

TELEPATHS EXIST

By SP Wright

There have always been individuals who do not conform to the standards of the community in which they live. Those who find groups hard to interact with on a fundamental level and avoid social occasions. Some are awkward, others shy, and a few are embarrassed, but they all feel that they should not *have* to interact. It's not that they don't want to participate, but rather an overwhelming sense of loss that prevents them from joining.

I am not one of those people, although I wish that I was! It would make things so much easier if I were. It would be amazing if the only thing I had to worry about was whether I wore the right clothes, spoke the right jargon, or stood in the right corner of the room. I would love to be judged and criticized for my lack of athletic prowess, or the fact that I have never learned to swim!

Unfortunately for me, my world does not fit into the routines or expectations of the average person. I walk through dreams and race through the wilds of imagination, and I must be extremely careful of who is around me at any given moment.

Some of the people you meet throughout your journey will comment on how quickly they can read a person. They will express opinions on the man they just interviewed based on factors that they have determined to be the most likely to indicate motivation and drive. This is something I try very hard not to do as I have a unique viewpoint on the lives of others.

The woman who conducted the interview had no way of knowing that the applicant had ridden the local bus to the nearest stop and then ran the rest of the way to ensure he arrived on time - which was why his shoes were covered in muck. Nor could she have known that the applicant's wife and children had perished last month when his home had caught fire and that his mind kept flashing back to that moment accounting for his lack of attentiveness. There was no way for her to know that the smirk which kept appearing on the man's face was because the interviewer's zipper was down which had left her lingerie showing when she sat.

I, on the other hand, would have known all those things. I would not have only realized that the man was contemplating the reason he survived the fire, and his family had not, but I would have also experienced his feelings during those moments. I would have been able to feel my lungs filling with smoke as I frantically struggled down the burning hallways trying to locate my daughter! I would have felt the heat of the doorknob as I summoned all my strength to burst through her door, and staggered under the weight of a flaming support beam as it collapsed and crushed my arm beneath it. I would have been the one howling in pain as I drug the limp child from beneath her bed and carried her out onto the front lawn. Through my eyes, I would have seen the world slowly fade to black as I lost consciousness while trying in vain to bring breath back into her body. While the woman conducting the interview would have been oblivious to these thoughts that were flying through his mind I would have relived every excruciating detail of this dark moment each time the memory resurfaced within his mind.

I cannot remember a time when this curse had not been with me. In childhood, I had known when my parents were going to fight hours before the argument would happen. I could hear their thoughts each time they became agitated with one another. I saw the scenario play out in my father's mind where he would finally snap and speak his mind. I spoke his eloquent words as he endeavored to make those around him understand his frustrations, and felt his annoyance at himself when he failed to say anything. In mother's mind, she would become so infuriated that she would begin throwing incredibly heavy things and punching holes in walls to vent her anger, but like father, she never acted on these images.

During my teenage years, I experienced puberty thousands of times a day on a heightened level that no other being can contemplate. In my mind, I could see hundreds of unspeakable little fantasies playing out. As I stared out the window into the quad, my mental barriers would be unable to defend me from the onslaught of sexual arousal which surrounded me. The visions I experienced were varied and ever changing to reflect the thoughts of those around me. The following would be a good example of the images dancing before my mind's eye as I struggled to pay attention in class.

Aged and wrinkled hands would wrap themselves around my body as they slowly caressed me. As the hands pulled away, I would find myself standing naked in the spotlight as my partner spun me across the stage in front of hundreds of spectators all of whom were only focused on my exposure! As I turned beyond the edge of the curtain, I would find myself immersed in a pool of hot steamy water, still naked but no longer male, and as I surfaced my lips would longingly touch with those of the man for whom my heart throbbed. When our mouths parted, I was dry once more (and a man) as I slowly caressed the male form lying beneath the covers with me as a soft wind blew across our skins. When the leaves blew in through the window my muscle-bound, rock-hard partner vanished in a swirl of color and was replaced with not one, but five incredibly well-proportioned women! All of whom were slowly moving their way up my body, hungrily licking my vagina and reaching for my own pair of boobs!

