

Reginald Gibson
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Professor Obiwu

Close Call

“Clear!”, the paramedic shrieked as he made countless desperate attempts to revive my mother with the defibrillator. My heartbeat would halt every time the massive amounts of volts struck her chest and her lifeless body sprung inches off the ground, in hope of regaining existence on Earth. Try after try, the man in black overalls and an orange vest shocked Momma desperately, but to no avail. The thick crowd of citizens behind me murmured, as if awaiting my reaction. Cat had my tongue, for I was speechless. I was stuck between feeling guilty and depressed. After about twenty minutes of sorrowful shocking, Paramedic Brown rose to his feet, eyed me with glossy pupils, and mournfully announced, “I’m sorry Reggie, we lost her.”

On June 29th, 1999, an unruly son was born to Yvette Gibson – Me. Being brother to three older sisters, everyone expected me to be a saint. Instead, I was the exact opposite. Because I was the last child, and the only male, I was spoiled rotten. My single mother worked two jobs, ensuring that my sisters received the necessities, while I received the desires. Many nights Momma would not sleep, sometimes working twenty-four hours consecutively just to keep a smile on my face. As you would imagine, she became ill, acquiring Cardiac Arrhythmia, an abnormal heart rhythm; while I transformed into a nasty, unmanageable, poor excuse of a son.

After about a decade, both Momma’s condition and my attitude horrifically worsened. Mom would often go into cardiac arrest and suffer mild strokes. In and out of rehab like a drug addict, my mom was mandated to bedrest by her doctor and I was to tend to her needs. It can be presumed exactly how that responsibility turned out.

“Reggie, can you bring me my heart pills?”

“I’m playing Grand Theft Auto. Use your cane and get it yourself.”

“But baby, I can’t move.”

“I can’t either.”

I was to the point where my heart was replaced by an icebox, because I was cold as hell toward my first lady. Family members and friends would often try to coax me into evolving into a better son, but their words went through one ear and out the next.

My uncle warned, “You won’t change until it’s too late. Your mother could die at any minute, and she’s the only one who genuinely loves you.”

Those were the only words that seemed to remain in my conscience out of all the countless and insignificant others. My mom passing was heavy on my mind one day, and I kept hearing my uncle’s warning replay in my head.

I raced home like Usain Bolt to show true love and affection to my mother.

“Mom, Mom, Mom!” I screamed as I barged through the front door, in a quest to discover my ill, unloved, and unappreciated queen.

“She went to the pharmacy for what she called her ‘final dose’,” said Gabbie casually.

Something didn’t sound right about my eldest sister’s last two words. I begged her to give me a lift to the pharmacy to ensure all was well. En route to the pharmacy, a police cruiser and an ambulance zoomed around us, as if in a Fast and Furious race.

“Probably another murder,” Gabbie jokingly said, for the Bahamas was known for these types of events. I chuckled in agreement.

As we approached the parking lot, I noticed Momma’s cane in close proximity to an unusually thick crowd gathered a few feet from the pharmacy’s entrance. I leaped out of the vehicle and sprinted toward the crowd where I heartbreakingly beheld my mom laid out on the concrete with a jar of pills spilt beside her.

“Cardiac arrest,” the paramedic shouted, “grab the defibrillator!”

I dashed to my mom’s side but was snatched by the man shouting moments ago.

“Who are you?”

“I’m her son, Reggie.”

“Stand to the side. I’m going to try reviving her. I’m Mr Brown.”

I stood in silence, feeling both guilty and depressed at the fact that this was all my fault.

“**Clear!**”, the paramedic shrieked as he made countless desperate attempts to revive my mother with the defibrillator, but to no avail. After about twenty minutes of sorrowful shocking, Paramedic Brown rose to his feet, eyed me with glossy pupils, and mournfully announced, “I’m sorry Reggie, we lost her.”

I collapsed.

“Baby, you fell asleep playing video games again,” Momma said as she woke me up to get ready.

“Brandon is outside,” she said. “You promised to keep his company this weekend while Unc is out of town.”

