

Worod Altaiy

At the tender age of eleven, I found myself subjected to a small hospital bed that was lovingly adorned by needles and drips. These were all inserted, well, somewhere or another. The experiences I faced on my first night in hospital, after I gained my title of 'burns survivor', was much like that first visit to the dentist, or the pain felt when the ill-timed truth about Santa Claus leaks through the mouth of a parent.

Growing up, strangers have forced me to believe that what happened to me was nothing more than a plain tragedy. To me, however, it was nothing more than a rigid stepping stone in my life, isolated from the nearby golden staircase I wished so badly to climb.

Now, before I am blatantly mocked for my insensitive stance towards the accident that changed my life, give me a moment to explain the very details of my, as Lemony Snicket would like to call it, 'unfortunate event'.

The day I scarred myself permanently, I was no different than any other pre-teen crowding the streets. I was still basing my life on junk food and cartoons. One hand on a clumsy steel-handle, connected to a home deep fryer, the other, glued to Sky remote control, flicking through the 'hip' channels, I managed to cause the deep fryer to slip off the counter. Four litres of boiling oil made a home of my face, neck, arm and both legs. I ran into my shower at the end of our narrow hallway, and tried to calm myself down. My meditative strategy seemed to work until my skin began blistering. At this point I must admit I didn't manage to hold myself together. The rest of that time, and the ambulance ride were nothing more than a blur.

During my time in hospital I screamed, I refused the 'cocktail of pills' for dinner, I tried to pull tubes out of my mouth and I cursed. But really, looking back at my experience, I think my actions were nothing out of the ordinary for morphine controlled patient. Minus being told off by nurses for dangerous wheel chair races around the hospital, I think I did pretty well.

I am a seventeen year old girl and covered skin grafts and burns marks. I still seem to find strangers staring unintentionally at the scars that plainly fill my body. But really, what's the point of getting offended? Instead of wasting my energy on those who believe they are doing nothing wrong by stealing the 'occasional glance' at my 'meshed' legs, I just ignore them and think of the day my scars will make a damn good conversation starter.

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