In the Eye of the Beholder

Beep. Beep. Beep. The sound of the monitor above my head. I saw nurses and doctors running around me like we were in a children’s jungle gym. Wait. What happened to me?

It was Christmas Day. One of my most favourite times of the year. Little did I know, a big change was coming my way. Full force. Life changing. I was at my Nonna’s home, surrounded by all my loved ones. The smell of Pine trees and cinnamon sticks floated throughout the air. The fireplace was roaring and crackling while my littlest cousin placed the angel on top of the tree. The perfect Christmas setting… but wait. My eldest cousin was someone who could eat the whole turkey and still be hungry *although he never gained weight, lucky guy*. He cracked open the refrigerator door and peeked in to see what exactly Nonna had in there. After hours of looking to see what he could munch on, he closed it. With nothing in his hands and his mouth not moving, something was up. There was no Eggnog. My poor little Nonna didn’t buy Eggnog for our Christmas Day gathering. That was a problem. No one wanting to leave and drive to see what was still open, we decided I would go. My car was the last one in the driveway which meant no one else had to move. Off I went.

Although not known for super cold weather where we live, the roads were drowned by snow. I started the car. The car, which was given down to me by my cousin, was officially as cold as the Artic and had no heat. *Great*. On my treacherous journey just to find Eggnog, a saw a Semi headed straight for me. The sky was grey, and snow was falling peacefully, but my sight was blinded by headlights beaming in my face. The build-up before noticing I was about to get hit, went by like a movie. My little old car, still driving towards the Semi, was headed towards the truck in slow motion. It clicked, I had to get out of his way. I swerved. Cranked my wheel as far as it would go to the right, clenching it like my life depended on it. In what felt like months, I ended up in a ditch. My back end was struck and caused me to head straight for the gully. Next thing I knew I was in the hospital.

I was confused at how none of my family was there. In *Grey’s Anatomy*, the family was always there. I tried asking the nurse where they were, but the words couldn’t come out. Was I alright? Did something happen to my voice? No. “Hello Lovely, you were in a car accident and had a few major injuries.” I blocked everything out after that. Until she spoke and said, “…and lastly, due to the fire that started, we had to replace your right eye.” Replace? It’s not like I had a spare one at home, what did she mean replace? I immediately snapped out whatever trance I was in. I had someone else’s eye, in my body! This is unbelievable. Do I even look the same? What if this one is a different colour? Stop. My mother and father walked in. With the looks on their face, I didn’t even need a mirror to see what awful shape I must have been in. They teared up. The saying ‘we are glad you’re okay’ was said to often. Okay? How could I be okay? And why are they not commenting on my new eye? Are they ignoring it? This is going to be one hell of a journey.

They took me home and it took a great amount of time before I was able to roll my eye in any other direction except just straight. Oh, and I finally had to get a pair of glasses. With numerous visits from family and friends, I really felt the love. However, the love for myself was still not present. I was grossed out at the fact someone else was now a part of me.

It took me a long time to come to my senses and realize that whoever donated this was truly someone who needed to be thanked. They saved my sight. At this time, I knew it was time to cut out the negativity and focus on the positive. I had an eye. With research and help from the hospital I found out Margret Jones donated her eye to me when she passed. Her daughter, Jennifer, was actually a nurse at the hospital. I figured I owed her a visit. With a bouquet in hand, she turned and smiled. I think she knew. Her mother was looking at her. Well, at least her right eye was. With tears slowly trickling down her pink cheeks, she thanked me. She explained how her mother always put others first and wanted to donate all she could. She was overjoyed at the fact it was given to someone ‘so pure’, I wasn’t sure how to take that. I had spent a significant amount of time dwelling with anger at the fact I had someone else’s eye. It took a long time to acknowledge how much of a gift it truly was. Needless to say, I had a difficult time understanding why she figured I was ‘so pure’.

It was a year after my accident. I made the best decision of my life. I walked into my insurance company and told them I needed my licence to state that I was willing to donate all of myself to someone who needs it when I pass.

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Flash forward to the year 2090. I am now 88 years old. I looked down on earth and smiled. I watched a young man whom had lost his right lung to Cancer, embrace the new one that was given to him. This new lung was once mine. And that. That was the moment I was the proudest of myself. Ever.