

Help Me

By ALR

Oh wow...I've never been in an ambulance before... The deceptively young person stares at the many different items that decorate the interior of the vehicle. It's smaller than they imagined. With the bed in the center making legroom tight for them as they sat on the small bench to the side. They watched as the cold plastic flat tube was wrapped around their arm. It expands, slowly squeezing their bicep. They're used to this. This isn't their first getting this type of test, or their first time heading to the ER because of their rapidly beating heart. But this is the first time it was this severe. So severe that they instinctively called their mother beforehand. So severe that despite the absurdly high costs of an ambulance, they'd gladly pay it if it meant getting the help they needed.

"Do you know what's wrong with me man? Do you know why my heart rate is so high?" They ask. They try their best to sound calm, and they succeed. But how long could they keep up the mask? They can't help but wonder.

"There's a few things it could be actually." He responds as he looks at his little laptop that he's been fiddling with since he sat down. He doesn't mention any details. Nor does he say anything else.

Right...none of my underlying health conditions can explain what's happening to me. Not at this cost. But why did it get so bad? Was I really that angry? As their taken to the hospital they do a recap of what happened leading up to this. I smoked. Tried to write. But I got too angry. So I waited. I sobered up. I tried again...maybe I wasn't sober enough? No...even if that was the case the experience of waiting for the ambulance definitely sobered me up. Well what about the conversations I had after I called my mom...she didn't exactly calm me down. And then there was the dispatcher. She wouldn't even listen to me. I mean telling me my chest just hurts when I told her I'm feeling no pain? How does that even make sense? Well...hopefully I can clear things up at the hospital...God your so fucking stupid. Do you really think it was worth it? Did you think you were going to write some grand fucking masterpiece? You're not even a fucking musician! You're some no name writer with nothing to their name but hopes and dreams. No job. No money. Nothing. You're just a pathetic sack of walking talking shit that somehow keeps waking up every goddamn day! You're fucking worthless you know that? How are you going to pay for anything of this with no insurance? How are you going to explain this to everyone? "Sorry I ended up in the hospital AGAIN? If not for Sam coming and getting your keys you would have left the place open where anyone was able to come in and rob the joint. All because you were too fucking stupid to grab your goddamn keys. Such an incompetent loser! A walking talking cyst on society, soaking up its resources because you can't get your fucking shit together! You're a disgrace! A dumb stupid moron! Pathetic!

With nothing else to think about they look down at their legs, and realize that they can feel them

getting heavier by the second. *Oh no...that's not good.* They start pounding on their legs. *Move damn it. Don't give out on me yet.* He continues to pound at their thigh, getting harder and harder with each hit. "Come on...move..." Their words slip out. It's becoming more difficult to hide their anxiety, but they soldier on, painting over the cracks in their mask with a fresh coat. Just in time too, cause the ride stopped moving. They've arrived.

The driver mentions that he'll get a wheelchair, making the individual feel at ease. But the wheelchair is outside. He still needs to get up.

"Alright let's go." The only remaining dispatcher inside the car commands.

"I'd love to....but I can't move."

Without missing a beat, the man holds out his hands. The individual grabs them, and is helped to their feet after a couple minutes of the most intense standing he's ever experienced. This is when the reality of the situation begins to sink in. *Had I sat down before they arrived...would I have been able to get up?* Slowly, they make their way through the small space that now feels as wide as the halls in their home. The man is behind him with every step, making sure he doesn't fall. After going down the steps, a task that seemed way easier than when he had to go up them, they found themselves outside. They quickly fall into the wheelchair, and they begin to feel some hope that the issue can be solved soon. "This is so embarrassing..." They say out loud, but to himself. How could he find himself here again? Maybe not at this exact hospital, but going through this exact problem yet again.

It's because you're stupid.

They hear a voice respond. A voice that isn't their own. *Yeah...I must be if I made the same mistake yet again.*

You're lucky you were even brought here, and the ambulance didn't just ignore you and drive off somewhere. Look at you, wasting their time with your stupid decisions. You should be ashamed of yourself.

You're right...I should have found a way to prevent this. I should have listened to the woman...I mean sure she was wrong about me having chest pains, but it's not like she didn't hear the symptoms I told her...

They enter the hospital and his conversation is interrupted when he hears some people asking about him.

"What? She's fine. She doesn't need to be here. She's too young for issues like that."

She? Or right...how could they know I'm non-binary...

