

# Giving Up

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I was slowly waking up, from something that felt like eternal sleep. It was confusing, since I didn't feel refreshed at all. I felt weak and queasy and an unexplainable feeling was clutching my guts. I was disorientated but I knew deep down that something was terribly wrong, but I just couldn't quite grip what it was. I calmed myself with the thought that right now I don't have to bother myself with it and wanted to bury myself into my fluffy sheets, when with panic I realized two things. These weren't my sheets nor my bed, and I couldn't move the lower part of my body. The rush of emotions was suddenly unbearable. A shiver ran down my spine and for a second I felt like a wave of freezing water covered me from head to waist. My breathing accelerated and I could hear my heart beating in my ears, eyes and mouth, louder and louder every second. The whole room was throbbing in the rhythm of my racing heart and then for a second it all turned black. I closed my eyes and tried to take in what was happening. This couldn't be true.

“Two to three years of intensive rehabilitation and you might be able to walk again.”

“Might...might...might...” The words echoed in her head as if they were a mockery. “Two or three years for what?” she thought. So she'll be able to walk herself from her bed to the couch? And why? For what, for whom? She had no one left and she didn't dare to reminisce who she lost. Sitting at the dinner table the candle flame flickering in the autumn breeze coming in through the window. His smile and the flame reflecting in his

calm eyes. So calm. Then all of a sudden the walls shook and as the debris hurled at them, she caught one last glimpse of his eyes, now wide and overwhelmed with panic and his face overcome by helplessness. This was the last memory she had of him, one she wished she could forget.

Slowly, days turned into weeks, weeks into months, autumn into winter and still she sat there in her hospital room, slowly withering away, growing paler and weaker every day. The doctors were desperate. She took her pills, did all the exercises but nothing seemed to help. She had no will to live, nothing for what to live. She had already tried ending it all, but under constant supervision, she had been saved. Or was she? Well, saved from the society's point of view. But for her being awake, being conscious was like torture. She already felt dead inside, why couldn't they just let her rest; just give her the peace she deserved.

She was lying in bed, not sleeping, just numbly gazing into the ceiling. The only source of light in her room was the glow from the city buildings coming in through the window. She listened and as usual at this hour in the night in this wing of the building she couldn't hear a sound. She closed her eyes and due to the medication drifted into restless sleep. She was quite suddenly woken up by the unpleasant smell and the loud noises drawing near. She sat up on her bed. Something wasn't right. She listened. At first she couldn't place this noise, but as it got closer, she heard screams and then a familiar crackling sound. Someone was yelling something but she couldn't quite figure out what. With a flash her room was suddenly filled with sharp light and frightening warmth filled her body. The building was covered in flames and they were slowly creeping through her room. She sat on her bed as panic filled her. Desperately she yelled for help but no one could possibly hear her over the roaring of the fire. She almost gave up, when miraculously, the sprinklers in the hallway

kicked in. There was still hope. She grabbed her crutches standing by the bed. But at this moment she could once again sense that uneasy feeling in her stomach and her insecurity slowly creeping in. She has never made it from her bed to the hall by herself. But this time, she had a reason. She wasn't doing this for the doctors or anyone else, but for herself only. She clenched her teeth and slowly raised her leg. Then the other. She felt the blazing fire closer and closer, she could painfully feel the heat on her back. Just one more step and suddenly she was on the threshold. She fell to the floor with exhaustion and felt the water drops slide down her face mixing with her tears. A smile appeared on her face for the first time since the accident. She was going to make it. Back in that room, she didn't want to give up, she didn't want to die. Not yet.