



YASMIN RAHMAN

Yasmin loves issue-led YA with a dash of hope and humour. During this **MA**, she gained a reputation for killing off characters, despite only a fraction *actually* dying. When she's not writing, she makes bookish fan art; her designs are sold worldwide on behalf of John Green. Her short story was published in Stripes' anthology *A Change is Gonna Come*. Yasmin is represented by Hellie Ogden at Janklow & Nesbit.

About *All the Things We Never Said*

Three girls. Three reasons to die.

Mehreen can't cope with her anxiety and depression. Her Noise tells her she's better off dead.

Cara hasn't been the same since the car crash. She's suffocating under the guilt of causing it, and her father's death.

Olivia's life seems picture perfect: she's rich, smart and beautiful. But inside, she's carrying a huge secret that's drowning her.

The trio are matched together by an overbearing suicide partner website and given fifteen days to prepare for their deaths. Fifteen days to live. But what happens when they start having second thoughts? Will the website let them off that easily?

A pact is a pact, after all.

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ALL THE THINGS WE NEVER SAID

Chapter One

MEHREEN

4th April

Bismillah hir-rahman nir-rahim

In the name of Allah, the most gracious, the most merciful.

The call to prayer is supposed to be relaxing. The Arabic is supposed to flow through you, cleansing your body from head to toe. It's supposed to be a time to ponder the significance of God's words. I guess it helps if you understand Arabic, which I don't.

Mum finishes her prayers and leaves the room, but I stay kneeling on the mat. They say that dawn is the best time to ask for things, so I start a little personal prayer.

Allah, I feel like there's something wrong with me, something completely and utterly unfixable. I just want to live a life where I'm not suddenly struck by an intense feeling of sadness. I'm fed up of the Noise – when my head is so crammed with thoughts and worries that I can't even focus on what I'm doing, who I'm with, whether I'm breathing. I want my brain to slow down, to focus, to just ... be normal. I need something to live for, Allah, because right now, the only thing keeping me here is you. And I'm starting to feel like that's not enough.

As usual, I find myself so overcome with tears that I can't continue. I curl up on the prayer mat in the foetal position, squeezing my eyes, clenching all my muscles, trying to push away the darkness.

‘Mehreen! Come down and eat!’ My mother’s voice is at the pitch that tells me this isn’t the first time she’s called me. When I stand up, my body is stiff and the sun is beginning to peek through the curtains. I wipe my face and compose myself before making my way downstairs.

In the kitchen, Mum is at her position by the sink, furiously scrubbing a pan while Dad sits at the head of the table, tapping away on his phone. The Angry Birds theme tune hums quietly around the room. Imran is leaning against the counter near the toaster, also on his phone. I slip into the room, fix myself some cereal and sit down at the other end of the table.

No one looks up.

No one says anything.

*They don't even notice when you're in the room.
THEY'RE BETTER OFF WITHOUT YOU.
They don't care about you.*

I chew my cereal and watch as Mum dries her hands and touches Imran on the back to squeeze past him to the cupboard. She pulls out a plate and silently hands it to him. He rolls his eyes and drops the toast from his mouth on to the plate then takes a seat right next to Dad, who’s picked up his phone again.

‘Want me to do it?’ Imran asks with his mouth full.

‘Almost got it,’ Dad mumbles. The downhearted tune plays a few seconds later. ‘Dammit!’

Imran laughs, snatches the phone and starts tapping away.

Watching the three of them is like watching a totally normal family interacting. It’s nothing momentous, what they’re doing, but it’s the little things that make a family a *proper* family.

*Look how happy they are on their own.
THEY'RE BETTER OFF WITHOUT YOU.
No one would even notice.
THEY'RE BETTER OFF WITHOUT YOU.*

Mum's started chopping some vegetables on the counter. I drop my bowl in the sink next to her, roll up my sleeves and grab the sponge.

'What's that on your wrist?' Mum asks, turning her head to look at me, the knife poised mid-slice.

There's a jolt in my chest. The heart I thought had become stagnant starts up again. Jumps straight into my throat. I shake my arm inconspicuously to loosen my sleeve so that it rolls down and covers the scars, but it only shuffles part way down. Mum's eyes are firmly fixed on my wrist.

This is it.

The moment I've both been dreading and hoping for.

I stare at her intently, hoping that she'll finally *see* me, that this pressure, this pain will finally go.

'Did you get those marks from your bangles?' she asks, her eyes only lingering on my face for a second before returning to her chore. 'I told you to stop wearing such cheap jewellery.'

Of course she doesn't see. She doesn't realise because things like this don't exist for her. In her world, there's only sunshine and butterflies. No one ever hurts. No one ever feels the need to not exist. Everything is *perfect*.

'Why don't you use all that time you spend in your room to find a job instead? That way you can afford things that don't ruin your body.'

I stare at the knife as it moves up and down between her fingers, willing it to slip, wishing it were my skin beneath it.

'Who'd want to hire her?' Imran laughs from the table, his eyes still fixed on Dad's phone. 'It's not like she's actually good at anything. Besides being a loser.'

He's right; you're such a loser.
No one will ever love you.
LOSER. LOSER. LOSER. LOSER.
They're better off without you.

I get that urge rushing through my body, that tight constriction in the middle of my chest, my wrists beginning to itch. There's an image in my head already of the trail of red, the sense of relief that I'll achieve. I wrap my fingers around my wrist and squeeze.

Dad's phone lets out an upbeat melody, and he squeals, patting Imran on the back as he takes his phone back to start the next level. Imran sits back in his chair, looking smug. His gaze moves back to me and before he can even start his next insult, I'm out of the room, up the stairs, slamming my bedroom door.

