay objects.

"Well, *Dr. Messie* doesn't know anything about the fashion from those days—just trust me."

I raise an eyebrow at the defensive tone she uses when she says Dr. Messie's name. It's the first time she's appeared to be anything but a happy yes-sir assistant. It's also the first

time she's used his name instead of just referring to him as "Doctor." I sense defiance in her, which I like.

"You'll also need this—take it with you," she adds, tucking some toiletries into the backpack. "He doesn't know the first thing about being a girl. Just trust me." She looks at me, hesitates. For the first time, I notice her eyes are kind, and she seems to be searching mine for the same kindness. "Trust me, OK?" She doesn't look away until I nod yes. "I'll be right back. Keep the light." Miss-No-Name leaves the flashlight on the ground, beam up, and disappears around a corner.

Kay and I strip off the Dr. Messie-approved jeans and tank tops and change into the shiny silver outfits she gave us. I remove my accessories, reluctantly.

"I'm nervous," I admit in a quiet voice, not wanting the assistant to hear our conversation from wherever she went, but Kay doesn't respond, which probably means she is nervous too. I remember the way she usually keeps positive talk going, but when things are not positive, she doesn't talk at all. She doesn't want to add to the negativity, keep the bad vibes alive. Kay is odd that way. She also sings old show tunes to her plants and doesn't kill bugs. We're nothing alike, which is probably one of the many reasons our relationship died.

"Hello-o? Aren't you nervous?" I persist, determined to get a reply out of her. "Throughout the whole orientation, no one told us how we would be travelling in time. They refused to answer any questions about the transportation. Not Dr. Messie, nor the assistant—who, by the way, we're supposed to trust, without even knowing her name. And now, here we are at the back of a plane, unregistered guests, no record of us boarding this aircraft; we've climbed out through the roof of a bathroom to follow a woman with a blank nametag who may or may not work here... Aren't you the least bit concerned?"

"Yes, yes, yes! OK? Is that what you want to hear, Grace? Now quit talking about it—I don't want any more malicious

energy to go into my nerves. Your bad talk is like a snake in Eden's garden."

I'm satisfied to have finally got a reaction out of Kay, but don't get to say anything more before the assistant reappears.

"Ready? All dressed? Come right this way, ladies."

We try to argue again about the go-go-dancer-looking outfits—they seem really over the top—but to no avail. At the last second, I tuck my lucky watch into my pocket. I haven't been apart from it in years; I'm not going to leave it behind now. It's the only thing left from my dad. At least I will have one comfort from home, from my past, even if it's an uncomfortable comfort. I adjust the tight new shirt, which is made from itchy I-don't-know-what, as the assistant escorts us through the dark back of the plane. We follow the path her light beam provides until we no longer need the way illuminated, thanks to the sunbeams that have appeared ahead.

She comes to a stop in front of a glass room with natural sunlight shining through. It's the middle of the day, and we can see clouds passing below and above, beautiful blue skies that reach until forever. The whole room is glass—the walls, floor, and ceiling—just like Dr. Messie's home office appeared to be. It's about the size of the bathroom stall we climbed out of.

She turns around to face us and hands us each a glass containing murky liquid with fog rising off it. "Stand in there and drink this," she says.

As if triggered by her voice, a door opens in the glass wall and the assistant motions for us to go through. I peer in: it's a glass room, all right; unlike Dr. Messie's home office, this is not a trick of the eye. My mind's eye runs wild at what might happen, seeing the blankets of clouds through the floor. I clench my fists. I have a vivid imagination and a terrible feeling in the pit of my stomach.

"Tell us what's going on, please?" I stammer. "How are

we getting there? What's the drink? Why are we standing on a glass floor in a little glass room in an airplane?"

But the assistant doesn't look concerned or even fazed by my uneasiness. She doesn't answer my questions. Out of her necklace, she takes something that at first looks like a pendant, then tucks her hair back.

"Put this in your pocket." She hands me a small glass tube, the size of my pinky nail. Again, she's searching my face; her tone is serious, but her eyes kind and gentle. "Make sure you keep it safe. The glass isn't fragile—it will not break—but keep it safe and don't lose it. This is your son's life in your hands, do you understand?" She focuses on the tube for a beat, then turns her attention back to me and closes her hand over mine, with a gentle squeeze. "When the time comes, you do exactly as we talked about in the orientation. Just a small poke in the donor and the device will latch on for us to read the data of the soul."

She releases my hand but doesn't break eye contact. I have to look away first.

I open my hand to examine the small tube. It's warm and gives off a soft, pinkish glow. I don't see a syringe in it, but from the orientation, I know it will open only when I touch it to the donor. This tube is my son's soul, and that's how I will treat it. Even though it is not fragile, I place it in my pocket as if it's the most breakable little item in the world, as precious as a newborn baby's first breath. I zip up my pocket and pat it. I hold my son's life in one pocket, and my father's death in the other. Vowing to keep both safe, I promise myself that this will be a successful mission. I convince myself that I will know "when the time is right"; I will find Marc's past life—I will feel his energy, recognize him somehow.

