

Searing pain traveled through Noah's body. A yelp escaped his lips, but nobody answered. The body of agony tore through him, and his fingers clenched onto all of his nerves. He lay on the cement unable to move. A flash of lightning crossed the sky, and he realized what was going on.

The second ever US disaster was taking place.

In 2000, there had been a US disaster, as people called it. A terrible thunder storm, followed by tsunamis, typhoons, and earthquakes had hammered North America. Hundreds of thousands of people died. Now, 100 years later, and in the second US disaster, everyone was vulnerable. There was no running from the storms. A tornado in Alabama occurred, so people moved to Michigan where it was supposed to be safe. Instead, the Great Lakes overflowed after tremendous rainstorms. And now, Noah lay on the cement, being flung everywhere by the waves. Unable to escape, trying to catch his breath, and knowing it was over. No one saw him as he slammed against a building, and his right side snapped.

Noah had been enjoying a day in the sun with his family on the beach of Lake Michigan. His father and mother were on the shore, watching him and his little sister splash in the water. A flash of light bannered the sky, and ten seconds later the clouds growled. Noah didn't see or hear any of this, because he was underwater, perfecting his handstand. His sister ran to the shore thinking that he was behind her. She had reached the sand when she realized where he was.

"NOAH!" she screamed. A giant twelve foot wave rose above the surface of the water, and his family ran to the car. Noah was no where to be seen. He plummeted onto the sand. Crawling, he made his way to the street, blood flowing from a gash under his left eye. He collapsed on the street as another wave flushed him towards a building. Panic stricken, he retched up his beach hot dog and slushie. Never would he have imagined that he would in the midst of a US disaster.

But he was, and he couldn't do anything about it.

Noah was alone on the street sprawled out in a pool of blood. The agonizing pain paralyzed him from his hips to the ends of his toes. He yelled, but there was no response. An agonizing sear of pain rushed through him. He was eleven years old, and about to have his life ended. He hadn't even gone to middle school yet, and he would never experience it. His life flashed before his eyes as another wave towered over him. One thought came to his mind.

I am hopeless.

And he truly was.

Hours passed, Noah struggled to drag himself out of the grasp of the waves' cold power. He barely made it to higher ground when yet another wave poured onto the beach. The aftermath of the hurricane was dreadful. Never would anyone imagine that a hurricane could occur in Lake Michigan or any other lake. But everyone was wrong.

Dead wrong.

Noah yelled again, and he finally heard a response.

TORNADO!! He screamed in his head. He looked out in the distance, and a swirl of debris was in the air, plucking beach trees out of the ground as if it were nothing. He screamed and realized that laying on the ground screaming would never help in this situation. A harsh wind smacked his face and he went tumbling down the street. He almost fainted when he realized the damage done that had been done to his leg. Flesh was ripped and his calf muscles were visible, blood was everywhere. He tried to get up, but he lost the control of his leg and fell again. He tried and tried. Finally he mustered the courage to stumble up and limp a few more yards. Running was torture, but he had to move or he would be dead.

When he stopped, one thing came to mind, and one thing only:

His family.

Where is my family? Are they okay? Is Ana okay?

That thought made him run faster. He charged through the street. He saw a young woman and stopped. She was curled up on the ground, huddled over something or *someone*. Noah staggered up to her.

“Excuse me, miss?” She looked up, tears in her eyes. Noah realized what she was covering.

She had a baby; a dead baby.

“Yes?” she asked, hopelessly.

“I’m so, so sorry about your loss.” He gestured towards the baby. “And I know that you may want to sit here and be alone, but there is a tornado coming this way.” The woman stood up, still cradling the baby.

“Go, run!” she replied urgently. The two scrambled as fast as they could, Noah was still tortured by his leg.

The two staggered in silence, until a sudden roar made them dash. Noah looked behind himself and saw the tornado from a very far away distance. He ran, and Mary followed. They dashed through the street and stopped at a sign at the bottom of a hill that said “DEAD END.” Noah looked up the hill to find undisturbed houses. Noah and Mary ran up the hill and banged on a door.

“Hello?” an old man called.

“Sir! Please let us in! There is a tornado coming!” Noah screamed. The fragile, old man cracked the door open and led them downstairs. Noah collapsed on the ground, breathless. His leg was bloody, and it burned with every small move that he made. He couldn’t believe he had run so fast and so far.

The old man slowly began to speak.

“I am Frank. I will get my wife to tend to your leg. She is a nurse and will be happy to help.” The old man called to his wife. The young woman was curled up on the couch, holding the baby’s body to her chest. An elderly woman came down the stairs and looked at Noah’s leg. She then ran back upstairs and grabbed a first aid kit and a box of medical supplies.

“Thank you, very much, ma’am. I am Noah. I was caught on the beach of Lake Michigan just about a mile from your house. A hurricane took place. You are very fortunate that your house is above sea level, or it would’ve been gone.” Noah said.

“I am Henrietta. You are very welcome, Noah.” She smiled at him.

