

a v a n t

The girl stumbled along the railway line which ran across the bridge separating the two parts of the town. She was covered in mud. It had been raining solidly for forty-eight hours and the verge up to the railway line was a sodden mess. She did not hesitate though, she was running for her life now. It had felt like a game up until that moment but now she knew this was not a game. There were no superheroes coming to rescue her.

In the past, as the summer breeze blew the blossom past her bedroom window she had dreamed of her hero and what he would do for her. She would not lie in bed each night like Maman crying dry tears about a life that had passed her by. She would not cry like Maman each day with her hands in dirty water. Always cooking. Always cleaning.

She had been promised a life in the big city. A life of carefree abandon, of parties, of cocktails. Of sex. She did not understand that part yet and was not sure she wanted to. All she knew was that it was a gift she ought to share and it could bring its own set of rewards.

The girl's summer dress billowed in the wind behind her, the blood stains pressing against her body in various places as the wind whipped the thin cotton fabric. She looked around, her eyes darting towards the forest and then to the river beneath her. Her hair was matted with dirt from where she had been lying on the ground, her face pushed into the mud as his foot held her down. She had thought her skull was going to explode and perhaps that was his intention. If she had not wriggled free then, perhaps it would already be over.

She turned her head back and although her eyes were swollen and red she knew instinctively they were following her. She pressed forward, her feet raw and bloody and each step against the cold railway lines like a dagger into them. She lurched onwards knowing she had to make it to the other side. If she could only do that she would be okay. Wouldn't she?

Behind her she could hear the catcalls, the wolf-whistles, the giggles, the voices of boys with nothing but darkness in their hearts and mischief in their minds. She thought for a moment that they sounded happy, but why? Why would they be happy? Weren't they meant to save her? To be her saviours? She closed her eyes and pictured his red cape, the one she had imagined would wrap itself around her and always protect her from danger, to carry her away to safety. Every nerve in her body was firing alerts into her brain - there was no escape. There was no protection. It was over. She opened her eyes and saw them striding purposefully towards her. She saw the black eyes that showed no signs of life or light and she knew there was no coming back, there would be no superhero to save her. Whatever was going to happen next she knew there was no return from the abyss they would throw her into.