[At the innermost core of all loneliness is a deep and powerful yearning for union with one's lost self.](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/b/brendanfra151767.html" \o "view quote)  
-[Brendan Francis](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/b/brendan_francis.html) 

A black butterfly fluttered along the ground, twisting and turning as obstacle after obstacle blocked its path. Suddenly, the butterfly constricted into a tight ball before falling apart as two pale white hands. She let her hands drop to her lap as she closed her blue eyes. It would be nice to fly away like a little butterfly, wouldn’t it? She would give a lot to be one of the white butterflies fluttering in the garden. A small sigh escaped her mouth. She had done it again. Another daydream.

Talia leaned her head back against the leather seating as she stared out the small window to her left. Talia hated daydreams. What was the point about dreaming of things she would never have? It would only hurt realizing that you couldn’t do what you wanted to. So why did she keep doing it?

A laugh echoed from outside the window caught Talia’s attention as she turned to glance outside. Five teenagers scurried around in the small courtyard outside Talia’s room. They waved their arms manically, beckoning some of the other children to come around. Talia’s eyes light up as she recognized the familiar faces. There was the red-headed girl that was the vocalist, the blonde boy that played the piano, the brown-haired person of indeterminate gender that played the bass, the black-haired girl who played drums, and the other red-headed boy that played guitar. She didn’t know any of their names, but she liked them... at least a little. The side of Talia’s mouth twitched up before immediately turning back down. No.

Her hand snapped out to yank the dangling cord by the windowsill, causing the blinds to drop down. The room fell into darkness, but Talia still stared at the spot the small band would have taken if she had not just moved. “We’re going to start in a minute, so settle down!” Talia groaned. They really needed to soundproof the rooms. Talia glanced to the doorway before sighing. She really hadn’t thought this through well. Talia grabbed the small handle on the side of her chair before slowing scooting her wheelchair towards the door. She grunted as her left hand slipped, and she angled to the right.

Why wasn’t it getting any easier? It had already been over a month, but she still couldn’t do it right. Music pounded in from the hospital courtyard, and Talia’s head drooped even lower. Her eyes felt warm as tears slipped down her cheek. She hated it when they came to play music. Why did they have to appear every week and show her what she could never be?

“Talia, dear. What are you doing in here? Come, I’ll wheel you outside with the others.” Talia’s head shot up at the nurse’s voice. As comprehension dawned her, Talia scooted back in her seat.

“No, I’m fine. Really, Diana. You don’t have to do that,” Talia said hurriedly.

“You stay by yourself far too often, dear. Come, it won’t be too bad.” The warmth in Diana’s voice did little to reassure Talia. Unfortunately, there was little she could do to escape as Diana grabbed the handlebars of her wheelchair. Talia huffed and glared off to the side as Diana wheeled her out of the hospital room. The stale air brushed past their faces as they exited the elevator and headed out to the courtyard.

As the music grew louder, Talia felt herself shrink in her seat. “Diana, please don’t bring me out there. I’ll watch from in the lobby.” Diana raised a faded eyebrow and eyed Talia before shaking her head.

“For now, I suppose this is good enough. I’ll stay with you until it is time to go back up, so let’s go over here.” Diana pushed the wheelchair to the right near the end of a row of chairs before sitting down in the nearest seat. Talia sighed softly. Diana only wanted the best for her, but sometimes it felt smothering.

Talia propped up her head on her fist as she stared out the glass panes to where the small group was performing. It wasn’t as if they were brilliant at playing their instruments, but they had energy to them. No matter how hard she tried, Talia found it hard to dislike them. They were too... happy. And maybe that was why her heart ached whenever she looked at them for too long. They reminded her too much of the person she had wanted to be.

She could have been a singer or even a dancer. That would have been fun. On a stage, it felt like all the eyes in the world turned to stop and stare. Before, she had liked that feeling, but things had changed so much after her accident. Now, she slunk around in the darkness, trying to avoid attention. Whenever she got attention now, it was for all the reasons. Children stared and parents gasped as she wheeled past. She felt like an invalid. If people were going to act differently around her now that she had lost her legs, then it was better if she didn’t have to face them at all and spare everyone the hurt.

The music died down, and Talia turned to Diana. “I stayed until the end. Let’s go back up.” The implied words were, “Let’s go back up before anyone sees me.” Talia flipped the lock on her wheelchair and expectantly looked up at Diana who was still sitting in her chair. “Did you hear me?”

“I did, but wait a moment. There’s someone I’d like you to meet.” Meeting someone? Talia instinctively rolled her chair back a little bit.

“Preferably not. You can tell that person I’m sorry, but I’m not in the mood for meeting people right now. I’m tired,” Talia said shortly while trying to shove her wheelchair along. It was so blasted difficult.

“Hey! Wait a second!” A shock jolted up Talia’s spine as she felt a hand grab her chair’s handlebars. Diana tugged the wheelchair slightly, and Talia moved her hands away from the wheels.

“Bring me upstairs, Diana. Quickly.” Much to her chagrin, Diana merely raised an eyebrow and glanced over to the teenagers that were heading their way. “Please, Diana,” she implored. Diana shook her head and patted Talia softly on the head.

“It’s all right to meet talk to new people, you know. They aren’t going to hurt you.” Talia glanced away. Physical hurt wasn’t what she was worried about. “They’re good kids. Trust me. Just give it a shot, eh?”

Talia opened her mouth to protest, but she was cut off by the red-headed boy’s “Hey Mum!” It was strange seeing him up close after only seeing glimpses of him whenever his group performed in the courtyard. His voice was different than she thought it would be, but it wasn’t a particularly bad thing. But wait, did he just call Diana his mother? Talia stared at Diana incredulously, but she only winked in return. “And you must be Talia, right? Mum said we would get to meet you today! My name is Henry!”

Talia scrutinized Henry’s outstretched hand before shaking it tentatively. “A pleasure, I’m sure.” Henry appeared oblivious to her displeasure as he waved his friends over. One by one, Henry introduced his friends and Talia quickly noticed something different about them. They weren’t like a lot of the people who visited her in the hospital. None of them stared at her legs. All of them looked her in the eye as they were introduced. It was... nice.

A few hours later, Talia waved at the group as they exited the lobby. For the second time that day, her eyes felt warm, but it was different this time. Tears leaked by the palms of her hands as a small smile crossed her face. For the first time in weeks and weeks, she had felt normal, and normal felt great. Maybe she would ask Diana if she could see them again.