He lay on the white carpet, now red from the blood from his leg. He winced with every breath he took. He moaned with every move he made. He turned towards the woman, who was sobbing. Henrietta started dabbing Noah’s leg with something, but Noah didn’t know what it was. All he knew was that it burned like fire. He lay on the ground, and groaned whenever Henrietta touched his flesh. She continued to dab for at least thirty minutes. She then wrapped his leg with a soft cloth. Suddenly, the young woman spoke up.

“I am Mary, and this is my daughter, April. She was playing on the shore when the wave hit, and when I got to her, she had already drowned.” Noah looked at her.

“Mary, I am really sorry about your loss. I am here because when the storm started, I was underwater, and I didn’t notice anything. My family had already left the beach when I surfaced.” Noah explained.

A long, loud grumble suddenly filled the room, shaking the house. Frank cautiously stepped up the stairs and looked out the window.

“Everyone, stay calm. Please lie down and get comfortable. The tornado is coming, and will be here soon,” he announced. Mary crouched on the ground and curled up in a ball with little April in her arms. Noah crawled next to her, and Henrietta joined them. Frank gathered food and drinks, and got to safety of the cellar.

One minute passed, and trees could be heard breaking in half by the enormous gushes of wind. Noah yelled. Mary cried and clutched onto April as best she could. Henrietta and Frank wrapped their arms around each other. Never was Noah more afraid.

Suddenly, he saw the sky.

It was the last thing he saw before he blacked out.

“Noah! Wake up!” Henrietta poked his side. He snapped his eyes open. Everything around him was white. He sat up, looking around the room. Henrietta and Mary, (with April’s body in her arms) sat next to his bed.

“Where am I?” he asked.

“We are at a hospital in Nebraska.” Noah looked at her, and then realized someone was missing.

“Where is Frank?” he asked.

“Um, Frank didn’t make it through the tornado,” Mary said. Noah bent his head and a tear trickled down his cheek. After a few moments, Henrietta wanted to break the silence.

“I think I’m hungry. Who wants to go downstairs for some dinner?” she asked quietly. Noah asked for a wheelchair because he was still weary and his leg was killing him. Mary decided to stay in the room where she could rest her throbbing head.

Noah glided down the hall as Henrietta pushed him. Patients in the cafeteria were almost silent. Noah selected a chocolate milk and a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. He and Henrietta sat at a table and ate in peace. Noah watched as a young girl and her mother found a table. The little girl reminded him of his sister Ana.

“Honey, please be quiet. I have a headache.” *Ana... I miss her. I wish she was here with me.* Noah thought. He wheeled himself to the bathroom, which was right next to the little girl’s table. As he wheeled himself out, he heard a woman.

“Noah?” He looked to his left. His mother was there, and so was his Ana. His sister Ana! His mom! His family!

“Mom? Ana?” Noah gaped at them in disbelief.

“Yeah, it’s us! Sara and Ana Edwards!” she squealed. Noah leapt out of his wheelchair and hugged all of them at once, ignoring the pain from his legs. His mom cried hysterically. They had been so afraid they would never see each other again.

Henrietta walked up to them.

“Mom, this is Henrietta. She and her husband Frank saved me and another woman named Mary. They let Mary and I stay in their basement during the tornado. She tended to my torn up leg,” Noah said, gesturing towards his bandages.

“Noah, we thought you... died,” his mother said.

“I thought you died, too! But you didn’t! You’re alive and with me! My family!” Noah exclaimed with joy.

“Well, not completely. Dad dove in the water to find you, and he got flushed into a building and cracked his head,” Noah’s mom said sadly.

Noah felt his eyes swell up with tears. He couldn’t believe it. His dad was gone. He sat in disbelief, crying. All because he had been underwater, his father had died.

“It’s all my fault,” Noah sobbed.

“No, sweetie, it’s not your fault,” his mom assured him, attempting to comfort him.

“Mom, it’s my fault and you know it. If I hadn’t been underwater, he would be alive. I made him die. I *had* to be underwater at that time!” Noah sobbed again. “Why are you guys here, though? You don’t have any injuries.”

“We are here because Ana and I are volunteering to help people. The waves *just* missed catching us and we made it to Nebraska yesterday. Luckily neither of us got any serious injuries. I did get hit in the head but it wasn’t that bad. I just have an awful headache.”

Noah grabbed his mom’s wrist.

“Mom, I want you to meet Mary and April. Come on.” Noah had his mom and sister follow him to his room. They walked in, and Mary looked up.

“Mary, this is my mother and sister. My mom also lost her husband in the waves,” Noah said.

The women soon talked easily, as if they had known each other for years. Noah’s leg continued to sear with pain, and the doctors treated it with the help of Henrietta.

Henrietta ended up getting a job at the hospital, and Noah’s family found an apartment while Sara was on a job search. Noah and Ana enrolled at public schools in Omaha, and Mary lived with them until she got a job and a house.

Finally, after 3 treacherous weeks of mayhem, the US was disaster-free. It was a relief to know that everything would be back to normal soon.

THE END