

My Gymnastics Comeback and Setback

By: Amber G.

Chapter 1

I am a gymnast... Well I used to be. You see I was a star at my gymnastics studio. Apex. If you're wondering what I mean when I said I used to be a gymnast. Well it happened when I was eleven. I was in the middle of an uneven bar routine. I was on a roll. Swinging back and forth and back and forth. Until I began to stick my landing. With one twist into a back flip I felt a cringe in my back. My muscles tighten and my back felt like it was about to break. Once I landed I fell to the ground with a loud thud. I heard the crowd whispering and gasping. I knew that I wasn't going to get a spot on winning anything. I know I know what you're thinking you just hurt yourself how could you think about winning. In my head winning is everything. I have to be perfect or I just fail. While I was laying on the floor feeling lifeless I see my mom run up to me saying my name. "Amanda. Amanda." I didn't answer to her. I didn't want to answer to anybody. Knowing that I failed my routine. After that everything was a blur. The next day I woke up with a tight back brace on me. I thought to myself I really did it this time. I did the biggest fail of all fails. Hurting yourself in gymnastics is the worst thing you could ever do to yourself. Well then afterwards I found out that I had paralyzed my spine. When the doctor told me I had paralyzed my back I went berserk. I told my mom "how am I supposed to do gymnastics in this uncomfortable back brace?" My mom didn't answer. She just looked at me with that face that says I'm so sorry but you can't.

Chapter 2

Years past I turned twelve and my back pains got worse. I stopped doing gymnastics feeling ashamed of what I did. I knew I let my coaches down. Ever since then I became a normal girl. Well not exactly. I became the girl who quit gymnastics just because of a back problem. So this is how my story goes. I was walking to school with my best friend Arica. She dose gymnastics at Apex too. Every day we walk to school we pass the apex studio. Just passing the place makes my back hurts and flash backs from the incident start. Anyway as we were walking Arica asked a question that she never asked before. "Why don't you just go back to Apex?" She said "why quit?" I flinched at that word. Quit. I looked at her and said "I'm not going back. I'm not taking the risk of hurting myself again. Besides this back brace can never come off."She looked at me and sighed. When we got to school and opened the double doors my back began to hurt. I felt them. The eyes of the other students staring into my back brace, my soul. I just

kept walking ignoring the eyes. School went by pretty fast, and sluggish. Until seventh period. The nurse called my teacher. As usual. Everyday during seventh period I have to go to the nurse so she can look at my back. As I was walking to the front office I saw my mom. Staring at me with a cheesy smile, like the Grinch after Christmas. I walk up to her and say "what are you doing here." She walks up to me and says... "Amanda you can do gymnastics again" when she says those words. My back begins to hurt, and my legs began to weaken and I fall to the ground.

Chapter 3

When I wake up from my ground fall I find my mom staring at me with worried eyes. I sat up for a second then laid back down. "What do you mean I can start gymnastics?" I said. "Well" my mother stared "I was talking with your doctor about your back and she said she can start gymnastics again. So I rushed over here and you came and fainted and so on." I looked at her like she just a bottle of crazy. I sat up then I said "mom I can't do it." She looked at me and said "you can't do what?" she asked. "Gymnastics" I said "I don't want to risk getting hurt again." "But you won't get hurt." She said. I let out a huge sigh and rolled my eyes. "Fine" she said "I'll just tell your coach that you're a quitter." I looked at her and narrowed my eyes. "What? I am not a quitter. If anything I am a winner." I say to her. "Oh yeah, well then a real winner wouldn't quit just because of a back problem. A winner would fight against a back problem." She said. I looked at her still narrowing my eyes at her. I took a deep breath and said "fine. I'll restart gymnastics. But, but I am not starting at the beginners class." She looked at me and smiled. "Come on we need to go to the doctors to get that back brace off you" she said. She pulled my arm and guided me to the car. And drove off with excitement.

Chapter 4

When I arrived to the doctor's office my back tingled and ached. So I took a little nap before I heard the nurse call my name. "Amanda Stein the doctor is ready for you." As I was walking to my room number my legs felt weak, but I wasn't about to faint. Once I was in the room and on the little doctors bed my doctor came in. her name was Doctor Dan zinger. "Hi Amanda how are you today?" I just smiled in reply. "Look... I know you're nervous. But once it's off you'll feel more free, and loose." I looked at her and smiled. "Okay... I'm ready." I took a deep breath and stood still as she took off my back brace. As she was doing so my mother was waiting nervously for the back brace to come off. Once it was off my back hurt for a while but then I got used to it. When I walked out of the doctor's office I felt kind of wobbly so they put me in a temporary wheel chair. But I didn't get off that easy. I had to go to therapy for about six

weeks. I had to learn how to walk with my back straight, and keep my balance so I could avoid falling over when I walked. Once my six weeks were up. I was walking the way I walked before the accident. That's when I started my training for gymnastics.

Chapter 5

On the day I went to Apex. I felt a little bit of confidence inside of me. But once I walked into the studio I tried to walk back but my mom pulled me by the arm. When I walked onto the mats everyone was staring at me. Did I do something wrong I asked myself in my head. When I walked to my coach I saw Arica smiling and waving at me. When I walked up to her she gave me a hug and said "you got your back brace off. It's about time." She sighed in relief. Then my coach came up to me and said "good to see you Amanda. You ready to start?" he asked. I took a deep breath and said "ok." We started with a simple trick. I kind of refused to do it but I did it anyway. It was a cartwheel. First try he held on to me. And a few other times. But on Tuesday April 24. I did my own cartwheel by myself. I know it doesn't sound like much of an accomplishment. But it was to me. Because you see those cartwheels lead me onto a great future. I started doing competitions again. I started practicing my uneven bar routines. And other tricks. But that got me kind of scared because one day I had a competition that had me do my uneven bar routine.. I thought to myself. I'm doomed.

Chapter 6

On the day I had my competition for my uneven bar routine. I began to think about the accident, the back brace and the back pains. I was beginning to think I wasn't going to do it but I changed my mind and said I am going to be a winner. And not run away from my fear. When we arrived at the competition sight I had a flash of the accident. But that wasn't going to stop me. When I got into my black and turquoise leotard I went to the uneven bars. I was the first person up and I felt queasy. Before I started some lady came up to me and said "You don't have to do the uneven bar routine." I looked at her and said with my chin held high "thanks, but no thanks" I walked up to the bars and jumped when she called my name. In the end I didn't win that particular competition. But my mom was proud of me anyway. I learned in the period my back was injured that it's better to try than quit. I also learned that winning isn't everything. But when you have a desire and something unexpected happens don't stop. Just try try again.