

My Mother Loves Me.

He awoke to a siren drawing near, fuzzy objects moved above him, a cacophony filled his ears as his senses slowly returned. Then came the pain. Agony filled his mind as he tried to draw a breath. He felt something wet drip down his temple. A metallic tang filled his dry mouth. Finally the objects above him cleared and the siren stopped. As his eyes refocused, he could see people running at him, blue and red flashing lights illuminating them from behind. He could see the other year eights all screaming and crying as they watched him lie on the floor of the gymnasium. He searched for her, but she wasn't there.

He was placed on a white stretcher and lifted into the back of the ambulance.

"Call his parents" he could hear them shout, but no one answered. He did have a parent. Just one though. And she was gone. Black surrounded the edges of his vision, slowly inching in. Scared, he tried to take another breath, but something was in the way. He struggled more, trying to scream through a closed throat. The paramedics were asking questions in a soothing tone, "What is your name? Can you hear me?" he tried to answer, but his body wouldn't let him. Trying to say something, anything, but the blackness finally took over.

He awoke with a gasp, through a normal throat this time. Looking around, he was in his room, his bed. Through the window he could see that it was day.

He got up out of bed and surveyed the room. It was normal. Nothing had changed. Messy as always, clothes strewn around the floor. He made his way to the door, struggling to walk through his arrangement of toys tired from their late night wanderings. He could hear singing down the hall and smell bacon cooking. He cautiously walked down the hallway, about to turn the corner-

More pain shot through his entire body, yet he still could not scream. The paramedics were trying to shove something down his throat, scraping the sides, he was choking on the blood, the pain so intense he could feel it through his entire body. He was shaking and could feel hands trying to press him down, he was not in control, he couldn't do anything. If only she were here. She would help him.

How did this even happen, why was he here? He could recall something to do with running, not having his puffer. Why didn't he have his puffer? She always made him bring his puffer. The tube finally made its way down his throat, bringing a whole new wave of pain. Then came a breath of fresh air at last. The blackness began to fade from his vision, but with each raspy breath came more pain. He could hardly stand it, but through the tube, he could not scream.

He turned the corner and saw a woman with long black hair, the smell of bacon cooking filling his nose, the sight of her at last. He took a step towards her, reached out, trying to touch her-

They had him hooked up to a machine now, the incessant noise of that beep kept getting faster and faster. He felt something pierce his arm, a small prick against the rest of the pain

in his body. The same pain that began to fade. Was he finally dying? Could this be over at last? He could not stand another minute of this. His heart was still going, but he could feel it slowing, with it, his painful breaths. A sense of peace came over him.

“Jasper is that you? Are you awake already??” His mother said without turning around. A fresh sound of sizzling came as a new rasher of bacon hit the pan. The woman turned around and smiled up at him. He still wasn’t used to being taller than her now.

”Want some bacon? I have to go soon.”

He sat down and a plate of bacon and scrambled eggs was placed before him.

“Oh before I forget, where is your puffer?”

He pointed to his school bag. She reached in and drew it out. Lifting it up to the light and smiling.

“I’ll take this for today, if that’s ok?”

He nodded. He didn’t care if she took it, he hardly needed it anyway.

Lifting his arm to grab a piece of bacon, a sudden pain flared. Looking down, he saw bruises all along his arm, hurting too much to lift his arm further. He realised that he was in pain all over, his head ached, his legs, his chest. Why?

They were asking him questions, trying to get him to answer in any way, but he wasn’t in control of his body right now, he couldn’t do it.

“Can you hear us? Can you move your fingers?”

The paramedics were more calm now that he was stable but he still couldn’t answer.

“He’s beaten up pretty bad, give him time.”

“Who did this to him?”

“Most of these bruises are old, and he shows scarring from a while ago. It could be...”

He stopped listening and tried to focus on his body. He hated that his body wasn’t listening.

He didn’t have any control except for his mind. And he didn’t like his mind. His mind had memories.

“Jasper, I’m going to leave for a few days and you’re going to be alone for a while, but you’ll be ok, yeah?”

He nodded slowly, confused.

“And don’t tell anyone I am gone ok? You don’t want mummy to get into trouble do you?”

He shook his head firmly. If she got in trouble, got taken away like she said could happen, no.

She walked to the front door and waved, the blood on her knuckles a contrast against her pale skin. He felt something trickle down the side of his head. A drop of it fell to the floor, he looked down. It was blood.

“Bye!”

The door slammed shut.

He woke up again. Still in the ambulance.

Why was he bleeding? Why did he have all these bruises?

His mind flashed to last night, his coughing from his asthma making his mum angry.

“Why won’t you just shut up!”

But she wouldn’t hit him. She loved him. She took care of him. She made sure he always brought his puffer to school.

“Where did these bruises come from, sweetie? Can you tell us that?”

They had taken the tube out, he was breathing normally now.

“Because my mother loves me.”