As you can imagine always experiencing such vivid images did not make my own experience any less awkward or confusing. I not only had to worry about the changes my body was going through, sorting through my own rising urges, and deal with acne ... but in all the confusion I couldn't even tell which sex I was attracted to!

This situation could not be allowed to persist! I must find a way to protect myself!

I was not stupid! I had read enough comics and seen enough movies that I knew what was happening. Somehow, impossibly, I had been born a telepath able to read the thoughts and feelings of those around me! I do not know how this happened, but I did know enough not to say anything to anyone under any circumstance. I knew what would happen to me if anyone should find out and I loathed to even think of that existence. I refused to end up in that situation!

As the years progressed, I withdrew from society and began to forge my own path through life. I was forced to learn how to temporarily block the intrusion of images when I would venture out into the public. I completed my college studies online to avoid interacting with that many people. I avidly refused to go to any parties or visit any of the bars as the minds of inebriated people were particularly difficult to contend with. I had forged a career as an author who lived alone in a secluded home on the outskirts of town, and thanks to the enormous popularity of my works I was finally able to afford my dream home.

I grudgingly made a trip into town so that I could finalize the paperwork for my purchase. My realtor Albert had been able to secure the rights to a secluded piece of land in the middle of Wyoming and I was eager to begin my new life there. I would be miles away from any other person, where only the thoughts of the occasional passing vehicle on the little used highway would intrude upon my being. As I entered the bank for what I hoped would be the last time I took note of the imaginings of those around me.

The old man at the counter was impatiently waiting for his money to be handed to him as he was envisioning how it would be used, and I could see that his plans this evening involved some scantily clad company.

The woman behind the counter was patiently ticking the minutes away in her mind until her vacation would begin and she could enjoy her stash of weed at home and get blitzed out of her mind, forgetting for a brief time about the pending divorce.

I continued strolling through the bank towards my destination and noted with amusement that the young man at the information desk was hungrily looking over my body as he envisioned ripping my clothes off there on the bank floor and ...

Further down the hall, I could see a meeting happening inside a glass room and could see that not one of the attendees was actively thinking about the meeting at all. Even the one currently speaking was daydreaming about the sweet gaming computer he was planning to build this coming weekend.

The hallway ended in an elevator which I was to ride to the fourth floor for my meeting with Albert. When the doors opened, I realized that there was a young woman standing inside and who appeared content to continue riding the lift. I shuffled inside and felt the platform accelerate upwards towards my destination. During the trip, I became uncomfortable as the thoughts of the other passenger washed over me, and I felt her excitement at the idea of setting a small poodle aflame and watching ecstatically as it burned! Her glee at the very idea of causing such pain was genuinely alarming, and I shrank as far back into the corner as I could.

When the door swished, open I rushed forward and burst through them. As I rushed down the new hall, I "heard" a cacophony of thoughts from within the rooms around me. There were clients

envisioning their new homes, daydreaming about driving their brand-new cars, considering the implications of finally affording the surgeries they had put off, and even a few who were excited to be buying their businesses. I saw all their thoughts with crystal clarity, as well as the ideas of the brokers who desperately wanted to be anywhere but the surroundings they were confined to. I even heard the wandering thoughts of the children and spouses who were unfortunate enough to have been drug down to the bank as well.

Someone was envisioning the enslavement of humans at the hands of alien conquerors who wanted to eat our brains!

I could see my destination up ahead and saw that the cubicle was empty save for the gentleman at the desk patiently waiting for me to arrive. He rose from his chair as I approached, but for some reason, his mind was a blank slate. There were no thoughts of any kind emanating from him. I slowed for a moment as I tried to process the implications of this eventuality until I set foot in his office and the entire world changed!

