



A Near Death Experience by Megan

Run. Run where? The beast was bounding after him. Why was it chasing him?

He had only been playing with his toys. 'Use your imagination; we're busy' they had said...and they had left him. He was a good boy, a quiet and content boy. He had happily been playing with toy cars and dinosaurs. Daddy had promised at breakfast that he would play with him after work. He must be busy. 'Busy busy' Daddy always said. Where was Daddy?

Rank upon rank of nature's green soldiers massed at his feet as he stared at his toys. The blades of grass writhed together in an eternal battle, growing tall in the absence of a lawnmower, nearly obscuring his toys from view: great for dinosaur ambush. A whistle of wind set the old gate at the end of the garden off with a gentle creak. Over there. Behind the gate. There it was. There it always was: the forest. 'Don't go in there,' he had been told. 'Or else beware the snarling, fiendish monsters'.

He would never know how he sensed the danger...some instinct perhaps, an intuition. But the beast was close and so he ran. He had not paused at the gate. He ran, terror driving his legs to escape the savagery.

The boy paused mid-stride, a momentary reflection, reason defeating the panic: where was mummy? Why wasn't she saving him? Scooping him up into the warmth of reassurance? A sudden burst of infantile energy overtook his legs as a roar resonated from abaft. The forest loomed nearby - his escape could only come from those very shadows he had been warned of. The child was enticed into the malevolent depths.

Trees jutted out from the darkness: looming, sneering, snatching. They waved their distorted limbs in the gusts of fetid breath - an act of intimidation, clutching at all those who dared enter into the gloomy depths. Darkness shrouded the eerie scene, vines hanging like snakes from the canopy above and obstructing the golden rays. The most noticeable absence, however, was that of noise. Deafening silence settled; a deathly silence. Until... a shattering roar. A bone chilling, hair raising roar. The roar was of anger at the difficulty of catching the prey, infuriation dripping off of each soundwave.

Run! Adrenaline returned once more and the boy sprang into action. Legs pounding down on the forest undergrowth, the boy fought hard to keep his balance, petrified of what would occur should he fall. Too scared to pause, too scared to look back, he knew, just knew: the beast was catching up, clawing at his heels. Hot breaths could be felt on the back of his neck. The rustling of fur. The skittering of leaves, scattered by stiletto claws.

Run. Just run. Keep running. Don't stop.

A steely grip grasped at the boy's shoulder as he was lurched into the air, arms flailing, feet swinging wildly. He'd been caught.

"Gotcha!" thundered the beast.

"Daddy!"

A Near Death Experience by Will

I hadn't seen the tight bend in the road. I hadn't seen the tree coming right for me. I hadn't been looking at the road for last 30 seconds. In all fairness, it was especially dark that evening. It was around the time of the winter solstice, so by 9pm, no light breached over the horizon. When the car smashed into the large oak tree, time seemed to slow down. I saw everything happen in such detail. Shards of glass flying toward me, like a bombardment of tiny arrows. I had gripped the steering wheel so hard that it had dented and split. But it didn't matter; the car was an unsalvageable wreck. I was lucky that I wasn't to.

After the air bag had been deployed, my head slammed into the steering wheel. When I got to hospital, I was in a bad way. I had hundreds of pieces of glass in my face, 4 broken ribs, I had broken both my arms and I had a minor concussion. I was in a trance like state for around a week. My eyes were open, but I couldn't focus on anything, all I saw was a mass of green, red and harsh white light. I only properly regained consciousness one week later. But when I awoke, it wasn't the pain that bothered me, nor was it the constant flow of morphine being pumped into my blood stream. No, it was the lack of recollection that really troubled me. All I could remember was moment before I blacked out.

When I first awoke, everything was hazy. A string of noise entered my open ears, but my brain was too scrambled to piece together anything audible. Some medical jargon I can image. Or some nurses talking about some Monday night soap. I went to move my head, but as I went to lift my body, sharp pains ran through my entire body. I fall back into my bed with a load wince, catching the attention of one of the nurses.

"Mr Biggs, are you ok? Can you hear me?" she asked in a somewhat demeaning tone. I let out a small high pitched groan to let her know I was ok.

"You've been in a car crash, very nasty one; you had to be put in intensive care". I pause as the memory of the crash comes flooding back to me.

"Where's my wife, is she here?" I manage to push out of my failing lungs. The nurse sighed and looked at her colleague, who nodded at her.

"Your wife was in the car with Mr Biggs, a large piece of shrapnel entered her abdomen. She died of blood loss. I am sorry for your loss"

My heart sank deep into ocean of my gut. My face, sheet white broke my façade, giving away my grief. I tried to keep a straight face, but I couldn't help the salty stream of tears flow over my motionless face.

I suddenly remembered. Why I didn't see that tree. Why I hadn't been looking at the road. We had been arguing. She had told me she was seeing someone else. I saw red. My foot hit the floor. I didn't notice my speed increasing rapidly.

It was my fault. Suddenly the broken ribs, the concussion, the pain all seemed meaning less. I had killed my wife.

