

## **The Beginning of the End**

By: Hannah K.

**August 30th 2017**

“Have you ever heard of HD?”, asks the doctor. He has an old face, leathery and filled with sorrow between the wrinkles. “Like the High Definition TV?” I reply with a smirk. “Tanner Eastwood!”, my mom threatens. “Be serious. You’re 23. This isn’t the time to act 12.” I give my mother a deeply sorrowful look and turn back to Dr. Sahil and inquire, “So Dr. Sahil what’s HD?”. “Well son, it’s a fatal disease that must run in your family’s genetics. The full name is Huntington’s Disease. It affects the nerve cells in your brain and it will progressively break them down.”

I let out a slow breath not daring to say a word. I look to my left. My mother is pale. Her face pinched as if she were sucking on a lemon before she says, “No, I’m sorry but you must have messed up the tests! Switched them with someone else’s blood perhaps? My son is going to Freetown, Sierra Leone. Haven’t you heard about the mudslides?”, My mother blurts as if she couldn’t get it out fast enough. “My son is a good man!”. She is crying. “This can’t be happening to him!”. She’s yelling now but I can barely hear it for the roaring in my ears is much too loud.

The doctor is calm as if this happens everyday. “Ma’am please.” The doctor is trying to get her from erupting and have the whole facility hear of my tragedy. “When will the symptoms take a toll?”, I say barely above a whisper. They don’t hear me. I look around the room. It is small, four walls, all white with two cabinets by the worn down door. There’s three chairs, two are taken up by me and my mother. The third is like a possibility that someone else could be here. My long lost father, an imaginary girlfriend, or the only friend I’ve had in years but never could seem to find. “Mom I think it’s time to go.” I say kind of strongly “Thank you doctor, I’ll see you soon.” I reply abruptly I take a sharp breath “Ok then... I’m very sorry Tanner.” The doctor says softly. I give him a nod and walk out of the clinic without looking back.

**September 3rd 2017**

I collapse into the passenger seat of my mother’s Jeep Grand Cherokee. “How are you feeling?” my mother pries as if it’s the end of the world. It’s the fourth time she’s asked. “Mother, every time you ask it’s the same answer” I snap. “I would just like to know if my child is ok.” My mother says in the toughest way possible for someone who wants to fall apart at the seams. “I’m sorry, I feel achy like I’ve just experienced 40 hours of

surgery.” Her face falls. She looks like she’s aged a decade in a few days. She has bags under her eyes her hair is matted and uncared for.

My 46 year old mother is pale and scared like she can’t seem to get out of bed most days. She thinks I haven’t heard her crying late at night or have not seen the new pills in her medicine cabinet. I want to ask if she’s ok but I shake my head and say to myself it’s nothing HD is toying with your mind making you hear and see things.

### **December 15th 2017**

“Honey you’ll be ok I swear.” my mother expresses aloud. My vision is fuzzy like I’m drunk at a concert with booming music. I recognize my surroundings: Four walls all white machines beep and chirp around me but I barely hear it. I focus on why it feels like a elephant is lounging on my chest squeezing every last bit of air out of me. I try to talk but when I do it doesn’t sound like me. It sounds like fingernails on a chalkboard or bagpipes being punctured over and over. It even surprises my mother, she has a look of anguish and uncertainty flaunting itself across her tired face.

I feel my surroundings. A hospital bed. The blanket from home that I’ve had since a little kid. It has little yellow ducks strewn across the blue backdrop it helped when there were thunderstorms. It still helps now. All I can think of is pain, from the excruciating headache to my swollen ankles. “Mom....Mom.” I plead “Yes!..yes?” She says clearly startled, “I want to go home.” I express. “Oh honey, I’m sorry but we’re going to be here for a few days” she replies “Or more.” she mutters under her breath. I finally decide to close my eyes so I can never open them up again.