As I desperately tried to contemplate the meaning behind why I couldn't hear his thoughts I crossed the threshold into his room and abruptly swayed and stumbled the last few steps to his desk. Seeing this he rushed to my side to assist me, but there was nothing he could do as it wasn't him which had disoriented me so, but rather the silence. Somehow there were no voices within the confines of his little room. I could not hear the thoughts of anyone, anywhere. I HAD GONE DEAF! The voices had always been there, an unwelcome but constant companion, and while I had prayed for their silence all my life now that it had happened, I felt empty and hollow.

While I was desperately attempting to adjust to my new lack of feeling I was vaguely aware that he was inquiring to my wellbeing.

Without thinking about it I blurted, "I'll be fine sir. The lack of voices in this room just threw me off and took me by surprise." Dammit, I just told my realtor that I heard voices, what the hell was I going to do now?

"Oh yes, I see," he said as he rounded his desk and took his seat, "It is one of my favorite parts of this job. In this room, the thoughts of others cannot reach me, and I am free for a brief time!" he then winked knowingly at me and patiently waited for me to respond with a giant smile plastered across his face.

What, the hell, was going on here?

This room was somehow blocking my ability to hear others, and the guy in front of me just casually stated that other people's thoughts couldn't reach him here. I had thought I was in a standard bank, but now I wasn't so sure anymore and decided to play it safe. I couldn't hide the expression of shock and confusion which had crossed my face as he spoke, but I attempted to twist them into a look of amused confusion before responding. "I'm sorry, I was referring to the fact that I lost my call as I entered your office. You were saying ..."

He continued to smile at me, but his eyes narrowed as he looked me over. Abruptly he was in my mind, but not in the way that I was accustomed to, *<You can hear me, can't you?>* He saw in my reaction that I could and continued. *<Are you able to reply to me in this same manner?>*

I shook my head quickly without taking my eyes off him.

In his eyes, it was evident that he was disappointed but ultimately unfazed! *<A pity. It would be much faster and convenient to converse in this manner, however, for your sake, I will revert to verbal language.>*

He sat up straighter in his chair and began to recount his story. Like me, he had carried this burden throughout his life and thought himself alone. He went through many of the same obstacles that I had, and like me, he had managed to find a way to survive in a world that would have driven others insane. He had also forged a career in a field that required little interaction with his fellow man until approximately two years ago.

When he went on a business trip to the Bahamas, he was forced to meet with a client and experienced for the first time the bliss of silence. His client had been in a room much like this one which prevented Albert from hearing the people around him, and he had reacted in much the same manner that I was now. He learned during that meeting that he was not alone and that his client was also a telepath like him and that there was a better way to live. He had been invited to join his client on a secluded Island in the Arctic sea where he would be able to live without the noise of the world surrounding him at every moment. He would also be able to learn techniques for controlling his abilities.

At this point, Albert leaned forward and informed me that this same offer was now being presented to me. His mentor was on the Island at this moment, and was hoping to see me there within the next two weeks! "It is important that you understand that this offer is entirely voluntary. There will be no repercussions should you choose not to go, nor will we take your refusal negatively. The only one who benefits from the training we're offering is you, and if you choose not to receive it, then we will understand." His eyes tightened as he locked his gaze with mine, "You must also understand that this is a one-time offer! For the protection of both you and us, we will not be contacting you again!"

He rose at that moment and gently thrust a pile of paper into my hand as he led me to the door. I exited his office in a state of bewilderment, and once I was again beyond his threshold, the voices of the world returned to me. I slowly staggered back to the elevator and found myself dismayed to discover that the same young woman was still inside. I hesitated briefly trying to decide if I should take the stairs when I heard him again. *<Take the elevator, my friend! I will encapsulate it in the same manner that I have with my office so that you will not have to hear the dark thoughts of this one again.>*

He kept his word, and the descent to the ground floor was quiet and uneventful. The border he had created shattered when I set foot once more in the lobby, and I barely noticed the images forming in my mind from the stray thoughts of others as I absently glanced through the papers he had placed in my hands. As I passed the horny man at the information desk, I paused while openly gawking at the item in my hand. I had received a map which clearly defined the path to this Island he had spoken of, and I knew at that moment that I would go.