

The Sound of Joy

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I awoke to my left arm shaking. I reached sleepily for my lilac purple glasses, blinking slowly and carefully. I yawned and sat up, hearing my usual morning sounds-silence. As my feet covered by fuzzy pink socks hit the floor, I heard nothing. I gave my vibrating alarm clock a hard push to shut it off, and stared lazily across the room. *Today*-that thought sent both excitement and dread pumping through my veins. I pulled the bed sheets over my pillows and moved Fluffball, my chocolate Labrador puppy onto the floor. She snorted in frustration. *Sorry, Fluffy*, I signed, my fingers moving incorrectly from my tiredness, making it out to be, *Seroy, Friney*. I felt like a Latin-signer when I first woke up. A sudden sense of fear overpowered all excitement and I slumped back onto my bed. Today was January 31, the day that would be in my memories forever. It was the "BIG" day, as my sister Jessa called it, it was the day of my surgery. I had been deaf my whole life, which the dictionary says means "having impaired hearing." But today could make everything better or WORSE. This risky surgery could either repair my hearing with the help of implanted hearing aids or crush my eardrums to demolish my chance of hearing. I pulled on my outfit and combed my ink black curls, sweeping them into a ponytail. I took a deep breath and met Jessa in the hallway. We grabbed waffles from the kitchen and trudged out to the car, no signing in the process.

Monitors were beeping (Jessa told me so). Whatever beeping sounded like, I had yet to know, but I hoped I would get to know. Doctors whizzed by, white coats flying and beds-on-wheels spinning in every direction. The waiting room was filled with big, squishy armchairs and sofas lining the walls, out-of-date gossip magazines stacked upon the wooden coffee tables on both sides of every sofa. Jessa took a gray armchair by the painting of the ocean, and I collapsed into a loveseat, snuggling in as the sides squished over my arms. A few minutes later, Jessa popped up, signing *let's go*. My fingers shook too much to respond. I heaved myself up and followed a tall nurse down the hall. Before I knew it, I was in a blue hospital gown, climbing into a white bed. I was shaking rapidly, not ready for the shots I knew I would get. A smiling doctor entered, and put an odd mask over my nose and mouth. I stared up at the ceiling, feeling drowsy. After one last blink, my vision went black.

Light flooded into my eyes. Jessa was fast asleep. I rolled my eyes. A mirror beside me revealed a very thick material wrapped around my ears. I slammed my hand on the table to wake up Jessa. Her eyes fluttered, and she

rushed over to my bed, fingers swirling. *The doc will be in momentarily. He said you won't be so able to sneer for a few days, if you even cans. It is case oven the wrapping around your head. Do you fall okay?* I grinned.

At least I am not the only one who cannot sign correctly when first woken up, I thought to myself. Sheesh, what does “it is case oven the wrapping around your head” even mean? I giggled. The doctor strode into the room, beckoning my sis along. Jessa and Dr. Jenkins had a brief word, not in sign language. I tried to read their lips, but failed. Bored, my eyes glanced at the black and white strip moving across the bottom of the tv screen. Closed Captions for the hearing impaired! (CC) I cheered silently and began watching “Suki’s World”, whatever that was. The next 2 days in the hospital were decent with ice cream and get-well-soon cards.

At last it was the day I could come home, and I was jittery with excitement. Today I would know if I could hear. *Are you ready?* Jessa asked in sign language. I nodded, my legs trembling. Her mouth opened, yet no sound was heard. Jessa, I signed slowly, my eyes brimmed with tears. Suddenly a sharp feeling rose in the air. I rubbed my ears. Jessa was talking and her voice carried in the wind. A grateful tear ran down my cheek. I clutched my throat and focused. A long sound like Jessa’s rushed from my lips. This was great! This was awesome! This was hearing, really hearing! I dropped to the ground and cried with joy, for now I could experience a new chapter of life! I could hear!

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