

“Dear Brave People” Mentor Text

Read the mentor text below from *Dear My Blank: Secret Letters Never Sent*, edited by Emily Trunko.

Dear Brave People

by anonymous, from *Dear My Blank: Secret Letters Never Sent*

Dear Brave People,

I realise that it appears I'm fearless. I can make that presentation with ease, I can stand near the edge of the cliff and look down, and I can befriend that spider in the bathroom. (He's called Steve.)

But recently I've realised that's not what makes people brave. *Brave* has a different meaning.

I'm afraid of people leaving. After I watched my best friend become someone else's and I was forced into befriend my childhood bully, I realised I don't want to let myself go through this again. I see my fear come through when questioning my boyfriend's affections. I see it when I distance myself from my friends who are going to leave for university. I see it in my overanalysis of my parents' relationship and paranoia over a possible divorce.

I don't want to be alone.

I'm afraid of failure. I aced my exams and the bar has moved up again. I have those high expectations along with everyone else, but I know that maybe the tower is just too tall, and I should've built stronger foundations. I act like I know what I'm doing, but really I'm drifting away from the shore faster and faster.

I don't want to let anyone down.

I'm afraid of change. I don't know where I lie anymore.

I thought I knew what to do in my future, but I can't bear to think that I'm now not so sure. I thought I was completely straight, but now it's internal agony as I'm not so sure. Turns out I thought a lot of things.

I don't want my life to not be the way I expected.

I may not be scared of crowds. Or the dark. Or small spaces. *But I am afraid.*

I am afraid of responsibility; I am afraid of not living up to expectations, of changing the future, of growing up, not knowing, sex, relationships, hardship, secrets, grades, judgment, falling short, loneliness, change, confusion, arguments, curiosity, love, hate, losing, pressure, differences, honesty, lies.

I am afraid of *me*.

Yet, despite this, I know I am brave. I know I am brave because I've accepted my invisible fears and haven't let them overcome me.

I want you to know that you're brave because you know your fears. You're brave because you introduced yourself. You're brave because you said "No, I don't understand." You're brave because you're here.

I hope you can learn from me and be brave in your own way. I know I am.

— B