

HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED THE FEELING OF NOT BEING ABLE TO SEE HOW BEAUTIFUL YOUR WORLD IS, OR HOW BEAUTIFUL THE COLORS OF THE PARROTS ON THE TREES ARE? WELL I EXPERIENCE THAT FEELING EVERY DAY. I AM CAMILA AND I'M 10 YEARS OLD. I AM ALMOST COMPLETELY BLIND BECAUSE OF MY CURRENT DISEASE, CATARACTS. EVEN THOUGH I CAN BARELY SEE, I AM JUST LIKE ANY OTHER GIRL MY AGE. SOMETIMES MAMMA CRADLES ME IN HER ARMS AND SAYS, "IT'S OK CAMILA. DON'T CRY. EVERYTHING WILL BE OK. WE WILL FIND MONEY TO GET YOU SURGERY, DO NOT WORRY." AND I KNOW EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY. BUT MOST OF TIME I LIKE TO PRETEND I'M LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE. EXCEPT FOR THE PART WITH THE EYES.

MY LIFE IS A SERIES OF EVENTS THAT GO UP, AND DOWN LIKE A ROLLER COASTER. MY HOUSE IS BASICALLY BOARDS STUCK TOGETHER WITH SUPER GLUE. IN IT WE HAVE TWO ROOMS. A KITCHEN AND LIVING ROOM WHERE THE LIVING ROOM COUCH IS WHERE I SLEEP AT NIGHT. YOU'RE PROBABLY THINKING, "WHERE DID YOU GET THAT PAPER AND PENCIL FROM CAMILA?" WELL ACTUALLY THAT WOULD BE THE CITY DUMP. THAT'S WHERE EVERYONE GETS THINGS THESE DAYS. WE ARE SWALLOWED IN DRUG TRAFFICKING, TAXES, VIOLENCE, LOSS OF MONEY, AND LOSS OF SHELTER. TODAY I AM GOING TO WALK THROUGH MY FAVORITE STREET WITH MY NEIGHBOR WHO LEADS THE WAY. SHE LOVES FLOWERS, SO WE GO TO THE FLOWER SHOP FIRST. WE WALK IN TO THE SMELL OF SWEET PINK ROSES. THE CASHIER GREETES US WITH, "HELLO MS. ROSALINA! HELLO CAMILA! WELCOME BACK. WOULD YOU LIKE OUR NEW, ON SALE, DAISIES?" SHE'S SUCH A NICE PERSON. EVERYONE ALWAYS HELPS ME AROUND HERE DESPITE THE VIOLENCE.

MY SCHOOL IS ONE OF THE BEST SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND AND DISABLED IN THE WORLD! THE INSTITUTO BENJAMEN CONSTANT. WHEN I GROW UP I WOULD LIKE TO TEACH A CHILDREN'S COMPUTER CLASS. THE ONLY PROBLEM IS, I DON'T REALLY HAVE ENOUGH MONEY TO GET TO COLLEGE TO BE WHAT I WANT. I REALLY WISH MY FAMILY HAD THE MONEY, BUT WE DON'T. SO I HOPE, ONE DAY SOMEONE COULD DONATE ME A COLLEGE TUITION. SCHOOL HAS ALWAYS BEEN IMPORTANT TO ME. RIGHT NOW WE ARE LEARNING BRAILLE. THERE IS LOTS OF THINGS TO LEARN WITH BRAILLE AND IT'S REALLY HARD, BUT MY FRIENDS SAY IT IS DEFINITELY WORTH IT IN THE END. BUT THEN I GOT TO THINKING. IF I GOT SURGERY, IT COULD HEAL MY EYES COMPLETELY! I WOULD BE ABLE TO SEE AGAIN! A KNOCK INTERRUPTED MY THOUGHTS.

