

# UC Merced

## The Vernal Pool

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Campos, Noemy

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## Conversations with an Insomniac

By Noemy Campos

Chloe is lying in her bed. She's staring up at the ceiling wishing she could sleep. Her head turns to see the clock; it's 2 AM. She has been tossing and turning for the past hour. She feels so tired, but every time she closes her eyes all she can think about are homework assignments. All she does is scold herself over and over again.

*'I told you not to take that nap at 6pm. I told you that you needed to work on your English homework before 8, but do you listen to me? Noooooooo. How many times have I told you, you're an insomniac! Two hour naps aren't going to help you!'* Number 1 scolds.

*'I know...'* Chloe responds.

*'Hey, number 1, why do you have to be so mean? Do I have to remind you that in that moment you also agreed to take the nap? Don't beat us up because you decided to go along with the bad decision,'* Number 2 enters.

*'Oh here we go. What's your excuse this time? Hm?'* Number 1 retorts.

*'Why are you getting so bent out of shape? You're stressing us out. We could be sleeping, but because you're too busy scolding us, we can't sleep. You're the problem here.'*

*'Oh shut up, number 2.'*

*'Hey man, I can't help it if you decided to follow me. Second of all, you don't always have to listen to me. Learn how to argue for your side. The boring side.'*

Chloe rolls over to her other side and looks at the clock again, 2:15.

She gets off her bed and begins to pace around her room. She puts on some random violin music.

*'What do you mean I don't have to listen to you! You're literally me! You're my conscience, number 2!'*

*'So? You're a conscience too, number 1. I can't help it if you're dumb enough to listen to me. I've made so many mistakes and you still listen to me.'*

*'I cAn'T hEIP iT, I cAn'T hELp IT, I CaN'T HeLp It! Is that all you can say, number 2? Nothing is ever YOUR FAULT. It's always MY FAULT for listening to you. And you know what? You're right. And knowing that you're right just pisses me off even more!'*

*"WELL, WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO DO? LEAVE?"*

*"YES!"*

Chloe walks over to the window. She rests her forehead on the cool glass. A small sigh of frustration escapes her lips. Her eyes close as her ears listen to the violin. Outside, the wind blows gently making the leaves on the tree rustle. The young girl's chest rises and falls slowly, as she lets out a deep exhale from her nose. Chloe relaxes her muscles. For a few seconds her mind is silent.

*'How am I supposed to leave if I'm a part of you?'*

*'OH MY GOSH, I SWEAR IF YOU DON'T SHUT UP I WILL END YOU!'*

*'DO IT, NUMBER 1! I DARE YOU! TRY ME!'*

Chloe repeatedly bangs her head lightly on the glass. The voices continue yelling. The back and forth never seems to end. There's always something to fight about. There's always something to attack each other

about. Number 2 loves to fight and Number 1 can't learn to shut up. It's a never ending cycle.

*'Would you two shut up already?' Chloe states in her mind.*

*'Oh, look who's here. You seriously want to get involved? You're the reason we're fighting in case you forgot. We have an English assignment due tomorrow and you still haven't finished. When is it gonna get done, huh? Papers don't write themselves,' Number 1 says harshly and Chloe can't help but agree.*

*'Yeah, me, school is important. Stop fooling around and sit down and do your work. What's wrong with you,' Number 2 says, disgusted.*

Chloe moves to her desk and turns on her lamp. She pulls out her English homework and begins to work on it. The voices grow silent. All Chloe can think about is getting the assignment done. Page after page she reads and types. The words are clear in her head but aren't sticking.

4:30 AM.

Chloe is exhausted but her conscience won't let her sleep. She finishes one assignment and moves onto the next. She's no longer behind but ahead in all her classes. Again she walks around her room.

*'Sleep me, sleep,'* she chants. All the other voices are gone. But she's left wide awake.

Poor thing finally climbs into bed at 5 in the morning.

When will it all stop?