

“ARE YOU SURE YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT’S HAPPENING TO YOU?” the slender brunette asked me with raised brows at the end of my hospital bed.

Every time a new person asked me that, I wondered if I had said something wrong. I dotted off for a few seconds still adjusting to being woken up moments ago.

Yeah, I’ll Be Fine

MAX BALDERSON

“Yeah—I have cirrhosis and hypertension in my liver.”

The doctor nodded blankly.

“This is causing varices to form in my esophagus and gastrointestinal tract which is why I was throwing up blood on Monday. In addition to that, you guys also found that I have poly cystic kidney disease.”

The doctor and nurse by her side turned their heads in unison as if to acknowledge that the information I was sharing was correct but not sharing the same calmness that I expressed.

Someone must have glued a concerned look on their faces, because nothing I was saying could ease their nerves. It matched the beeps and white noise of the hospital pretty well.

“Mr. Balderson, just to make sure that it’s absolutely clear, you’re aware that your liver is failing? And that the long term goal that we need to plan for is a transplant.”

“Yep.”

The two gave me their medical spiel, like all the others before them, and shifted out the door. I’d been getting those looks of shock for the past few days and was starting to suspect that maybe I was the weird one, but why should I be freaking out?

There was nothing I could really do aside from sit in bed, nod, and rack my brain trying to answer questions I had never even considered a week ago.

Truthfully, I didn't understand, but I've had time. Watching my mom in thousands of hospital beds before me. Not screaming, not crying, just laying down in bed holding her overgrown baby's hand. Or watching my brother get checked his senior year during soccer before staring down the same shotgun barrel of diagnoses that had now shifted their aim towards me. Odd to think that an elbow to the groin can be lucky. I've had much longer to think than these doctors knew.

These conditions were new to me, but after seeing superwoman too tired to even speak and after seeing your best friend suddenly forced to give up his sport, his passion, after seeing everyone in my mother's family in the same spot as me getting up stronger than before... Yeah, I'll be fine. ✱