None of them care about you.
CUT. CUT. CUT. CUT.
You'll feel better.
CUT. CUT. CUT. CUT. CUT. CUT. CUT. CUT.
they don't want you around.
CUT. CUT.

The need to cut is a physical thing. My wrists pulse, my heart races, my brain whirs. I dig my nails into my palms to try and quell the rage within me, but that's not enough. I'm not strong enough to resist. Weak and pathetic, that's me all over. Every time I do it, I hate myself, literally *hate* myself for doing that to my body, but when the thought enters my mind, it's like there's only one thing I can do to get rid of it. So, I just kneel on the floor and take out the craft knife hidden under my mattress, like the loser I am.

YOU'RE SO STUPID. WORTHLESS.
No one would even realise if you weren't here.
LOSER. CUT.
Just end it all. NO ONE WOULD
EVEN NOTICE.

When I'm done and have tidied everything up, I log on to my laptop, feeling completely spent. Cutting usually makes the Noise quieten down for a bit; it's one of the only times I feel like I can actually think clearly.

I open up the sole website I have bookmarked: a website I haven't been able to get out of my head since I stumbled across it a few weeks ago. www.MementoMori.com, a website with a simple message on the homepage:

Enter your details in a simple questionnaire to be matched with a suicide partner and have a pact tailored to your needs.

It's like something clicked into place when I found this site. As if it had

appeared to me as a sign. I've been thinking about suicide a *lot* recently, but I've also always known that it was out of my reach. I may not be the best Muslim, but I know that suicide is a sin, that I'll regret it in the afterlife. But MementoMori makes me think maybe there is a way out. All I need is someone else to take away the guilt, take away the blame. If I were to join MementoMori, then I wouldn't be the one responsible.

I scroll down the page, reading the questions I've now memorised. I open the word document containing my prewritten answers and then hesitate. Mum's laughter floats up the stairs and I think about her emotionless response to my scars, the way her eyes always gloss over me. Without a second thought, I paste my answers into the questionnaire and press the submit button before the doubts creep back in.

Chapter Two

OLIVIA

We sit down for supper. The smell of lobster permeates the room as Maria brings the plates in. It's a special occasion, according to Mother.

He sits at the

H

E

A

D

of the table, in **Daddy's** seat.

I've already had three glasses of champagne. It's a *special occasion*, after all.

I'm still not drunk enough.

I can still see straight.

see the way she l

e

a

n

s into him when he talks, the way she

pushes around her food on the plate, no doubt still stinging from the comment he made about her weight last week.

He kisses her on the neck.

I pour another glass.

She giggles. Shoots a glance my way. Reminds him that they've got company.

Company.

I've lived here my whole life and *I'm* the company.

He looks over at me.

I my head, focusing on my plate.
duck

He suggests she tell me the news.

My head **SNAPS** up.

The champagne hits. Makes my head spin.

I force myself to look over at her.

Fuzzy faced,

oblivious

Mother.

I ask her what news he's talking about.

To her credit, she looks mildly uncomfortable, fiddling with her pearl necklace.

He reaches over and squeezes her fingers, that disgusting smile

s p r e a d i n g

across his face.

He encourages her to go on.

She straightens her back.

Clears her throat.

She tells me that they've been dating for a while now.

As if I didn't know.

As if I wasn't aware of the

preposterous

amount of time they've been spending together,
the amount of time he's spent in my presence.

She says it's time they **took the next step.**

No.

No.

No.

No.

No.

No.

I look up at her.

Pleading.

Begging.

Wishing.

She proudly tells me his flat lease is up.

They've rented a van to bring his stuff over.

Next week.

He looks at me.

Smirks.

Winks.

We're going to be roomies, he tells me.

The glass

S H A T T E R S

in my hand.

Champagne goes everywhere.

It's a special occasion, after all.

The glass

CUTS

into my fingers.

into my palm.

The sound of cracking glass slices through the silence.

'Oh, Olivia!' Mum chides. 'That's a crystal flute!'

'You really should be more careful, Liv,' he says.

LIV.

He calls me Liv.

Maria rushes over dutifully with her dustpan and brush.

She tries to smile at me as she clears away the mess, but all I can focus on is the shard of glass in my hand.

I want to place it against my throat and drag it along

s l o w l y

To feel my skin slice open.

Y

A

R

P

To watch the blood S P R A Y

P

R

A

Y over everything.

To see it stain the lace tablecloth Mother dry-cleans every fortnight.

I want to take the glass and **stab** it into my chest

OVER

AND

OVER

‘Olivia?’ Mother asks, when Maria’s out of the room again.
When the mess is gone.
Her brow is creased and I know she’s waiting, watching.

But not too closely.

Never closely enough.

God forbid she see the truth.

‘Congratulations,’ I manage to say. ‘That’s great.’
‘Isn’t it just?’ she says, putting her hand on his again.
His eyes are on me though.
‘You okay, Liv?’

LIV.

He calls me Liv.

‘Can I be excused, please?’
She doesn’t even ask why.
 doesn’t notice the alteration in my breath.
 can’t hear the pOuNdInG in my chest.
She’s got what she needed.

We’re going to be roomies.

In my bedroom, I unclench my fist, noting the thin, dry trail of red with sadness.
 I pull out my laptop.
 Open up a word document.
 The list I’ve been building up for months.
The list that was supposed to be just a fantasy.
 But is now my only option.

~~Line upon line of crossed out websites.~~
Websites where the most hopeless people reside.

People
like
me.

DESPERATE

for a way out.
I click on the first uncrossed website.
www.MementoMori.com
Please let this be the one.