I stare at the drink the assistant gave us, sniff at it, look up at her with questioning eyes.

"It will transport you when the glass room opens," she says. "Instead of plunging to your death, you'll fall back in

time. Now drink up. It's best to plug your nose—and don't sip it, we haven't got all day. You can't miss your opportunity. As soon as the right turbulence hits, you're out of here." She pauses, a smirk creeping onto her lips, making me annoyed with her all over again. "And the look on your faces is exactly why we didn't tell you anything before. Trust me, remember? Good luck to both of you."

She turns and leaves, her footsteps echoing.

I turn to look at Kay; she looks like I feel, but she's already standing in the glass room, holding her drink out to clink with mine.

"Cheers?" she says in a shaky voice.

I join her on the glass floor. My knees almost buckle as I step over the threshold. The door slides closed behind me; I hear it lock into place, sealing the deal.

We clink glasses and chug the liquid. It's warm and fizzy and tastes like salty tree bark, and I don't get all the way through it before I start gagging. I do everything I can not to throw it up; it almost comes out through my nostrils.

"Oh no, that's awful!" I say between gasps, and Kay laughs nervously at me, nodding in agreement. I take the assistant's advice and plug my nose to finish the rest. And then all of a sudden...

All...

...of...

...a...

...sudden...

Nothing. I don't feel any different. The glass floor is still beneath us, and soft clouds still look like soft clouds, big blue skies above us. Nothing happens.

"So I guess we just wait, then," I mumble.

Kay and I don't talk to each other. I'm nervous, and Kay is being Kay, avoiding bad energy. This feeling is horrible.

My fears are making me want to call all this off, run back in, chase down the assistant and tell her she's made a mistake.

Tell her we're not the right people to do this. If it weren't for Kay being here with me—even after I've treated her so badly—taking this crazy adventure with me for my son, for no personal gain... If it weren't for that, I might just run. Chicken out.

But as strange as I feel about it, Kay is here. And she didn't leave after the orientation session, either; she didn't leave when they explained the risks involved in surviving in the early twenty-first century. When they talked about the risk of heart attack from the food we're going to eat, or the risk of cancer due to the radiation we're going to encounter, or the risk of traffic accidents before the invention of the links we use today: she didn't leave. Even when they explained that they don't know if we will make it back. That we could be stuck there forever. Even then. When I asked her why she was coming with me, she told me it was for Peter, her little brother. She was doing this to honour his memory. Kay practically raised Peter because her parents worked so much. She was the only one by his side when he succumbed to Metagenesis, and his soul left him for the last time.

The aircraft shakes, interrupting my thoughts and making my heart skip beats. I hold my breath as I look at Kay; she's holding her breath too, her blue eyes wide. The glass floor shudders, but nothing happens. I just want this to be over with. I guess that wasn't the right turbulence.

I've never been skydiving. Marc's the risk-taker guy; he went skydiving on his eighteenth birthday, the same day we met. I wasn't the skydiving kind and watching the clouds below us... we're really high up right now. I gulp at the thought of plunging through those clouds at top speed, the ground rushing up beneath me, no parachutes, nothing to slow us down if something goes wrong. I wonder if we will come close to the ground and then be zapped into another time. Will we actually hit the ground and go through to another dimension? Or will it be instantaneous: the earth will open up

and swallow us whole, and just like that, we'll be transported? Will it hurt? Why didn't I ask the assistant if it would hurt? Whatever is going to happen, I hope it happens soon.

The empty glass in my hand is now slippery from my sweaty grip. I look to Kay, desperate for her positive small talk, but she doesn't look up to it. She's staring at the ground, the colour gone from her face. She looks pale with fear, or maybe even sick to her stomach.

"Kay? Are you OK?"

She meets my eyes, and I hear her glass drop to the ground and smash. But her eyes widen, and I realize she's still holding her glass. I know I'm still clinging to mine; my fingers are almost numb from the death grip on it. So if that wasn't our glass cups...

The floor drops away from our feet, glass shattering. We're momentarily suspended in the air. What is probably a split nanosecond feels like an eternity. Just like being on a roller coaster, when it reaches the top, and the climb seems to slow to an almost stop when you regret boarding the little car when regret is useless, there's no turning back. And you think to yourself, what the hell were you thinking? And then you get to the top and seem to teeter and totter, right before you...

Fall.

