

"FREE"

Writer Number: 14-06-28

DE Number: 06

When her son gets in a car accident, a mother is left with a
difficult decision.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL, PHILADELPHIA, PA - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

A woman with short blonde hair in her late 40's, RACHEL, is sitting next to a hospital bed. She's holding a withered red rose, talking to someone, but more so to herself.

Rachel has bags under her eyes and is worn with exhaustion.

RACHEL

You spend your whole life trying to hold on to whatever is good. But no matter how hard you clench your fists, you can still lose it.

A high pitched noise swells. Louder.

CUT TO:

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

TITLE: "2 DAYS EARLIER"

The ER Doors burst open. Four NURSES are wheeling in a victim on a gurney. DR. SPELLING (late 30's), is being briefed.

DR. SPELLING

What do we have?

NURSE #1

MVA. Head trauma with blunt force to the thorac. Possible fractured ribs and internal bleeding.

The nurses wheel the gurney next to the bed.

DR. SPELLING

Ready? One, two, three!

The bloody victim is placed on the bed.

NURSE #2

His blood pressure is low. Sixty over forty. He's losing volume.

NURSE #3

I'm having trouble getting a vein. Might need a central line.

NURSE #4

He's B negative.

NURSE #1

We need to stop the bleeding from
his head.

Dr. Spelling turns to the cardiac monitor as the victim's
heart beat flat lines.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rachel runs into the waiting room, pushing past people. She
yells towards the front desk.

RACHEL

Where's my son!? Where's my son!?

The RECEPTIONIST tries to answer but Rachel sees a group of
nurses moving quickly down a hallway and follows them.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

Have you seen my son!?

A few nurses turn back and restrain Rachel from going any
farther. A MALE NURSE holds her back.

MALE NURSE

Ma'am, you can't go in there.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Same as before. The flat line continues.

NURSE #1

Doctor?

DR. SPELLING

Let's shock him.

Nurse #1 and Nurse #4 wheel the CRP cart over to the bed.
They put a board under his back and attach the pads to his
chest.

NURSE #1

Clear.

The nurses step back. The Doctor takes up the paddles.

DR. SPELLING

Shocking.

Dr. Spelling delivers a shock. Nothing.

DR. SPELLING (CONT'D)
Again. Shocking.

Boom. The victim comes back. Heart rate is speedy but consistent. Dr. Spelling exhales in relief.

DR. SPELLING (CONT'D)
We got him.

The nurses get back to work.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rachel has been seated down, in between two nurses. She's in tears and is hysterical.

RACHEL
My son. My son. What's happening to
my son!?

A high pitched noise swells again as we:

FADE TO WHITE.

FADE IN:

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

DR. PAUL GILLESPIE (50's), is briefing family members about the accident. Lying in bed is PETER (21), surrounded by his father, RICHARD (40's), LYNN (40's) and sister, ELLIE (7).

DR. GILLESPIE
He has multiple fractured ribs,
bilateral lung punctures with
splenic and pancreatic
hemorrhaging.

RICHARD
Where do we go from here?

DR. GILLESPIE
He may need several transplants.
Although that is risky. It might be
safer to see if he can make it
without them. But if he does need
them, he might need them very soon.
Within the next few days.

RICHARD
Thank you, Doctor.

DR. GILLESPIE
I'll be back to check on you
shortly, Peter.

Dr. Gillespie exits as Peter speaks through his oxygen mask.

PETER
I'm sorry, Dad. I'm sorry.

RICHARD
Don't worry about that now. We're
just here to get you back to
normal. I love you, son.

PETER
I love you, too, Dad.

LYNN
We're here for you, Peter.

PETER
Thanks, Lynn.

LYNN
You can call me Mom, remember?

Peter smiles as Ellie hands him a drawing.

ELLIE
I made this for you, Peter.

Peter holds the drawing.

RACHEL (O.S.)
How much longer does he have?

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - DR. GILLESPIE'S OFFICE - DAY

Rachel is sitting across from Dr. Gillespie. She holds a pamphlet about organ transplants in her hand.

