

The Night I Almost Died

“This place is awesome!” I exclaimed. We were having a great time in India. We had done many things including visiting the Taj Mahal. My favorite part though was that we had just rode elephants into the sunset and had come back to a great dinner. The food was delicious and I went to bed with a stomach stuffed full of chicken and rice. There was only one problem with India. Everywhere I looked on the streets, it felt like there were homeless people, and they all seemed sick. They were all slumped over on what they called their bed. Their faces were pale and they looked hopeless. Their teeth looked like rotten bananas from lack of brushing their teeth. Their eyes looked like red balloons from lack of sleep, and a stench that just reminded you of sickness came from their dying bodies. “Can’t relate” I laughed to myself. That statement was kind of true but deep down I felt a kind of understanding to those people. Somehow I felt like I could relate. I didn’t know why.

When you are having a great time it feels like something bad will always happen. Of course when I woke up the next morning this was exactly how I felt. I felt awful. It felt like I couldn’t get my breath out, almost like there was a vacuum inside me sucking the air so my lungs couldn’t get any. I took short quick breaths so that I could get air. I had this terrible taste in my mouth, kind of like the taste you get when you throw. At first I wasn’t too worried because I had recovered from a deathly sickness at an even younger age. I decided to lie in my warm comfy bed for a while but after a few minutes passed I started getting worried. When I felt so bad that it was hard to bear I slowly stumbled to my parents room like a man in the dark would.

“I don’t feel too good,” I said as I stood in my parents' doorway. I didn’t want to get my parents all crazy by saying I felt terrible. But of course my dad still reacted the way he always does when somebody wakes him up because there's a problem.

My dad shot up, “What! Are you ok?”

My mom got up a little slower. “It's gonna be ok,” she assured me as she walked me to the living room and had me lie down on the couch.

As I explained to her how I was feeling my brother walked by, “Your fine, get over it,” he snapped as he walked by to get breakfast. My mom gave him a warning stare. He walked over to the breakfast table and started joking with my other two siblings at the table while I sat in misery trying to breathe as best I could.

I spent the next few days in and out of sleep on that same couch that I now just related to sickness. But the sickness felt like it was getting worse and worse. All of the sudden it hit me. It felt like I had been underwater too long and couldn’t get to the surface. “Mom!” I screamed. My parents came rushing in. They tried to ask me how I felt but right when they laid eyes on my face my dad picked me up and he and my mom raced me out to the car. Apparently something was wrong with it.

I was surprised that I was actually able to stay conscious as long as I did but I wish I hadn’t. The pain was too much. Finally, everything went black.

“He has pneumonia,” the doctor told us, looking very concerned. As he explained to me all of the details that I really didn’t need to know I zoned out. I thought back to the people I had seen out there on the streets. I felt the same hopelessness as them, almost like I wasn’t gonna get better. I zoned back in as the doctor was finishing his explanation and I nodded my head like I understood. “Can we talk?” he asked my

parents and they left the room. I sat on the white, new smelling hospital bed breathing into all of these machines, and feeling scared. I wish I could have heard what they were saying but I knew I couldn't and I knew they wouldn't tell me. The door opened suddenly scaring me as my mom and dad walked in their faces pale like ghosts with an expression of fear.

"How would you feel if we left you here alone," my mom asked. I could not even bear to think of that. Me at this place with doctors and nurses rushing around me like a stampede tending to people without my parents there to comfort me! There was no way.

"You don't want to stay with me," I cried. My parents looked at each other and walked back to the hallway to talk to the doctor. It had to have been another hour before they came back in. A little color was back on their faces but they still looked very scared.

"Alright Levi," my mom said, "You're going home in the ambulance." I was very confused but I acted like I understood and a few nurses helped me walk to the scary, red truck known as an ambulance. Behind them came my mom and dad carrying equipment that would help me breathe. What I found out when we got home was that if I had stayed at the hospital I would not have been allowed to have visitors meaning my parents wouldn't be able to see me. But, our doctor was very kind and understanding and had given us the option to basically take the hospital to us. I would be checked on every day by the doctor and all the breathing machines would be with me. I didn't want to tell anyone but it felt like I wasn't ever gonna get better.

Again I spent the next few days in and out of naps and it was the most bored I ever was. But, when I woke up that night it most definitely was not boring. I was

struggling to breathe and everything was blurry. My whole body felt as if I was running through a fire. My parents were already sitting over me, reading scriptures and praying. I wanted to talk to them but I felt like I was slipping away and couldn't communicate. Then it was lights out.

I awoke not knowing where I was. My doctor and family were standing over me. I looked around and then remembered. I recalled everything and realized that I was lucky to be alive. I still felt sick, but compared to the way I had felt the night before, on the brink of death, I felt amazing. I stood up for the first time in a week or so. Everyone in my family hugged me and was so happy I was alive. Even all my brothers, and it was then that I realized that everything was going to be ok!