

3, 6, 10

3 Stitches

The smell of alcohol burned the tips of my nose.

“Stay still, it will hurt for a moment,” the nurse said. I held my arm still, clenching my hand into a white knuckled fist.

The pain came immediately, and I sucked in a sharp breath, tears spilling from my eyes.

Dab, dab, dab. The nurse continued until she felt satisfied, and my arm was still tingling from the pain when she finally drew back.

“Allisa Marie am I right?” The nurse said, looking up at me, as I quickly wiped the tears with my good arm.

“Yes,” I said. I meant to make it sound stronger, but it sounded pathetic to my ears. The nurse nodded sympathetically.

“Can you tell me how you got hurt?”

I shook my head, my bottom lip trembling. “It doesn’t matter, it’s not serious anyways.”

“I wouldn’t say it’s nothing. You’re going to need three stitches for that wound. It’s very deep and an infection could spread.”

My breathing stopped. The nurse continued to talk about the procedure, but the word *stitches* kept ringing in my ear.

We’ll make sure it’ll hurt.

My head shot up and I looked around the room.

“Are you okay?” The nurse said.

“Didn’t you hear that,” I whispered.

The nurse’s brow furrowed, replying, “there is no one here besides us.”

I nodded, and she continued on.

You should have known you’re no superhero.

I felt my hands starting to shake as the voices emerged.

We’ll make you go crying to your mommy.

But I didn’t have a mom.

You’ll never feel pain as bad as when we’re done with you.

I’ve never had stitches before.

“Okay, hold still. I’ll stitch up your wounds, and then we’ll call your guardian. It won’t hurt a lot, I promise.”

She lied. It hurt a lot.

6 Stitches

I didn’t want to look.

I walked down the hallway.

One step, two step, three step, five, six, seven, eight.

Down, down, down.

Drip, drip, drip.

I looked behind me. There was a trail of red.

I opened the door, my arm warm and sticky.

I didn't want to look at it.

It was the same nurse. I didn't remember her name.

Her head turned up and she gasped, her gaze landing on my arm.

Was it that bad?

She immediately sat me on the bed.

She introduced her name to me again.

I don't keep it in mind.

She got to work just like before. I feel a sharp sting of pressure on my arm, and I suck in a breath of cold air through my teeth, tears springing in my eyes.

Dab, dab, dab.

"Allisa Marie, you're the same patient from a few months ago am I right?"

I nodded.

Dab, dab, dab.

"Can you please recall how you got injured?"

I shook my head.

"You don't remember?"

I shook my head.

“You won’t tell me?”

I nodded.

“This is serious Allisa, the school board needs to understand what is happening. Are you being bullied?”

I considered it. I considered telling her everything that had happened to me. But I shook my head. I was a coward, and I was ashamed by that.

“I. Tripped.” Broken words stumbled from my mouth.

She signed, and continued repairing my wound.

“How. Bad. Is. It.” I said in muffled words, breaking them down so I wouldn’t choke on my own suffocation.

“Six stitches,” she said quietly.

My spine straightened, the memories of my last stitches pinning me down. I think I finally understand how it felt for a piece of fabric to be stitched together.

I used to like stitching. It was soothing. In, out, in, out, goes the string. Coloured pieces of fabric. In, out, in, out. Little dresses. Little hats. Little Scarfs.

I wonder if the nurse found it soothing.

I looked at her face.

Her face had a sheen of sweat.

Her hands were fiddling in her lap.

Her lips were drawn down, and she kept on licking her lips.

That reminded me, I was thirsty.

Clang, clang.

The sound of the cart rolling, with the metal utensils bouncing.

Clang, clang.

My throat suddenly felt dry.

I wanted so desperately to look at my arm, but my attention shifted back to the stitched up wound on my other arm, crooked and rusted with age. At last that's what I perceived.

"Okay, here we go."

I felt the needle break into my skin.

I thought,

it didn't hurt as much as last time.

Ten Stitches

I felt the pain sharp in my leg.

I couldn't move.

My face was hurting.

My arm was hurting.

My *heart* was hurting.

Wait.

No.

This was like a bullet had gotten shot in my heart.

Was this how the dead felt?

No.

I shouldn't be selfish.

Why am I on the ground?

I don't want to trouble anyone.

I don't want to become a burden.

I could still hear their mocking laughter.

Was it fun?

Was I...funny?

I wanted to laugh.

But I didn't find it funny.

...

Beep, beep, beep.

Oh yeah.

I remember how I got here.

There was a lot of screaming.

Or maybe that was laughing?

I couldn't tell the difference.

There were lights.

They were so bright.

Was it the sun?

That would be nice.

I liked the sun.

Mom would always lay there with me.

Tears.

So many tears.

Help.

Help.

Get me out of *here*.

I want to go back.

Back to my life.

Back to my mom.

Pain.

Pain.

Ringling.

So much ringing.

I want it to stop.

“Twelve stitches.”

Twelve?

How did I get here?

I felt something near my leg.

Pointy.

I remember.

Just like those two times.

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I didn't feel any pain in my leg.

I wanted to cry out in relief.

At least it didn't hurt.

Beep, beep.

Snitches get stitches.

Those words.

Freak.

Beep. Beep. Beep.

Weirdo.

Faster. Beep. Beep. Beep. Beep

Snitches.

Faster. Beep. Beep. Beep. Beep. Beep

Get.

Faster. Beep. Beep. Beep. Beep. Beep. Beep

Stitches.

I wish I could hear what happened next.

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