DR. GILLESPIE
A few weeks at most. But probably
only a few days.

RACHEL
And what if it doesn't work? Will
it have been a waste?

DR. GILLESPIE
That depends on who's asking.

INT./EXT. - RACHEL'S CAR - NIGHT

As Rachel drives, the conversation continues in her head. A few red roses line the floorboard of the passenger seat.

DR. GILLESPIE (O.S.)
I know this is tough, Rachel. And risky. But it's your call. You're free to choose whatever you think is best.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - EVENING

The next evening. Richard is by Peter's side.

PETER
The nurses keep coming by to check on me, Dad. Do they know something I don't?

RICHARD
(consoling)
They like you.

PETER
I think the medication is finally kicking in.

RICHARD
Good.

PETER
(collecting his thoughts)
Even if I make it out of this hospital, how am I supposed to go on? What's going to happen? It's my fault for me being the way I am.

Richard can't find the words. He embraces Peter as he sobs.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - DR. GILLESPIE'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Rachel is across from Dr. Gillespie.

DR. GILLESPIE
I don't want to put pressure on you, Rachel, but his condition is worsening. We will need an answer sooner than later.

RACHEL
I want to see him again.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Peter is sound asleep. Richard is sitting next to Peter, reading a book. The shadows on the pages change as Rachel blocks the light to the door. Richard looks up.

RICHARD

Rachel?

Rachel stares at Peter, not making eye contact with Richard.

RACHEL

May I speak with him alone?

RICHARD

He's asleep. The medication has him under pretty deep.

RACHEL

That's okay.

RICHARD

Sure.

Richard collects his things and gives Rachel privacy.

Rachel pulls herself together and makes her way to the side of the bed. She stares at Peter. She holds a withered rose.

RACHEL

I thought if I'd come here, I'd be angry at you. And that it would make me feel better. Or maybe you could tell me that I don't have to make this choice. But I've gone through every possibility in my head.

(beat)

I just wanted a husband who loved me and a healthy son. That's all I asked for.

(beat)

You spend your whole life trying to hold on to whatever is good. But no matter how hard you clench your fists, you can still lose it.

Rachel grasps Peter's shoulder hard.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I can do whatever I want. It's my choice. If only it felt that way.

After a moment, Peter's monitors start going crazy. She looks over in confusion as Peter awakes and struggles to breathe. Richard and a NURSE come bolting in the room.

NURSE #5
I need a Doctor!

Another nurse comes into the room. Rachel slowly makes her way out of it, keeping her eyes fixated on Peter.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

INT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Peter is at a house full of kids partying.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - PRESENT

The nurses work on Peter.

NURSE #5
I can't keep his lungs inflated.

EXT. HOUSE - FLASHBACK

Peter stumbles to his car and pulls out his keys.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - PRESENT

Dr. Gillespie is making his way past Rachel to Peter's room.

DR. GILLESPIE
Rachel, this is it. We need an
answer.

INT. RACHEL'S HOUSE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Rachel is sitting at the kitchen table, paying bills. Her son, TREY (20), is talking with her.

TREY
What? No one got you roses for
Valentine's Day? Mom, you are too
pretty for that.

RACHEL
It's fine, Trey. Your father never
got me roses, anyway.

Trey picks up the car keys.

TREY
(headed out the door)
Mom, I'm getting you roses right
now and there's nothing you can do
about it.

RACHEL
(smiling)
You don't have to do that, Trey.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM - PRESENT

Peter is being wheeled into the Operating Room.

INT. GROCERY STORE - FLASHBACK

Trey purchases a dozen roses and heads out to his car.

INT./EXT. PETER'S CAR - FLASHBACK

Peter crushes an empty beer can and tosses it out the window.

INT./EXT. TREY'S CAR - FLASHBACK

Trey heads home from the grocery store. The roses lie on the passenger seat. Trey sees oncoming headlights.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA INTERSECTION - FLASHBACK

Peter starts losing control of the wheel. He tries averting Trey's car and slams right into the driver's side.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - PRESENT

Rachel looks over a document on a clipboard. The top of the paper reads "Authorization for Organ and Tissue Donation." A tear falls as she signs the document.