A Near Death Experience by Katie

We were just playing on the ice, the snowflakes falling thick and fast, battering our hands and faces. It was a biting glacial attack. But we loved it, it was freedom and our choice to be cold, it made me and him feel alive. We were on the lake at the bottom of the valley, enveloped in steep pine trees, made strong from years of nature's advancement, tough and green. Everything was covered In snow, as if some higher being had

intended to neatly frost the landscape then become bored, tipping a whole bowl of mixture on our little town. It's probably about a mile each way, our lake. It looks huge to us, just grey and white rolling into a horizon that looks identical everyway around. This was our playground, we went there often, we knew every rock and tree and smell of tree sap by heart. Each bird song still takes me back to our portion of earth, not yet turned sour from death or man.

It seemed like ages the tag and snow fights, but we made sure to keep within twenty feet of the iced pine trees and beaches. We weren't stupid, we knew the risks, father had explained to us before that we could get lost here. But how could we, we had every secret trail and monsters cave carefully drawn out on our maps. Eventually we became more and more confident, tiptoeing, daring, and galloping with childish delight further out. Further. And further.

The ice was thick and sturdy and held our weight. So many laughs we had, until my brothers turned into a scream.

To this day I can't hear shouting on the TV, it makes my mind turn frosty and my heart ache. He had gone straight under, like the penguins dived at sea world. Only our lake had an undercurrent- that's what the policemen told mum and dad. I could see him under our glass floor. I was looking into a mirror, us both either side of the ice, thrashing, punching, screaming. Snow was seeking out and finding my eyes, the blizzard bit me and my face. All shouting was drowned out by the white noise of a million crystals hitting the ground. He drowned in that noise as my voice did. Soaked and drenched in winter ice and snow. This wasn't our lake, this wasn't on our map. This was a rebellion against me and him by nature. How could our perfect lake do this.

It had only been seconds, a man saw me struggling, he broke this cold expanse easily and dragged him out. I cried when he opened his eyes, I thought I had killed him. But some chink of summer inside of him had won and thawed our darkest fears.

I pause, hands primed above my type writer. That's enough for today. I can feel the frost of my memories fade as I put away these sheets of blotched past. My son looks on, carefully observing my room, made cosy with life in a world permanently winter from its man-made cold. Childhood ignorance is a wonderful thing. My brother walks in and smiles.

A Near Death Experience by Chloe

The level, undisturbed snow stretched out ahead of me. My steamy breath dispersed into the air as I pulled my scarf up over my nose and adjusted my goggles over my eyes. After I had completed my last minute safety checks I shifted my weight, balancing precariously on the summit. I took one last glance at the cloudless sky above me before dropping down the almost vertical incline.

No one had been down this slope this morning, most likely because of the tedious climb up to the start and the warning signs littering the path on the way up; "Advanced riders only", "No access during high winds", "Avalanche Warning". All the usual.

The icy wind rushed past, whistling within my helmet. I held out my arms and bent my knees for balance, weaving around hidden boulders and crevices. I laughed out loud and it echoed in my own head; Nothing compares to this feeling.

I heard it first. Like the warning growl of a protective dog or the continuous rumble of thunder you get before a rainstorm. I should have known then, but I carried on, naïve and unaware.

Spotting the grand tourist lodge based near the bottom of the slope, I squinted my eyes to focus on a few figures out on the balcony, waving enthusiastically. Between the snowflakes which had settled on my goggles and the sheer distance between us, I couldn't make out if they were male or female, young or old, even how many of them there were. Nevertheless I waved back and grasped the opportunity to show off. Focusing on a small ramp of snow, I headed toward it and took off, spinning a whole 360 degrees.

There it was:

An immense wall of white snow, less than 10 feet behind me and gaining speed.

For a second I couldn't breathe. What do I do? I was barely halfway down the mountain, there's no way I could escape it. I leaned forward, urging my board to go faster, to take me away from this imminent danger. My eyes desperately looked for obstacles to avoid. Then I glanced back behind me-

That was a mistake. I saw the snow was towering right above me. As I suspected, it was even closer now. But I didn't see the frozen monster right in my path.

I don't even know what it really was, it all happened so fast after that.

I was suddenly falling, tumbling, rolling, cartwheeling down. I was pummelled by snow and by miscellaneous objects I no longer had the power to avoid. The wave had overcome me. Something solid hit my head and everything went black.

Later – who knows how much time had passed – I awoke. All I could see was white, unless I closed my eyes: Then all I could see was black. I listened but heard nothing. It could possibly be the impact which momentarily made me deaf, or the snow blocking all the soundwaves from reaching me. My feet and hands were numb from the cold, I just hoped that they were still attached. Which way was up? It didn't matter, I couldn't move anyway.

It felt like days later. My mouth was dry and my breathing was strained.

Then I heard something: voices? Voices! Right above me! Thank God!

