

Akilah Stroman

Starry Knight

Nobody knew what was wrong with Clarity. At Chemistry, it was the same thing every day; she'd sit in the back, where the teacher hopefully wouldn't notice. He always did, however; everyone would notice. Her head was turned, facing that special seat next to her, the empty one right beside the window, and she would just talk. She talked about her day, the classes she was stressing out about, how awful the cafeteria lunch was, how amazing that new movie was...she talked about everything. If someone sat in that seat, she would look at them weirdly, as if they violated her personal space. She'd tell them to get off, and if they didn't, she'd scream. Everyone knew whose seat that was, everyone knew it was reserved for Starry Knight.

Starry Knight was a friend she met when she was six. She was sobbing on the steps of her house, the rain pouring down upon her tangled red hair. The girls at school called her names again, not letting her play tag with them. Mom wasn't home again, probably not coming until 10:00 at night. Clarity cried and cried- she cried until it became tiresome.

When she looked up for the first time in hours, she saw something in front of her; a glimmering figure that couldn't surprise or startle her. He was tall, and wore a coat as dark as the distant sky, covering his entire head. Multiple silver flowers covered his entire outfit, sparkling every time he moved, almost like the stars. He picked one off and gave it to her.

From then on, Starry Knight would visit her as often as possible. When she was seven, he'd come over every day, and play board games with her. He didn't like to use his hands, so Clarity would have to move his pieces for him. When she was ten, Starry Knight would come over and watch old movies with her, while Mom was passed out on the couch. They'd share a bowl of popcorn, but he wouldn't eat. He said he was trying to watch his calories. When she was

fourteen, she'd walk around the schoolyard at recess, just talking to him. Clarity wondered why people looked at her the way they did, but he said it was because of his elaborate coat, and his odd sense of style. When she was seventeen, they'd go to the mall together after school, and, they'd stay there for hours until Mom was home to let them inside. He had a phobia of cashiers, and no money, so Clarity would often buy things for him. She didn't mind, however, his presence was worth the price.

Most of the class would laugh, and joke about that crazy girl in the back of the room. Most of the class would point and stare. Nobody knew, of course, that as Clarity held that silver flower in her hands, on the empty night she met him; she looked up to the sky again, and realized the pouring rain had stopped.