

Telephone

There on a wall, a telephone hung. Inside enclosed walls it stayed, pondering one question.

Could it ever hear like they did?

The first day, it was installed on one of four smooth, white walls that made up a small room that in turn made up part of a building.

The days after that, it was not used. It could only feel the gaze of its owners (if it could call them that). They left during the night, for what seemed like a few hours, leaving the telephone, as lonely as it felt, alone. It could not talk and express its feeling of loneliness, for it had no mouth of its own to use.

Only after a week had it first come to use. This was also the first time the telephone had heard a ringing noise in itself. It was strange, a foreign sound. It watched as its owner rose from their seat, looking at the telephone as they walked over and picked it up.

The conversation was barely ten minutes, but the telephone felt as if it was longer. The thrill of the call bloomed inside the telephone as it listened and tried to make out what the conversation was about. Faint mumbling inside the telephone rung in its machine. The whirring of its insides blocked out the sound of its owner's voice. As the telephone concentrated on the conversation, the mumbling became even more quieter.

Suddenly, a booming voice raised. The telephone heard it loud and clear.

“Preg-!”

It cut off into another quiet mumble. The telephone was disappointed, but it didn't give up. It continued to listen to the conversation, with its excitement rising as the call carried on. The voice murmured and murmured, but the telephone couldn't make out anything that was being said.

Finally, the telephone was put back. It was slightly disheartened, but it waited for the next call nevertheless.

After a few months and calls, the telephone was sure that it could hear conversations clearly now. Despite not being able to hear clearly, it was able to recognize the different voices that talked and their faces. This time, a familiar face showed up in the room. They sat on the chair right behind the desk, reading a gray paper. It looked about half the size of the desk, if not bigger.

The same old ringing sound had started playing.

This is it, right? The telephone thought.

The person looked at the telephone with the same glance they had used before. They stood up trotting over to the green object. They picked it up and the telephone began to hear the same old mumbling sound. Just like before, a loud noise suddenly overcame the telephone.

It was put down and the person grabbed their jacket and ran out of the room, leaving the telephone all alone, let down by not being able to hear the conversation yet again. It was sad, but it had no mouth, no ears, no hands, and no legs to express its feelings with. It could not throw a tantrum or cry, yet it felt as if it wanted to. These feelings were left behind as soon as dawn had risen the next day.

How much time had passed, the telephone did not know. But from what it could tell, it had been a very long time. Only twice had the same person visited within this region of time, which made the telephone continue to lose its hope. But as the sun rose and set, so did the person and their family.

The person came in with a smile on their face, presumably from their child. They sat down on the chair and began reading another gray, half of the size of the desk, paper. The telephone heard

a familiar sound. With a grin, the person walked over to the telephone yet another time. This time, the telephone could barely make out what the person was saying.

“Goodb-” Was one of the lines the telephone had heard.

“Ha- goo- da- a- sch-” Was what it was followed by.

The tall figure put the telephone down and sat back on their seat. In the present moment, instead of feeling somewhat disappointed, the telephone felt a surge of ambition. It wished it could hear words. But this was not a wish. It was a burning desire to finally be able to hear the person on this side and on the other.

Long periods of time which had separated the person’s visits did not please the telephone. But finally, *finally*, they came back. Older than they looked, older than the telephone looked. The same old routine had undergone. They sat and the telephone waited, waiting for a call.

Ring, ring, ring.

Maybe, just maybe, it was its chance to finally hear. It sat patiently on the wall, hoping the person would hurry and pick it up. Once they finally did, they seemed slower than before. Maybe the telephone was hallucinating. Not that it could anyway.

“-aduation? I’ll- there.’

Once again, the telephone was hung on the wall, wallowing in its own agony. Hundreds of times this had occurred. It lost hope, the hope that was promised to never be put out.

The person no longer came. It was a younger version. Different in many ways, yes, but similar in the same sense. It was the first time they had come.

Ring, ring, ring.

It no longer hoped to hear. Its desire was broken into pieces shattered like glass.

“Hello?”

What was this? It was a strange feeling. What was this sound? Then it realized.

Words.

Time and time again, it could not hear. But now, it could.

What was the difference?

Excitement and happiness rushed through the telephone.

But alas, it could not express these feelings. It could not cheer and shout, cry and laugh. It could not run or walk or jump. It could only sit in the hands of its owner, listening.

For this telephone, was merely a telephone.