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Helpless Observation of the Unforgotten Trauma

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Helpless Observation of the Unforgotten Trauma

Camilla Reimer

The commotion has died down now. The crowds of people have receded. The surgeons, who just moments ago were frantically searching through my abdomen, now sit outside the door, silent. I feel the increasing hopelessness that overwhelms the room. They tally the blood products with each new unit hung, but I can sense the reluctance met when they call in a request for yet another cooler from the blood bank. I have needed too much. They are running out.

There are dozens of eyes watching me, all of them showing the futility of my condition. There is a respectful sadness in their hopeless gazes, and the sheer exhaustion from the fight they put up for hours before cannot be masked. One set of eyes, though, have something more buried underneath. I can't quite grasp what it is that set these eyes apart. The sadness is there. The exhaustion is there. But there is more.

She has been standing by the side of my bed for hours, just looking at me. She will move out of the way for nurses or offer a hand cleaning off the blood crusted across my eyes and cheeks. But mostly she just stands there, holding my frigidly cold hand. I don't know who she is or why she is here, but I can tell she feels desperately helpless.

I'll never quite know the complexities of what her gaze tells me, but I am confident she will never forget this moment. I will be remembered by this stranger in the short white coat.



Camilla Reimer is a current medical student at the University of Nebraska Medical Center who dreams of pursuing a career in otolaryngology. Born and raised in Colorado, she is a mountain adventurer at heart, but embraces any opportunity to travel and explore. Camilla attended Hastings College in Hastings, Nebraska, where she met her husband. Together, they have a passion for medical mission work and look forward to leading frequent trips to under served areas of Central America.