

Christmas Miracle
Samantha M.
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There's a song that says, "You don't know what you got till it's gone." I can't remember the name of it or who it's sung by, but I know that line. I learned the lesson it speaks of very well this Christmas. I thought I was dehydrated, just not getting enough sleep; never in a million years did I ever think these everyday occurrences to be something more than stress. That all changed when I went for my flu shot like I do every year. I remember the doctor coming into the room and asking me if there was anything unusual and I told him, thinking nothing of it and before I knew it I was being poked and prodded like a vampire's victim and my blood was being sent to different labs for varying examinations. The doctor had said my body may not be able to break down food for energy and they were "just making sure" that's what it was. They thought I was diabetic. Maybe they were right.

I sat on my bed alone that night, Christmas Eve to be exact, starring at my pale blue walls when it hit me; my life could be changing forever. All the people I loved lives' could be changing forever. The lab results weren't even in and yet words like *insulin*, and *glucose levels* had already permanently entered my vocabulary. If the results came back with my blood sugar being through the roof then each and every day I would be worrying about whether I was eating enough, was I eating too much, did I take enough insulin before dinner? Could I live like that?

I looked down at my index finger where they had taken my blood the day my world changed upside-down, starring at the little red dot no larger than the tip of a needle surrounded by pure, unblemished flesh. Why had God done this to me? I

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thought he loved me. I thought he was supposed to protect me. Isn't that what they taught you in church? And if that was true then why would he hurt me and my family?

As if in answer to my question, I heard my mother's caring voice enter my head. "When in doubt, pray." It seemed like good advice and what was there to lose? I couldn't do anything to change the lab results, but maybe someone else could. I glanced up at the ceiling fan collecting dust from its lack of use in the cold Michigan winters and whispered, "Please," into the night. Suddenly, a calming sensation overwhelmed me, shortly followed by hot tears trickling down my pale cheeks. I fell off the bed and sank to my knees on the floor, sobbing.

"Please Lord, let me be healthy," I cried. "Please take care of me and allow their suspicions to be false. I know I make mistakes and I know that I don't read my bible every day or talk to you each night but please Lord don't let this happen!" I stayed this way for a long while knowing that if by some miracle I was healthy I would never again be ungrateful for anything in my life. Never again would I take my health, my life for granted. Every day was a precious miracle and every breath was a gift from God.

I sat up, roughly wiped the last traces of tears from my eyes like I used to do when I was child and gave a grim smile at how my behavior scarcely changed from when I was five to fifteen before grimacing again. Was there anything else I could do? Any last comfort I could receive? I sighed and ran a hand through my long chocolate hair before I saw it: a small, leather-bound book lying on my triangular bedside table, the front cover wearing off from my having it since second-grade. I walked over to the bible, picked it up, flipped to a random page and looked down. The verse was Mark 5:34

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and Jesus was speaking to an ill woman whom he had just met and he said, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.” I stared at the little ink words pressed into the paper in disbelief. Was there a chance-? But I didn’t have time to finish the thought.

The phone rang and I jumped about a foot in the air before looking at the clock. It was ten-thirty at night; no good news comes after seven pm. Slowly, I exited my room and walked down the hall to see my mom with her light brown hair hiding behind her ears talking on the phone. Her moss-colored eyes were downcast and she was biting her lip to the point where I thought she would soon draw blood. A single tear rolled down her cheek, creating a river through her light make-up.

“Uh-huh,” she said into the receiver. “Yes...okay...yes, alright...thank you and Merry Christmas.” There was a small *click* as she hung up the phone and began sobbing into her hands. I had never seen my mother cry before; this couldn’t have been good.

I sat down beside her and placed a hand on her back. She looked up at me, sighed and said, “That was the doctor; Addie, your test results came back in.”

I held my breath; she was crying. This could only mean one thing: I had type 1 diabetes. God hadn’t saved me. How stupid I had been to think I mattered to him. How foolish I was to think he would help me; he spent his time on people more religious and important than me.

“And...?” I asked quietly, though I already knew the answer.

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She tucked my shiny hair back behind my ear like she used to do when I was little and said, "You're healthy. You need to hold back on some of the pop and caffeine, but you're healthy."

It took a moment for the words to register in my mind. I was healthy? I wasn't diabetic? God had taken care of me? I didn't know what to say or do; I wanted to sing and dance and cry all at the same time. My mom pulled me closer to her and held me tight; I cried into her shoulder.

"Thank God," she whispered and I smiled. Yes, that was exactly what I had to do.

"What's all the commotion?" asked a voice from the door and I looked up to see my tall father with his cropped graying hair standing in the doorway, his hands behind his back.

"I'm healthy," I squeaked and I watched as relief flooded his face. I got up and ran to him in my mismatched pajamas. He held me close and kissed the top of my head.

"That's wonderful Addie," he whispered and I felt something being pressed into the palm of my hand. I looked down and saw a little green box with a large red bow planted on the top.

"We thought we'd let you open your present early," said my mom as my dad and I sat beside her on the comfy bed. Carefully, I pulled on the ribbon and watched the bow slide off the package and tore the paper to see a velvet jewelry box. I clicked it open

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and gasped as I saw a golden heart dangling from a thin chain. I pulled it out and held it up in the air before my father took it and placed it around my neck.

“So that no matter what happens in your life, you know that challenges don’t define who you are, but it’s what you do when they occur that’s important.”

I smiled and hugged both my parents. “Thank you,” I whispered.

“You’re welcome,” they said in unison and I got up, walked back to my room, shut the door and stood behind it with my back pressed against the cold wood.

“Thank you,” I breathed, looking up at the ceiling, holding the necklace in my hand. No matter what came in the future, no matter what challenges I faced, God was with me and he had given me the Christmas miracle of a lifetime.