

had no idea what had happened to me and I didn't trust anyone. If my father was fine, why wasn't he here? I thought my parents didn't know where I was and could be searching for me in the chowks and bazaars of Mingora. I didn't believe my parents were safe. Those first days my mind kept drifting in and out of a dream world. I kept having flashbacks to lying on a bed with men around me, so many that you couldn't count, and asking, 'Where is my father?' I thought I had been shot but wasn't sure – were these dreams or memories?

I was obsessed by how much this must be costing. The money from the awards had almost all gone on the school and buying a plot of land in our village in Shangla. Whenever I saw the doctors talking to one another I thought they were saying, 'Malala doesn't have any money. Malala can't pay for her treatment.' One of the doctors was a Polish man who always looked sad. I thought he was the owner of the hospital and was unhappy because I couldn't pay. So I gestured at a nurse for paper and wrote, 'Why are you sad?' He replied, 'No, I am not sad.' 'Who will pay?' I wrote. 'We don't have any money.' 'Don't worry, your government will pay,' he said. Afterwards he always smiled when he saw me.

I always think about solutions to problems so I thought maybe I could go down to the reception of the hospital and ask for a phone to call my mother and father. But my brain was telling me, *You don't have the money to pay for the call nor do you know the country code.* Then I thought, *I need to go out and start working to earn money so I can buy a phone and call my father so we can all be together again.*

Everything was so mixed up in my mind. I thought the teddy bear Dr Fiona had given me was green and had been swapped with a white one. 'Where's the green teddy?' I kept asking, even though I was told over and over there was no green teddy. The green was probably the glow of the walls in the intensive care unit but I'm still convinced there was a green teddy.

I kept forgetting English words. One note to the nurses was 'a wire to clean my teeth'. It felt like something was stuck between them and I meant floss. Actually my tongue was numb and my teeth were fine. The only thing that calmed me was when Rehanna came. She said healing prayers and I started moving my lips to some of them and mouthing 'Amin' (our word for 'amen') at the end. The television was kept off, except once when they let me watch *Masterchef* which I used to watch in Mingora and loved but everything was blurred. It was only later I learned that people were not allowed to bring in newspapers or tell me anything as the doctors were worried it could traumatise me.

I was terrified that my father could be dead. Then Fiona brought in a Pakistani newspaper from the week before which had a photograph of my father talking to General Kayani with a shawled figure sitting at the back next to my brother. I could just see her feet. 'That's my mother!' I wrote.

Later that day Dr Javid came in with his mobile phone. 'We're going to call your parents,' he said. My eyes shone with excitement. 'You won't cry, you won't weep,' he instructed me. He was gruff but very kind, like he had known me for ever. 'I will give you the mobile and be strong.' I nodded. He dialled the number, spoke and then gave me the phone.

There was my father's voice. I couldn't talk because of the tube in my neck. But I was so happy to hear him. I couldn't smile because of my face, but it was as if there was a smile inside. 'I'll come soon,' he promised. 'Now have a rest and in two days we will be there.' Later he told me that Dr Javid had also ordered him not to cry as that would make us all sadder. The doctor wanted us to be strong for each other. The call did not last long because my parents did not want to tire me out. My