

# Taking The Cards As Dealt

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"Taking The Cards As Dealt" is a short narrative about a young girl, Amy, who after having what she thinks is an Asthma attack, discovers she has cancer.

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I never knew how much all the simple things of life meant to me, until I couldn't do them anymore. Taking a walk on a cold winter night alone, playing tag at a party, eating as much junk food as possible without my parents knowing, normal teenage things. It was all so normal for me to waste time thinking about how much I loved it. But once that all ended, it was hard, it still is.

It all happened last winter, I was taking a walk with my brother on a cold night with a slight breeze. My Asthma had been acting up, so we were making our way home when my quiet coughing became a lot louder, and I soon found myself on the wet ground grasping for air. The leaves brushed against my neck like wet fingers, as it became harder and harder to breathe. Inside, I was strangely calm, pondering if I was going to die, but not really having a sense of fright if I did. Then I blacked out.

When I finally awoke I looked around wondering where I was, not recognizing the dull cream room with lightly colored flowers lining the edges. A thirty or so year old woman stood leaning over me, and though her lips were moving, no sound was coming out, I was too dazed. She helped me to sit up, and seeing all the machinery and tubes and needles attached to my arms, I knew I was in a hospital. She walked out of the room and came back a few long minutes after, with a doctor and my parents. My mom ran over to me and hugged me with tears streaming down her face along with my dad. Then the doctor began to talk, that's the day my life ended, or so I thought.

Hi Amy, my name is Dr. Russel, and you are in the hospital. You are probably very confused about everything and don't remember much, but do you think you could tell me what you do remember?

Umm, I had a bad asthma attack, fell down, could not breathe, and then blacked out. My raspy, monotone voice surprised me as I responded.

Very good Amy, most people do not remember things after they have blacked out until a few days afterwards! But... you didn't have an asthma attack. You had a heart attack. He looked so sympathetic I felt as if I, the little girl in the hospital bed, needed to comfort the grown man who was doing just fine.

So, I stated, A heart attack is not too bad, I'll be fine. Good as new. There was that sympathetic look again as Dr. Russel began to speak,

There's more. You have a tumor. It is very close to your heart and we cannot remove it without an extremely risky surgery, you won't-

How risky is this surgery? I interrupted, Why did we not know about this before?

The surgery has a 10% removal success, and a 90% death rate. And we did not know this before because no one ever looked for it. It is a very small tumor, virtually undetectable, unless looking for it. This tumor is a form of cancer, now I know...

Dr. Russel kept on talking, going into all the technical terms, and kept repeating with his apologies. He told me I would never be able to run like a normal kid again, I would have to watch my diet, not be outside for long periods of time during cold weather, stuff like that. Each can't do and, must not, I felt was a stab on my 14 year old life. I got stabbed a lot.

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It was extremely hard at first, every night I fell asleep with a wet pillow and swollen eyes, not being able to go anywhere or do anything by myself. I refused to except my condition and tried to keep doing the thing I was not supposed too, I quickly learned that doing that, only landed me back in the hospital bed. After time, I slowly, and I mean slowly, began to except my conditions and the limits that came with it. I still miss all the things I can not do, but there are other things that fill my time that are just as good, even some better, like painting and writing.

So many times we let our circumstance define who we are, but I have made the choice to not let my circumstance dictate my life. Of course I am not perfect, I still cry sometimes and get mad, but I remember that my circumstance is not me, and I am not my circumstance. But that, I am me, and that my tumor is just a small part of me, literally.

Cancer. Funny how one small word can completely alter your world. You never know if you will have a tomorrow, so live out today, and live with no regrets.

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