EXT. UPENN HOSPITAL - FLASHBACK

Two ambulances leaves the hospital.

EXT. PHILADELPHIA INTERSECTION - FLASHBACK

Each ambulance takes a victim from the accident.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - FLASHBACK

This is the scene from the beginning. Rachel spots a couple of hurried nurses and rushes towards them.

RACHEL

Have you seen my son?

A few nurses turn back and restrain Rachel from going any farther. A MALE NURSE holds her back.

MALE NURSE

Ma'am, you can't go in there.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - OPERATING ROOM - PRESENT

Dr. Gillespie and a handful of nurses carefully work at transplanting the lungs into Peter's body cavity.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - FLASHBACK

The victim this time is Peter, who is gasping for air. Nurses and a Doctor surround him. Peter tries to speak.

NURSE #6

He's going shocky.

PETER

What about the other car? The other driver!?

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - FLASHBACK

Dr. Spelling is trying to shock Trey back to life, just like in the beginning.

DR. SPELLING

Shocking.

Dr. Spelling delivers a shock. Nothing.

DR. SPELLING (CONT'D)

Again. Shocking.

Boom. Trey comes back. Heart rate is speedy but consistent. Dr. Spelling takes a breath.

DR. SPELLING (CONT'D)
We got him.

The nurses get back to work.

NURSE #1
He's lost a lot from his head.

DR. SPELLING
We've got his heart back. He'll be
okay.

The monitor flat lines again. Dr. Spelling takes up the
paddles again.

DR. SPELLING (CONT'D)
Shocking.

Shock delivered. Nothing.

Again. Nothing. Dr. Spelling tries again. Nothing. He grabs
an epinephrine syringe and sticks it right into Trey's heart.
Nothing. The nurses all look towards Dr. Spelling.

DR. SPELLING (CONT'D)
We lost him.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - FLASHBACK

Peter is being worked on and is a little more stable now.

NURSE #7
He's really banged up. His organs
are punctured. Might need some
transplants.

NURSE #6
Might be tough. He's B negative.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - FLASHBACK

Rachel waits nervously. Dr. Spelling comes out towards her.
She rises from her seat expectantly. She receives the bad
news. She falls to the ground, sobbing.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - PRESENT

Dr. Gillespie tells Richard, Lynn and Ellie that the
operation went well and Peter is doing okay.

END OF MONTAGE.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - HOSPITAL ROOM - THE NEXT DAY

Peter is surrounded by Richard, Lynn and Ellie.

LYNN

We're so glad you're okay, Peter.

Rachel walks in the doorway.

RICHARD

I think there's some one you need
to meet, Peter.

Richard, Lynn and Ellie head outside of the room. Peter has never met her, but understands who Rachel is.

They both don't know how to begin talking.

PETER

I don't want you to forgive me.

RACHEL

Do you suggest I make you suffer?

She looks down at the HANDCUFFS that are holding Peter onto the bed.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

If I'm going to do this, I've got
to do it all the way.

(beat)

It's my choice, Peter. For the both
of us.

Rachel gently places a hand on his shoulder. Peter sobs.

INT. UPENN HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Richard is saying his goodbye to Rachel, who is sitting down.

RICHARD

I've never owed so much to a
complete stranger before.

(beat)

When my wife died four years ago, I
thought I'd never find happiness
again. I hope you do.

Without knowing what else to say, Richard walks away. Rachel starts crying. Ellie, who had been with Lynn at the Gift Shop, runs towards Rachel with a red rose.

ELLIE
Excuse me, Ms.?

Rachel turns her head.

ELLIE (CONT'D)
This is for you.

RACHEL
Thank you.

Ellie scampers back to Richard and Lynn as they walk away.

Rachel observes the beautiful red rose. She lets out tears of grief and loss. Exhales. She lets go.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.