My heart was racing and I was sweating like I had just run a marathon. I sprang to my feet, quickly freshened up, packed my backpack, and met my cousin downstairs in his car.

“Sorry B,” I said to Brandon. “I overslept. It’s been a long day.”

“I bet - You look like crap,” he said as he flipped on his bright headlights. “We can get some shut eye as soon as we get home.”

After an hour-long silent drive, we pulled into the driveway of a two-story yellow house, surrounded only by bushes, trees, and the sounds of wildlife. A branch shouts from the bushes, as if it was stepped on.

“What the hell is that?” I asked fearfully.

“Probably just another animal,” Brandon assured me. “They’re very active at night. Quickly, get inside.”

As we made it safely inside, Brandon showed me around.

“You can take the guest room,” Brandon said as he opened my door for me. “I’ll be in my room knocked out if you need me.”

I crashed onto the mushy bed, and in seconds, I was fast asleep.

Asleep in his semi-dark bedroom, Brandon was startled by the sounds of footsteps in his house. As he sat up in bed, he saw the silhouette of a man. Thinking he’s still dreaming, he started to rub his eyes. As his vision became clearer, he realized the shadow was getting closer. He and I were the only ones home, but I wasn’t six-feet tall and the size of a linebacker. There was an extremely uncomfortable silence as they squinted at each other through the darkness. All of a sudden, he jumped out of bed to race for his father’s gun. The stranger raced to him, leading with a combat knife. Brandon sidesteps quickly to the right, evading the blade. The knife pierces through the closet door and gets stuck. The fight for survival begins as a brawl ensues. Punches start to fly - Brandon delivers a one-two punch to the man's face then avoids his right jab. The man snatches and launches Brandon into a mirror above the dresser. Everything crashes onto him as he begins to crawl.

“Tell your Pops he messed with the wrong one,” the man said as he kicked Brandon again. “If I can’t kill him, I’ll kill you.”

Confused, Brandon shouts at the stranger. “Who are you?”

The man punches Brandon back to the floor as he is getting up. He thumps onto the glass-filled carpet, groaning and spitting blood.

I was awakened by the distant noise in the house. Disoriented, I began to rub my eyes clear. Before the man kicks him again, Brandon sends a boot to the groin, pounces up and spears him into the writing desk. Utensils, books, and a laptop tumbles onto them. The room is a mess. The intruder's gun falls onto the carpet. Brandon on top - unleashes a slew of punches to the man's face followed by a lamp to the head, reopening a previous wound. Blood drips from the man's forehead. Brandon gets up and hobbles to the gun, but is grabbed from behind in a choke hold - He struggles.

I enter the room, flip the light switch, and freeze in shock as I witness my cousin's life being cut short by the hands of an intruder. The man continues to choke Brandon. I quickly dashed for the gun and hesitantly aimed it at them. Brandon struggled but managed to get out a few words.

"Shoot him," Brandon screamed. "Reggie, shoot him! What are you doing? Shoot hi-"

I fired a shot and both men crashed to the floor. There was a pin drop silence in the room. Suddenly, Brandon started coughing as he tried to push the 200-pound corpse off his body. Brandon finally got free and stood up, rubbing his throat.

"If you had let him kill me, I would've killed you," he said to me.

Before I could respond, there were half a dozen cop cars outside. We headed outside to explain the situation but to our surprise, the officers already knew.

"A hiker called about a ruckus and gunfire at this residence," said one of the officers. "You two mind if we take a look inside?"

Brandon shakes his head in agreement.

"You two wait here by the car."

Moments later, the officer radioed his partners.

"Send in the coroners."

Covered in blood, Brandon and I were transported to the station for a statement. Luckily for us, we would get away with self defense since he was in our house. Dressed in overalls while sipping a cup of coffee, I notice my ill mother waddling her way through the station looking for me. I immediately felt sorry for not appreciating her while she's alive because I could've been dead. I sprinted to her and hugged her so tight while whispering a prayer of forgiveness for how I've treated her. I guess I simply took her for granted due to her unconditional love for me. In no time, all my horrible ways departed from me and I quickly transformed into the son my momma always deserved, thanks to a rude awakening and a close call.