

There is something strangely intimidating about going somewhere alone when you're nineteen.

I used to think that if I wanted to go for a walk, explore somewhere new or sit in a cafe for an hour, I needed a reason to be there and, preferably, have someone beside me. Being alone felt like it announced something about me. *She has no one to come with her. Is she waiting for someone? She must be.*

Recently, I have been making the conscious effort to ignore that feeling.

If I am free and want to head into town for a browse but no one is available to come with me, usually, I wouldn't go. Why? The same reason you might hesitate to eat alone, go to the cinema alone or take yourself somewhere nice without having someone to share it with. Because we are so used to experiencing life alongside other people that we forget we are allowed to enjoy it on our own, too.

But not anymore.

The other day I wanted to see the new Spider Man movie, which is 10/10 btw, but no one was available to join me. I went anyway. And if I'm being honest, it was great. I picked up my snacks, headed into the cinema and took my comfy little seat all in my own time, without needing to align what I'm doing with anyone else.

Would it have been better with my best friend by my side? Yes. Did I enjoy it, nonetheless? Also yes.

At first, I was painfully aware of myself. I wondered if people were looking at me. I was praying I didn't bump into anyone that would recognise me and question why I'm alone. I walked a little too quick, as if I were late to meeting someone. As if I had somewhere very important to be. Nope. I had nowhere to be, no one waiting for me and a whole night to do things at my speed.

That feeling of taking up too much space or being somewhere I wasn't supposed to be went away.

Nobody was watching me.

Nobody cared that I was alone, they probably didn't even notice.

Neither did I.

I think young women are taught, in so many quiet ways, to wait for permission. To wait until someone comes to us. To make ourselves smaller, more agreeable, less conspicuous. Even the act of taking yourself somewhere can feel like a little act of rebellion.

My own company is enough.

I won't wait for someone else to make a day worth having.

Sometimes I can head out, be by myself and let the world be beautiful just because I am there to see it.