

## Happily Ever After

Terror and agitation, devotion and affection. All are masked by love, true love. Along with every Disney Prince and Princess, this emotion can be felt mutually through a mother and her daughter, a father and his son. This sensation courses so heavily through our veins that one puncture can bleed you dry. In that moment, I would have done anything to be void of emotions. Throughout the treatment process, my remorse was astronomical. But looking back now, my sensitivity was a blessing in disguise.

My life is a fairy tale. In the beginning, my life was, well, it was normal for any other eleven year old. I would go to school, hang out with my friends and play sports. My older sister would do the same. My dad would go to his job, working as a lawyer, and my mom would go to school and teach her students. It is funny how your life can change in a matter of seconds. It is ironic how a beautiful spring day can bring a family the worst news of all. But, that is what happens in fairy tales. Everything is great...until it is not.

Imagine this: loud wind coming through the car window, music blasting, and your mom and sister speaking with loud voices. Noisy right? Well, I can sleep through it all. I can also sleep through the most important phone call of my family's life. But what I cannot sleep through, is silence. And that is what I woke up to. Two weeks went by and I did not think much of that car ride. But then, I was summoned into the kitchen.

My tears could have filled the Pacific Ocean. My eyes were red and puffy. Nothing, and I mean nothing could have pulled me away from hugging my mom. I thought that the longer I embraced her, the healthier she would get. But that was where I went wrong. At that moment, my life took a break from being a fairy tale. Love can wake one from an eternal sleep, but cannot cure breast cancer.

I thought that this was *my* fault. That was when I knew my sensitivity kicked in. I thought that if I had a different past, my future would have had an alternate outcome. But fate is fate, and nothing can change that. I expected the worst. My mom's best friend previously died from breast cancer, implanting this fear in my mind. My reality was already halfway to becoming my worst nightmare. My brain was flooded with millions of scary thoughts and scenarios, all ending in the same way. Death.

Inhale, exhale, repeat. I can finally breathe again. We made it over the peak of the mountain. After two surgeries and radiation, my mom was on her road to recovery. We decided to start putting pieces together. Cancer is genetic, but no one in my family has ever been diagnosed before. How did my mom win the cancer lottery? Was it her beauty products, our laundry detergent, our food? Can chemicals even cause cancer? This uncertainty led to a house makeover. It was like our fairy godmother's came, said their "bibbidi-bobbidi-boo's" and poof! New lotions, new pots, new pans, and a lot of organic foods. Everything we purchased was clear of any toxic chemicals. Because of a life threatening disease, our family became more conscious of the ingredients put in products.

The gates reopen, peace is restored and the wicked stepmother goes away. Life went back to normal...kind of. My mom went back to teaching math, but only for part time. She is a superhuman! Teacher in the morning, cancer patient by day, and mother by night. And do not forget, my personal Uber! I was happy to see more of my mom, but the circumstances we had to go through to get to this point were depressing. My mom was on the verge of remission, and so was I. My depressing thoughts were slowly changing into happy ones.

Pink became my mom's favorite color and ribbons her favorite design. Our family built a strong connection to breast cancer, so strong that we decided to raise awareness. When I became

a Bat Mitzvah in 2017 with my sister, we raised money for a nonprofit organization called FORCE. By tying pink ribbons around trees, my sister and I raised money for breast and ovarian cancer research. Now, we work with Soul Ryeders, continuing to raise money but this time for specific, personalized resources for anyone affected by this disease. I also donated ten inches of my hair to Soul Ryeders so a chemotherapy patient can use my locks as a wig. I plan to donate again in the future!

Knowing that there is a possibility that this villain can come back, haunts me. But in addition to being scared, I am also very grateful. One can truly understand the relief that comes in the words “you are clear”, if you endure a variety of negative emotions, like myself and my family. In order to appreciate my mother’s remission, I allow myself to be vulnerable and accept my sensitivity. That moment was one of the happiest moments of my life. My mom, my Queen, was cured. We lived happily ever after.

The End