A Near Death Experience by Molly

Gun shots fired. The ringing of shouts and screams echoed through the skyscrapers of the city. The sky sank heavily into the earth, like it was the end of all life. The chaos in the streets was nothing like I had ever seen before, people shrieking for help in every direction. Crying in pain the young and old both struggled for breath. What seemed to be a breeding ground for war? Glimpses of the scenes meant that anyone could tell how shaken in terror the victims were. The sights were unbelievable, people running and taking cover in all directions. As dusk was falling, it increased the danger, and the possibility that more shots could fire any second. Gusts of wind whispered through the air, sighed through the skyline

and quivered the tall trees restlessly back and forth on the edge of the road. It was a blurred landscape like something from a movie. I kept telling myself it couldn't be real, and that I would wake up any second. But I didn't. It was real. And I couldn't do anything to stop it. I was alone. I don't know where my friend had gone, I felt so afraid. My mouth kept going dry because I knew my nerves were on the edge.

People were shot down like nothing.

I noticed a family of three that were severely affected. Blood poured from the infant's leg, like a blur of red. Pierced gashes in his leg bled out like a flowing river, whilst his mother and father desperately screamed out for aid. They both knew no one was going to come. I was crouched down by a car, to try and keep cover. The car looked as though it had swerved out of lane, and had smashed into a few buildings causing further disruption on the road, as plenty of other cars were on their sides with other smaller groups of people shielded behind. At an instant, I realise dark shadows closing in all around me. It was like big patches of grey and black cloud started folding in on me. Everything all around became flashes of silver. It was more bullets being fired thought the air. At first I thought this was another vision I was just imagining, but soon after a figure appeared...

The thumping of giant footsteps approached from behind me. I curled up in a ball to make myself seem unnoticeable, trembling with my arms covering my body. I was too scared to look behind or turn around. I felt as though I couldn't move and I knew I didn't want to. In an instant I realise what was about to happen. I hear a click of a gun right behind my head. The sweat dripped down heavily across my forehead. I turned to meet his gaze. I couldn't look at him directly but I was aware of his fists gripping the gun firmly right above me. I had to get out of the situation immediately; I didn't want to lose my life there and then.

I prepared myself in a position to roll underneath the car, seeming impossible but in that moment it was the only option left. It appeared that there was just enough room for my body to slide into the gap. I swept myself down onto my front and scraped along the gravel. There was sharp glass which must have fallen out the car's windows because I knew abruptly it had punctured my stomach as a large puddle of blood leaked out like a trail after I carried on struggling across the ground.

As I turned to see if he was still there, immediately a ringing tone shot through my ears. A body lay there. Silence was all there was. He was gone, and it was over.

A Near Death Experience by Eva

A cool breeze fluttered over my bare skin. The wind whispered and whistled, splashing me with salted sea spray. The sand stretched out for miles golden under the gradually rising sun, it was dotted with visitors, a man and his dog, a group of young people chattering around a fire and a middle aged couple murmuring contentedly. They hardly noticed me as I breathed in the fresh crisp seas air, looking out onto the vast green-blue body that dipped and rolled. I listened to the rhythmic crash of the white waves as they tumbled over each other onto the beach and my bare feet; I waded into them.

The sun glistened in the blue sky; the hazy mist of morning slowly lifted as I drifted peacefully, my eyes closed my face turn to the sun. My t-shirt clung to my skin my hair flowing as if in slow motion,

my body floated as if weightless, gently rocked by the swells of water beneath me. I swam maybe a hundred meters blowing bubbles and kicking my legs violently enjoying the raucous sound and feeling of freedom.

I remember a sudden jolt of uncertainty that seemed to come from nowhere, that sickening backflip my stomach did and a rising panic that wrapped itself around my throat and clung there.

I remember being aware of the quietness, the distant sound of waves breaking that told me the beach was too far, the faint laughter or shouts from the people there. As I spun to look I could make out the beach, the light from the fire was like a streetlight in a city as seen when you pass by on the motorway, a faint orange glow, unspecific and tiny. The sun was now much higher in the sky but the sea felt colder than it had before. I felt a certain type of dread then, a mix of isolation and hopelessness as well as understanding of my situation. The panic around my throat tightened, grasping and scratching so that I struggled to breathe.

A sharp tug from below got my attention, like a tightening blood pressure cuff, swirling and swelling around my legs threatening to drag me under. I kicked violently, as if warding off some great beast, struggling against the intensifying current.

There was a moment where my head was submerged, my vision blurred and my lungs burned and screamed for air, I thrashed and screamed, pockets of essential oxygen escaping and gliding fast towards the surface like people opening parachutes, up to where the sunlight filtered through the deep blue.

Frantically grasping at nothing, white knuckled clenching my fists around water.

Fatigue, exhaustion and an overwhelming sadness spread along my arms and into my fingers, over my chest and heart and into my motionless legs, my eyelids like lead weights pulling me into darkness...

Two hands seized me by my shoulders, pulling me into the air, into the light. I gasped, eyes widened, the sudden warmth of the sun shocked me, exposed and confused. I laid on a hard wet surface, coughing uncontrollably my throat hoarse. I tasted something metallic.

Cold droplets ran across my face, dripping from my nose and hair. I squinted up at the sun, gently warming me now, as the life boat drifted from side to side.