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Malaria Crisis

Akanksha Panda

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Okemos High School

Okemos, Michigan

Grade: 9-10

Genre: Creative

Second place in the Creative Genre for the 2013 Best Midwestern High School Writing Competition.

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Akanksha Panda

Mrs. Garmon

L/C 10 3rd Hour

18 September 2012

Malaria Crisis

“NISTHA!” my mother screams.

This has been the tenth time I have thrown up within the past fifteen minutes. My stomach is clenching and sore, almost as if I had done a hundred sit-ups non-stop. After I throw up, my head spins and I fall to the floor.

I wake up connected to a saline pouch while in a hospital bed. *Wait, I don't feel like throwing up, am I okay?* I think. The nurse and my mother walk in. My mother comes towards me and gives me a big hug. Without telling us what she is injecting in my arm, the nurse takes a needle full of medicine and sticks it into the plastic tube device that they must have put on my arm when I was asleep and it hurt like crazy. Finishing her task, she walks out of the room. I felt sleepy and I ask my mom if I could a nap. She gives me her consent.

I wake up and start shivering, as if I am having a seizure. My mother screams, “Nistha! Oh my god! NURSE!”

The nurse calmly comes in, looks at me, and then says, “I understand your concern, but it isn't a big deal, she is shivering because she is cold.”

She says this calmly, as if nothing major is happening. My mother replied, “She is cold? She is COLD?! NO, IN THE UNITED STATES WHEN SHE WAS COLD SHE NEVER SHIVERED THIS MUCH LIKE SHE WAS HAVING A SEIZURE!”

My mother and the nurse continue to quarrel. After 5 minutes, my shivering stops. The nurse says in the most cheerful happy voice, “She is okay now, no shivering! All better! Right *beta*?” (*beta* is the Hindi word for child).

The nurse leaves. My mother calms down and comes to give me a big hug. Once she touches me she jerks back and says, “Nistha! You have a fever! NURSE!”

The nurse comes in with a happy smile again, “Yes?”

My mother says, “My daughter has a fever, bring the thermometer!”

The thermometer is brought in. The nurse takes my temperature and her happy bright smile turns into a complete worried look. *That can't be good; I am never coming back to India I think.*

The nurse goes back to her lab. After an hour she comes back with doctor.

“We have to test her for Malaria, I am afraid she has some symptoms,” says the doctor.

My mother starts to cry. The nurses try to pacify her, but give up trying and leave. A little while later another nurse comes in and takes a blood test from me. We have to wait for three hours until they get the results. In the meantime, my mother hands me the phone and tells me that my sister is on the phone. I pick up the phone, and say, “Hello Riya, I am very scared Riya!”

I begin to cry. My sister responds, “Nani, there is no way you have Malaria. Not one mosquito has bit you since we arrived in India. You are completely fine. I will be here and pray to god for you okay? Everything will be fine. I am here for you.” (*Nani* means older sister in Oriya.)

I hang up the phone. Talking to my sister makes me relax a little bit for she is usually right.

I refuse to eat hospital food, it's too gross. My mother realizes this and goes to the market to get me some Coca-Cola along with some potato chips. In the meantime, I call my father in the United States to tell him about what has happened to me since this morning.

“Nistha, everything will be okay. I am pretty sure that they are just checking your blood to eliminate any possibility of any disease, not because they think you have it,” says Papi.

“Thanks Papi, I hope your right,” I say.

“Ha! I am *always* right,” says Papi.

Three hours later, my mother and I are in the hospital while I am eating dinner when the doctor came. My mother refuses to eat until she is sure that I am completely fine and am discharged from the hospital.

The doctor comes in with my blood report. The room is dead silent as the doctor precariously opens the envelope. *Drumroll!* I think. The doctor looks up at my mother and smiles. *Oh big deal! They always smile even when something is horrible! SAY SOMETHING ALREADY! I WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE!* I think. The doctor hands us some pills with the blood report and leaves. *ARE YOU KIDDING ME? I mean who does that? I have never seen a doctor come in, give us a blood report and leave without telling us what has happened! SERIOUSLY?* I think. My mother reads the report eagerly and smiles.

The next morning, I was discharged from the hospital.

The next week, I came back to the United States and my sister and my dad hugged me.

“I told you there was nothing to be afraid of!” said my sister Riya.

“Yeah, you did,” I said.

“You are okay now so no worries and now I can go beat you at tennis,” said Riya.

“Oh we will see about that!” I laughed.

At home, I sat down next to my mom, my dad, and my sister. I hugged them tightly.

“Thank you Mami, Papi, and Riya, I love you so much,” I said.

A tear of joy shed from everybody’s eyes.

That day we all laughed. Without them there for me, I would’ve felt scared and alone. I am grateful to have a family like them.