

Injury

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This is the first section of a short story series I wrote a few years ago. Thirteen-year-old Alan Wolski is pressured by his former best friend, Dylan Yankovitz, to jump off a brick wall. Read on and learn what consequences come with trusting someone one shouldn't.



Published on
Booksie

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“Alright, alright!” I was perched on top of a brick wall, my long, skinny legs dangling off the edge. My best friend, Dylan, was sitting right next to me, his glasses sliding down the tip of his freckled nose. There was a drop of about 20 feet, and Dylan was daring me to jump. I didn’t really want to, but Dylan was insisting that I should. He almost looked eager for me to jump off.

So here I was, slowly inching off the ledge, holding myself up with just my arms. If the ground underneath was soft grass, I would jump off without so much hesitation. But instead, it happened to be rocky sand, and I wasn’t too excited to get all scratched up.

“Çâmon Alan, go. I’ll be right behind you.” Dylan reassured me, laying a hand on my shoulder. I was dangling off the edge now, my arms wobbling as I bent them, ready to jump. Sweat was trickling down my face and my breathing was ragged. Then, squeezing my eyes shut, I flung myself off the wall.

Adrenaline was whipping through my veins as I began falling down. My hair thrashed through the air, as animated as a wildfire. I was out of control, my arms waving around frantically. The ground was coming closer and closer—WHAM!

I landed on my left leg with a sickening crack. I screamed out as pain shot up my leg, then tried to blink through my tears so I could see what had caused such agony. It certainly couldn’t have been the sand. I inched my leg to the right a little and saw that a wooden plank was planted right where I was so unfortunate to land, half covered in sand. It was then when I remembered Dylan, who promised he would jump right after me. I couldn’t hear where he landed, but I could feel a slight thud as his body hit the ground.

The searing pain in my leg was too much to bear. I writhed in the sand, hollering. Dylan appeared in front of me, looking worried and guilty. He was motioning for me to quiet down and looking frantically to his side to see if anyone was looking.

In the back of my brain, I thought, *What a friend. Dylan is more worried about himself than me. How could I be so stupid?* As my leg began to numb, I became more aware of my surroundings.

Dylan wasn’t beside me anymore. As I lifted my throbbing head, I could see him running away from me. I tried to convince myself that he was getting help, that he would call 911 or something. But I knew he was just ditching me.

As I struggled to pick myself up, I began to examine my leg. It was all scratched up from the sand, and my shin was bent so badly it almost looked like I had two knees. Obviously, it was broken.

How am I going to get home, or to a doctor? I wondered. A big black bruise was forming rapidly around the broken part, and the pain was excruciating.

I reached into my pocket to grab my cell phone, but it was gone. I looked all around me. Then my eyes rested on a couple pieces of plastic about three feet away. *There goes my cell phone, I thought. And my last hope.* I could have walked home, but obviously not with a broken leg. So I desperately began to drag myself, using just my arms and my right leg.

I was about two blocks away from my house when my left leg caught on a sharp rock and tore open. My eyes watered as I nearly fainted with pain.

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Tears were dripping down my puffy face when I was finally able to take a look at my damaged leg. When I first caught sight of it, I turned away, ready to throw up. And throw up I did, right on the sidewalk. I was shivering and tears were running down my face as I looked at my leg again.

There was a gash of about five inches, with blood was seeping out of it. Breathing through my teeth, I reached out a shaky hand to touch it. I didn't really feel it, because my leg was so numb.

I glanced back at the rock it got snagged on. It was smeared with blood and bits of flesh. A ripple went through me as I gagged. *By the time I get home, it will be 2020*, I thought miserably. I tried to inch myself forward, but collapsed. My face was pressed against the cold, dirty sidewalk. All I could hear was my own shallow breathing as my vision began to blur

I'm going to die here, I thought. The last thing I heard was the faint sound of sirens.

Beep...beep...The beeping kept on repeating. *Where am I?* I wondered as I groggily came back to earth. My crusty eyelids opened and I looked around without raising my head. There was a person stooped over me, obscuring my vision of the rest of the room.

When she saw I was awake, her eyes widened and she whispered, "Alan? Hey, Alan, are you awake?" In the back of my mind I thought, *Well my eyes are open, obviously I'm awake*. I slowly raised my head, and suddenly everything that happened hit me, as if someone threw a stone at my head. The jump, the broken leg, the gash, everything! I sat up with a start, startling my visitor. "What the hell where am I? What happened to my leg? You didn't cut it off did you?" The mere thought of my left leg being sawed off brought nausea. The girl chuckled. "Of course not. The police was looking for you, and when they saw you sprawled on the side walk, they immediately brought you to the hospital," she said. "Wait," I said. "The police was looking for me?" The girl nodded. "You were gone for about three hours," she said. "Uh-huh," I whispered, and went back to sleep.

