

“Awake Again with Asthma”

By Kamso

I’m running. My head’s getting lighter. My breath is getting shallow. *Thud*. Was that the floor? My new sportswear! Mum’s going to think I was playing in mud again. Wait, where am I? There is a strong metallic smell. I can faintly see nurse Ada’s face. Nurse Ada is here too. NURSE ADA IS HERE TOO! I fainted. I must have. That must explain why everything is so cold but oddly comforting.

The high-pitched screech of the odd blue metal door jerked me back to consciousness. I sat up to make sure I was in my usual spot. The black patch beside my bed at shoulder length, the crooked drawer with the lower end facing me and most importantly the little box of paper cutouts that I played with whenever I got lonely still glued underneath the bed. Yup, I was in my regular spot. I reached for the Ben 10 cutout, but I was halted by nurse Ada’s stern but soft gaze.

“What are you doing, Kamso?” She asked.

“Mummy nothing, how long was I out?” I asked, trying to change the subject. “An hour and a half,” she replied while suspiciously following my hand with her eyes.

“That’s more than usual.”

“You have to be careful, Kamso.”

“I know. But this is my last time.”

“You say that every time. This boy....”

She stood, taking the nebulizer with her. “Thirty minutes. You have thirty minutes before you go. And next time be smart.” As she walked towards the door, I reached for my companion once again. “And next time be more careful about where you hide that thing.”

“Yes.” I replied with a sigh of relief.

“Be smart?” she said.

I fought between a spider and a cockroach in the living room. I threw objects at them until I broke the four-day-old ocean blue flower vase. As scared as I was, I needed an alibi. I mean, which kid will immediately fess up to breaking anything? Following this train of thought, I ran to my oldest sister. She was watching High School Musical on the Dell OptiPlex GX260, and preparing to make this my sixth viewing of the movie, I joined her. Shortly after, Endy, my immediate sister, called me to help her in the kitchen. I zoomed past my mum, who had just come back from work in her usual light blue on white apparel to join my sister in the kitchen. The kitchen was the same as always, the black and white marble walls, the glossy black counter that housed the knife stand, and the pink thermos flask cooler. There, my sister was standing above the cooker, busy with dinner. Plantain. Fried plantain to be exact. She asked me to help her get some plates. I diligently obeyed (as expected of someone who just broke something). I tried to distract myself from the inevitable. The more time I spent in the kitchen, the lighter the air got. “You’re panting,” Endy told me. “Am I?” I replied. “Yeah, you- “KAMSO!” My mum yelled with red hot fury. She came to the kitchen, belt in hand, ready for action.

“You broke it didn’t you!” I didn’t answer. “How could you have been so careless? I’m very sure you were jumping on the chairs again!” I don’t respond. Is it just me or is breathing difficult? Why is everything spinning? All I can hear is mum’s voice—I think the neighbours can too—when suddenly everything goes dark. I faint.

I tried to move my arms a bit without opening my eyes. I felt something; it's cold, rod-like. I gave up and opened my eyes. The white ceiling looked very unfamiliar. I tried to sit up. "Ouch!" Everywhere hurts.

"He's awake!" I heard an unfamiliar voice shout.

Before I knew it, my mum rushed in beside me. I tried to move again but gave up due to the pain I felt again. As she hurriedly started to scan me for any injuries, I stayed as still as possible. She then proceeded to finally help me sit up. I sat up and finally got the opportunity to examine the room a little better. "I am in a hospital! Why am I in a hospital?" I turn to my mum. "Mum, why am I in a-," and she cut me short.

"You fainted dear!" she said while looking flustered.

"I WHAT?!!"

I saw in her eyes that the news might be a bit harder for me to take in than she expected. I started to breathe hard; my mum immediately tried to calm me down so I won't faint again. I calmed down but demanded an explanation. She told me everything. As she explains, all I could do was sit there in disbelief. But when I looked around, I slowly realized that I wouldn't be in a hospital if she weren't telling the truth. I fainted. I really *did* faint. But why? After I processed the information I just got, I faced my mum again to ask her why I even fainted in the first place. I expected to hear something predictable, something I could possibly relate to, but what I heard was shocking.

"I HAD WHAT?!" I yell.

My mum tried to make me quiet down, but I couldn't. What she told me wasn't something I could just accept and be quiet about. I narrowed my eyes and looked at her with disbelief once again. "She's pulling my leg, isn't she? She has to be. ME! Have an ASTHMA

ATTACK? How is that even possible? I'm sure the doctor made a mistake. I couldn't have had an asthma attack. I've never had one before. It couldn't have just popped out of nowhere, right?*right?*" This is what I thought to myself while I tried to understand the information being passed across to me. I openly denied everything,

"I don't believe a thing. I'm sure I don't have asthma," I claimed as I turned away from my mother's frustrated gaze.

"You should listen to your mum, you know. She's telling the truth," another unfamiliar voice said.

I turned towards the voice in shock. It was the doctor. He explained my apparent new condition. I was still shocked.

From that day on, I was never the same. I willingly refused to live, stopped taking chances. It was hard being the only one sitting in the corner watching others play, run, jump doing things I was prohibited from doing. I felt caged, because I told myself I could never have a normal childhood. I always believed it, and I still possibly do. And that might never change. Not until I find my limit. To find how much I can push myself before I get an attack. It may be tomorrow, next week, next month or even next year. But all I know is I am ready to start living. To appreciate each breath I take, comfortable or not, and to be completely immersed in whatever I find myself doing because I have been diagnosed with asthma, I can still be happy.

I look back at nurse Ada.

"This would not be my last time. But I'm ready. I'm willing to make this my last time. I'm ready to be smart."