He hears some more comments as another patient is rolled in. They're on a stretcher, but are being ignored as they discuss what to do with them. *Hey hey hold on, there's someone else here! Ignore me for a*

second and help them damn it! I'll be fine!

Selfish are we? What makes you think your presence is holding them up.

It's not like that! It's just...why haven't they checked on them yet?

You're the one who called them, and now you're complaining about them not immediately jumping to the rescue of someone else? You can't be serious, hahahaha!

He snaps back to reality after finally hearing that they'll at least take him in. That's when a nurse walks over to him with a pack of socks.

"Put these on."

"I can't bend over." They respond. "I can't really move actually," Not that he was expecting her to do it for him, but at least wanted to stay as transparent as possible. *I need to be honest right? They'll understand me as long as I'm honest...*

"Right..." With an eye roll the nurse moves them to the waiting area. "Alright, get up and sit in one of the chairs."

"Um...still can't move." While they can't see the nurse, they can feel her frustration.

"Really..." She rolls her annoyance into the corner. "When you're called, ask someone to move you." And without another word, she walks away.

Did I say something wrong? It's not like I can move...she's probably just stressed...They look around the room. Not that busy though...at least compared to Jefferson...I should be getting called soon. That's a relief. Maybe it's good that I came here instead of there. Who knows how long I would have been waiting had I come at the wrong time...

Aw, how cute. Being optimistic. What if you calm down before you're called, you faker?

I'm not faking!...I can barely move my arms. I've tried bending over twice now! And my chest feels so tight...my hands are so cold...

It was cold outside.

They've been cold since this all started!

How can you be so sure? Didn't you start to calm down a bit before the ambulance arrived? Do you even need to be here?

I couldn't make it back up the steps! It felt like my heart was gonna burst! What the fuck is wrong with you?

You should be asking yourself that. Look at the patients around you. Look at that old woman.

They turn their head to the right to see an older woman who barely looks conscious. She stares blankly into their eyes and he begins to imagine what kind of suffering could have brought her there and left her in such a catatonic state.

Can they tell I'm looking at them?

"Christina? Christina Aurora?" A voice calls into the waiting room.

They're calling me. They attempt to call out. "Here...I can't move..." It was barely audible. Any attempt to add more volume fails miserably. They notice a guard standing nearby so they start waving at them in hopes he gets their attention. And it works. He walk over and grips the chair.

"Thank you." Christina utters, feeling even more ashamed and embarrassed. The silence they got as a response stung.

They were taken to a small little area separated from the waiting room by a curtain, one of four. It's there they see a new man.

"Issue?"

"I um...I think I'm having a heart attack? I don't really know?" Christina tries her best not to panic.

"Well what were you doing?"

"I was working on something. I'm a writer see...and I got really excited while working on this song--"

"Did you take any drugs? Did you smoke?"

"I um...yes...I smoked a little earlier..."

What specs of compassion that were in his eyes immediately disappears as he begins looking at papers and monitors.

See? See? Look at how much of a problem you're becoming. Another druggie wheeled into the hospital. Wasting their damn time. Are you proud of yourself?

I don't even want to be here! Leave me alone!

Getting angry? The only person you should be mad at is yourself. You're the one that smoked. You're the one that wanted to write something you knew get you so angry. *YOUR* the one who called them. *YOUR the one who made it urgent. YOUR the one who's wasting time here!*

"Alright we'll take you to the back to monitor you. Your heart rate is a bit too high. Weed doesn't do this, you know." He says, now sounding a bit annoyed with the situation.

"I know." They respond. "I never said I'm like this because of weed."

The man looks at them with a silent acknowledgement before getting up. "You should put the socks on."

“I can’t move.”

With nothing else to say, he gets up and grabs the chair. Wheeling Christina into the back where the ER patients admitted are being held. While being rolled there, one of their feet had fallen off the footrest in their attempt to put the socks on. As it was dragged across the dirty floor they could feel grains of dirt brushing against the bottom of their foot. As they move along they spot a friend of theirs, now at the entrance of the ER.

They came...

You should be ashamed. Look at you.

“Christina! I’m here for you! Don’t worry! I love you!”

Those small words of comfort made the situation sink in all the more for them. Here they are. Unable to even raise their voice to assure them. *Pathetic. Fucking PATHETIC.*

As they’re wheeled to the back they quickly recognize that they’re the latest parade for the nurses working back there.....