My eyelids flickered open for the second time, and I realized the girl was gone. I sat up, my head throbbing. It felt like someone was hammering against my skull.

I groaned and pressed my palm to my forehead. I didn't want to look at my leg, because it probably looked even worse than it had before. I didn't deal that well with things like that. How I survived seeing my leg all bent up and bloody, I know not.

But, unable to resist the urge to see how my leg was doing, I peeked out at it from under my lashes. My leg was wrapped up in a large cast, and it was elevated into the air by some kind of sling coming out of the ceiling. I slowly dragged it out of the sling and placed it carefully in front of me. Then I gripped the ends of the hard cast and yanked, making chips of it snap away. After about 15 minutes of this, the pieces of the cast were scattered on the ground and all the wrapping that was left was a thin cloth, stained with blood. I tried to pull it off, but the blood was stuck to it and if I pulled any harder it would take off a chunk of my skin. So I scanned the room for some scissors.

Now I know you might be wondering why I was deliberately trying to get my casts off. The only reason why is that I have like, issues with bloody wounds, and I have to clean them out or else it will drive me crazy. But, it's not like it's a bad habit. I'm just a safe, clean kind of guy, you know?

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My eyes rested on some promising looking scissors sitting on a counter across the room. Throwing the covers off of me, I stood up and limped over to where the scissors were. My hands shaking from being so drugged up, I snatched the scissors and hobbled over to my bed again. Then I sat down on it and set to work.

First, I snipped the fabric that wasn't attached to my skin off. Then I carefully tore off some of the cloth that was stuck to me. It took time and patience, both of which I don't enjoy putting up with, but I eventually scraped off as much cloth as possible of my huge scab. I could see a huge blue and black lump on my shin, and just the sight of it made me shudder. I ran my fingers over it lightly, but didn't feel anything. *It's probably painkillers*, I thought dismissively. Then I got off my bed and limped over to one of the two sinks in the room.

Carefully, I lifted my injured leg and rested it in the sink. Then, being fairly flexible, I bent over and turned the knob for warm water. It trickled out of the faucet and pooled on my leg. I tried to soften the scab with the warm water. It worked slowly, the dried blood coming off in layers.

The sink was stained red by the time I could see the charred flesh under my scab. The painkillers were slowly wearing off, and gradually I began to feel more and more of what was happening to my leg. Before it hurt too much, I peeled off shreds of skin around the gash and rinsed it with the water. The pain was beginning to get sharper, and my wound was bleeding again. Then I heard footsteps in the hallway.

Yanking my leg out of the sink, I turned off the water and scrambled back to my bed just before the door opened. I narrowed my eyes to slits and I made my breathing heavier to indicate that I was asleep. Two doctors entered the room, wearing white coats. One tapped the other's shoulder and whispered, "He's still asleep. Wait his cast is off! What the heck?"

"What happened? How did he get his cast off?"

"I don't know! But we have to start the surgery in less than five minutes!"

"Well, what do we do?"

"You stay here and I'll get the nurse. Then we'll start."

"Okay, but hurry!"

My mind was slowly processing what I'd just heard as the footsteps of the first doctor echoed down the hallway. I was going to get operated on? I couldn't! My leg was fine; it just needed time to heal, is all. What did they need to operate for?

I guess I had been frowning a little, because the second doctor bent down and took a good look at me.

"Kid, I know you're awake. You aren't fooling anyone," he said. I froze, but didn't open my eyes. The doctor suddenly plopped his meaty hand on my back, and I started.

"Hah. I knew you weren't asleep."

"Well, how was I supposed to be, with all your yapping?"

"Aw, c'mon, kid. You were awake before that."

"N-no I wasn't."

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“You think we don’t have ears?”

I fell silent. How could I be so mindless as to think that I could fool them? I must have been making quite a racket. I sat up and looked the doctor straight in the eyes. He was buff, with dirty blonde hair that was cropped short. His eyes were a murky gray, and he had an almost too-white smile.

“Do I really need surgery?” I asked, lowering my gaze.

His eyes softened. “I’m afraid so, kid. Your leg here has endured some serious damage. If you wanna walk outta here with both your legs, your best bet would be surgery,” he said solemnly.

I pursed my lips, but stayed silent. I wasn’t sure how I would be able to handle the fact that I would be operated on. What could be so wrong with my leg? It couldn’t have gotten infected; the gash looked fine, despite the fact that it was bleeding slightly. And thousands of people have broken their legs before, and they all didn’t have to get surgery. What was wrong with me?

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