

## Can you hear me Miss Wise?

by Katy Wise

“Can you hear me Miss Wise, can you hear me?”

The truth was I could hear her, I could hear everything. But I wasn't ready to admit it. So with my eyes tight shut I did the only thing I seemed to be able to do, which was listen.

I listened to the sound of the wind and imagined the rustling and dropping golden Autumn leaves, I listened to my own breathing and concentrated on trying to slow it as the wind gradually increased.

If it was raining already I couldn't feel it, but the sound of the wind told me the weather was deteriorating, and the grey behind my eyelids suggested it was getting late.

I strained to hear hooves on wet ground, I couldn't locate them to start with and then there they were, distant, but increasing in time with the wind and getting closer, thundering towards me till they were right on top of me and then a high pitched winnie ripped through me and the sound of bone cracking.

My body convulsed in panic, I couldn't move away from it, but when no pain came I focused on the soft mumbling voices around me and realised the sound of hooves was a memory.

And now more memories were flooding my senses.

The sound of screeching breaks and leather dragged across tarmac, a branch snapping and iron on cobblestones, the disconnected rhythm of a loose wheel before splintering wood being scattered and the scratch of a broken shaft along the ground.

The noise of a hoof slipping on icy chalk and crumbling stones followed by a thud as a large body hit the ground and shouts of concern all around me.

And then there was the sharp crunch of plastic under hoof and another familiar thud as my own body hit the ground, this time followed by mocking laughter.

“Can you hear Miss Wise, can you hear me?”

I could, I could also hear the whirring propellers of a helicopter approaching, fighting the now outraged wind.

But I still wasn't ready to answer yet.

I strained to hear familiar hoof-beats near by, or an angry neigh keen to go home, or the gentle tugging of grass and grinding teeth as they chewed. I listened for a snuffle or a snort or a swish of main or tail, or the beat of a giant heart. But none came.

“Miss Wise can you hear me?”

I could, I could hear every fall and every accident that had come before me. But this one was different. I could hear no horse around me. I hadn't even heard the comforting sound of scrambling hooves righting a large felled body, or the panic inflicting noise of galloping hooves disappearing into the distance.

I had heard nothing but the same question since that blood curdling crack.

“Can you hear me Miss Wise, can you hear me?”

I could, but I no longer wanted to.