

The Grendel in Me

I, myself, may be good. Deep down within however, I am not. Things such as personal demons, irrational insecurities, and a brain filled to the brim with self-hatred sit inside of their rightful spots and wait. They wait for me to conjure a small mistake to come out of their places and attack relentlessly. I am all too familiar with the feeling of dread and shame that follows even the most minuscule of things. I could drop my pencil on the floor in class and feel the bad things consume me whole, from the inside out. It is only a matter of seconds from when said mistake happens for my brain to go dark. You see, the evil in me is not the type of evil one may think. The monster in this story is no monster; it is my own brain.

The demons that reside within this mind of mine are fully aware of the fact they are not welcome and never have been. Though aware, they stay. The strongest one that lives on despite being unwelcomed is named Depression. She is often the cause of my lack of focus, lack of motivation, and constant tears. She has been here for years and does not seem to want to leave, so I have kind of grown accustomed to her. When she is gone on vacation, I am often scared. I have become so used to the idea of her constantly playing a role in forming who I am as a person that when she is gone, I am in shambles. Suddenly in my head, everything I once knew was wrong. She has been such a big part of my life throughout the time I have been here on earth. Depression has a very close friend called Anxiety. Anxiety has been responsible for the fast heart rates and constant checking of my phone amongst other things. On her own, anxiety is an immeasurably difficult monster to fight. With depression, she is even stronger, and is more able to destroy me and break me down. Together they vow me to be empty and numb, forlorn and cold. Every day with these two is a battle, much like the one Beowulf and Grendel once fought in the epic poem Beowulf. Unlike the one they fought, in this story the good guy is not triumphant.

Along with Depression and Anxiety, there is a more silent monster. This one does not scream of her existence. In fact, she does not contribute much. She does not have to. I always know she is there. I know she does not want to be the way she is, because that is exactly what she makes me feel. Her name is Insecurity. In a world constantly throwing the attractiveness of one human or another into our faces, her and I are quite alike in the sense that neither of us will ever amount to what we see. Well, that is what she tells me at least. Instead, we compare ourselves to what we see. We obsess. What could be better? What can change? How much better are things for them? Even though what we compare ourselves to is not reality. A photograph is a mere moment in time, and often I spend hours trying to perfect myself permanently to match up to the split-second camera image. Insecurity is a mind-altering monster. She warps me and twists my vision of mirrors and shows me a terrifying beast unlike any other. I think she does it because she is not who she thought she was going to be when she grew up.

My nemesis is known as Self-Hatred. The gnarliest of creations, most foul of monsters; a redundant creature one could say. She is the one that fuels my doubt of my worth. The one that seeps through my skin and seethes within my blood. The one that knocks down all of my soldiers still standing from battles before. She goes dormant sometimes, but when she is around, she makes it well known. This is the monster I cannot keep inside. This monster swells out of my eyes and scratches out of my throat. She burns in every sense of the word. The painful sting she gives me as she overflows my tear ducts is one that hurts like no other. The painful words of self-loathing she forces out of my mouth are comparable to the wails of someone losing someone they love. Which is something nobody should ever hear. I suppose in a sense I have lost someone I love.

The confidence and exuberance that once filled me are no longer present. Because of my monsters, "Grendels" if you will, I am not the girl I once was. Fortunately for that girl, this

battle is not over yet. Despite my monsters clouding everything I do, I am still fighting as much as I can. My hope is that someday my monsters will be sent away to some other place- a place where they cannot hurt me. I will prove it to the present beasts that I can exist without them.