The wind is sucked out of my lungs in one big swoosh. I feel weightless; my hair actually lifts and polar-cold air surges through it, freezing my scalp and penetrating down to each root holding each strand. I don't know why I have all this time to think and wonder if my hair will actually snap off at the scalp and leave me bald when we arrive. I chance opening an eye to look at Kay, but she's gone. And then what seemed like the slowest nanosecond in time abruptly speeds up and I'm ejected out of the glass room; I smack my thigh hard on the way out. The vicious wind twists me around: my hair in my mouth, my collar snug around my neck, the shirt pulled taut under my armpits. I try to pull my knees in, to protect

myself, but I can't. My arms and legs flail in all directions; the pack on my back pulls away from me, and I fear losing it. I try to twist around, so my back is against the wind, make the pack suction into me. Eyes closed, I hold as still as I can, trying to relax as much as one can when whipping through the air into the unknown without a parachute. I let the wind push my arms and legs. And then, when I think I'm ready, I pull my right arm and leg in and then twist my body around. I think I've done it. I have two seconds of relief, knowing the pack is safe.

The wind is now at my back. I open my eyes, expecting to see the blue skies above me, afraid I'm now falling backward through clouds, the ground below me. But I don't see the sky: I see the clouds. It doesn't make sense, but maybe I'm not thinking straight; after all, I'm plummeting in a freefall toward... where the hell are we plummeting toward? I try to think it out. If the wind is to my back, then I should be falling down, *through* the clouds, right? But the clouds are further and further from me like I'm falling away from them. And that brings on a whole new panic. If I'm falling away from them, then the earth is coming up beneath me sooner than I thought. Somehow I must've missed falling through the clouds. For some reason, I imagined I would feel them, whatever it is they feel like. Perhaps cool cotton balls, or a misty fog on my skin, but I felt nothing at all.

I still don't see Kay. At last, I find my voice, which was stuck in my throat from fear, and yell for her, scream for her, screech for her. I haven't heard her screaming at all, and I'm suddenly afraid she's not with me. I'm worried about her.

"Kay?"

Nothing.

"Kay? Kay! Can you hear me!" I'm yelling as loud as I can, but the wind snatches the words away; even I can barely hear me. I feel a different kind of panic rising in me. She must be under me, I reason because I don't see her. Please

let her be near me, please. She can't possibly still be in that glass room. I try to look for her, squinting my eyes against the brightness of the day, the sun glaring off the plane. I see the plane, getting smaller and smaller. There is no sign of Kay, which fills me with dread.

What the hell? I see the *roof* of the plane getting smaller and smaller, not the underbelly.

Kay whips past me just then, twirling hard. Thank God!

"Kay, put your arms and legs out—you'll slow down and stop the spinning!"

I know she can't hear me, but I don't know what else to do.

"Kay!"

My screaming is useless. I watch in horror as she spirals and zigzags further and further from me. She looks like a rag doll in the wind; I'm afraid she might be unconscious. She doesn't look right, and I'm powerless to help her.

"Kay!" I yell out desperately, while my mind grapples with why the *roof* of the plane is in my vision. It doesn't make sense. I wonder if it's that drink; maybe it's a hallucinogenic drug of some sort.

"Kay!" I yell again.

Everything seems to be getting brighter and brighter—the sun is blinding, and the blue of the sky is lightening. We're not falling to the earth, we're flying away from it, up, away from the ground, away from the plane, higher and higher.

Suddenly the air thins out, although I'm sure it's always thin this high up. Instantly I can't breathe. I open my mouth to take a breath and yell again for Kay, but nothing. I can't suck in any air; I feel like a fish out of water. My eyes might bulge from the pressure or lack of oxygen. The wind on my back lets up, and I think I might pass out.

I seem to slow down. I'm still desperate to draw air into my lungs when, right at the very second I think I might lose consciousness, a strike of whiteness penetrates the world

around me, forcing my eyes shut; I've been desperately trying to keep them open in an attempt to hold onto consciousness.

I'm weightless, floating almost. I feel like I'm drifting, or maybe I'm passing out, or going into a coma. Everything seems to slow down; it doesn't hurt not to breathe, and I know that it should. Sounds disappear, no rushing wind in my ears, no panicked thoughts in my brain. I feel as though I may be slipping into a trance. I fight it; I want to stay awake. Is this what it feels like to lose your soul to Metagenesis? Trying to hold on, but it's easier to let go?

I try to breathe and realize that I have been breathing already—deeply, actually, and slowly. I've never felt more relaxed in all my life. It's like I'm floating on the surface of a salty lake, where my body feels lighter than it really is. I don't even want to fight it anymore. I want to succumb to it, whatever "it" may be.

I open my eyes lazily and find I'm now in complete darkness. I see nothing, hear nothing, smell nothing, and it doesn't even faze me.

I am floating in nothingness, neither up nor down.

"Kay?" I mumble as my eyes roll back in my head, and I let the darkness take me.