I CREPT TOWARD THE BROKEN DOWN HOUSE DOOR, UNSURE IF I SHOULD ANSWER. "HELLO? ANYONE THERE?" I YELLED OUT. BEFORE I KNEW IT MY FEET FELL OUT UNDERNEATH ME AND A DARK HOLE APPEARED BARRELING ME DOWN IT. "HELLPPPP!" I SCREAM. "MAMMA? I NEED HELP! WHATS HAPPENING?!" THEN EVERYTHING STOPPED. AND I WAS STANDING IN A PERFECTLY LIGHTED ROOM. I WISH I COULD GO BACK HOME. THE SOUND OF A DOOR CREAKED. IN CAME A PROFESSIONAL LOOKING DOCTOR. THIS IS TWISTED FOR SURE. WHERE DID HE COME FROM? "SO CAMILA! TODAY I AM GOING TO DO SOME SURGERY ON YOU. BUT DON'T WORRY, EVERYTHING WILL BE OKAY. YOU'RE JUST A BIT...

DAZED FROM THE FALL.” THE DOCTOR CHEERFULLY SMILED. “WHERE AM I?” I ASKED. THE DOCTOR FROWNED. “DON’T YOU SEE? IT’S YOUR LAND OF DREAMS! AFTER THIS SURGERY AND THE PROFESSIONAL DOCTOR YOU NEED IS BY YOUR SIDE, YOU CAN GO BACK HOME WITH A CLICK OF YOUR HEELS! SORT OF IRONIC THOUGH...THE CLICKING OF YOUR HEELS.” AND THAT’S WHEN HE STARTED THE SURGERY. WHICH I SOMEHOW DIDN’T FEEL WHAT SO EVER. THEN I DRIFTED TO SLEEP.

WHEN I WOKE UP, THE DOC WAS THERE. HE TOLD ME, “CLICK YOUR HEELS CAMILA!” AND I DID. I WAS SUDDENLY BACK IN MY HOUSE LYING IN MY BED. WAS IT A DREAM? OR REALITY? BUT IT MUST BE REALITY BECAUSE NOW..I DON’T FEEL A DIFFERENCE. THEN I NOTICED IT. I CAN SEE! OH MY! “I CAN SEE!” I SQUEALED. WAS THAT DOCTOR A MAGICIAN? HE MUST BE. I AM SO HAPPY. AND MY FAMILY DIDN’T EVEN NEED TO PAY. THE DOCTOR WALKED PROFESSIONALLY INTO MY ROOM. “HOW DO YOU LIKE THOSE NEW ABLE-TO-SEE EYES?” I ANSWERED CHEERFULLY, “I LOVE THEM!!!” NOW I THINK I HAVE EVERYTHING I NEED. A DOCTOR TO HELP ME, SURGERY TO HELP ME SEE, AND...COLLEGE TUITION TO BECOME A TEACHER. WAIT. I DON’T HAVE TUITION YET. THE DOCTOR HELD UP A PIECE OF PAPER. “LOOKING FOR THIS CAMILA??” HE ASKS. “WHAT IS IT.” I SAY. “IT’S YOUR COLLEGE TUITION SILLY! MS. ROSALINA DID NOT KNOW YOU WANTED TO GO TO COLLEGE AND SAID IF SHE KNEW, SHE WOULD HAVE GIVEN YOU A TUITION SOONER!” “SO HERE IT IS! YOUR OWN COLLEGE TUITION!” MAN THIS DOCTOR WAS ON A ROLL. “DOCTOR. I COULDN’T DO THIS WITHOUT YOUR HELP. I AM SO THANKFUL THAT I HAVE EVERYTHING I NEED NOW. I CAN LIVE A HAPPY LIFE BEING ABLE TO SEE THINGS THAT ARE BEAUTIFUL. I CAN EVEN TEACH COMPUTING!” CAMILA SMILED WIDER THAN A HORIZON. AND SHE LIVED A VERY HAPPY LIFE. SHE COULD SEE. SHE COULD HAVE A DOCTOR WHO WOULD HELP HER WHENEVER SHE NEEDED HIM WITH A CLICK OF HER HEELS. AND SHE HAD COLLEGE TUITION TO FOLLOW HER DREAMS. AND SHE WAS HAPPY.