

To Chase A Dream

The tears streamed down Chelsea Trussul's face, as she madly and carelessly fled. What was she fleeing from? At this moment, she knew not, she cared not. She only wanted to feel her muscles burning with physical exertion, to take some relief off of her thoughts. She tripped over a jagged rock and continuously stumbled as she floundered up the mountainside. *Just get away! Away from it all!* A fresh torrent of tears poured from her eyes, no, her very soul, and smeared her beautiful but distraught and drained face.

Finally, as she could run no more, Chelsea collapsed to the ground. As she painfully looked up, she took in the beauty of the mountains as never before. *Now*, everything held so much beauty, *now* that it was slipping away. She sank back into her delirium. She remembered, oh how she hated it, but she remembered. She remembered vaguely the trip to the hospital in the ambulance, remembered her family's faces, distraught with worry, as they hovered over her before she was carted away to the emergency room. Then she remembered awakening to hear the doctor say those words, haunting, despicable, crushing. Most likely, she was going to die. Soon. The illness the doctor had diagnosed her with would keep giving her spasms, continually worse and closer between, until it became too much for her seventeen-year-old body to handle.

"Why God? Please! Why?" Chelsea cried into nothingness. The mountain valleys absorbed the sound, in their usual calm way, and left Chelsea to think in her own agony, but as she looked up, she was again calmed by them in an unexplainable way.

She thought of her family, of her friends, of Greg, bless his wonderful heart, and of her life, as she'd been living it. At school, so much emphasis had been placed on learning as much as she could, getting good grades to earn a scholarship, spending time with friends. None of that was wrong, of course, naturally, it was perfectly right. But all of the other things that claimed her time, things that she felt she *should* do, had kept her from things that she *needed* to do. Until now, she hadn't seen that.

She wished she'd spent more time with her family, with God, with her story. Oh, how she had always wanted, terribly, to write that story, to share with the world what she felt needed to be heard. Why she felt that way, where she even got the idea, she couldn't say. And since she couldn't explain it to herself, how could she explain the need to write to her friends, whose goals were to become lawyers, surgeons, tangible things, not always requiring depth of thought

or feeling? She couldn't. So therefore they didn't understand, and asked her to join this club, play at that concert, on and on, until she had less and less time for the things that were important to her. Now that her short life was, told to her, drawing to a close, she felt like she was choking, grasping, at all the things that *really* mattered, but she had taken for granted. And now they were slipping out of reach, or so she felt, to evade her and leave her alone. In her own terrible pain.

Through her tear-stained and blotted eyes she searched the panorama for something, knowing not at that moment what it was. Chelsea just sat, staring, and praying. The gorgeous peaks flooded her view as they arched up against the endless blue. Oh, how clear it was! The kind of day she loved most.

Chelsea saw the carpet of green stretched far below her, gently broken by the gurgling brook as it wound its way down the valley, giving of itself to better others. She saw her car, parked on the shoulder of the road, looking more like one of her little brother's toys.

As she sat there on that precipice, close to shock, trying to absorb her fate, and begging of God to have mercy on her, a realization began to dawn over her dark existence. As the hours passed, with that realization, a slow and sure kind of peace stole over her. It seemed as if God had draped a blanket of protection around her weary shoulders and had wrapped her in His love. She now began to think, this time rationally.

If I only have three months to do on this earth what God has planned for me, I am going to do it. The things that have mattered so much, but I never got around to doing: camping with my family, teaching my sister to sew, writing my story. The things that seemed trivial, but now I realize just how powerful they are. How powerful dreams are. How much they matter. At least, when my time has come, I will know I've done something with my time, not squandered it away. Waiting for the "right" moment, putting it off because I've got all the time in the world. No, that is not Chelsea Trussul. Not anymore. Time is too precious.

Chelsea slowly stood, and, easing the pain in her back, slowly made her way down the mountainside, tears once again streaming down her face. Bittersweet tears that told of life, love, dreams to chase, changes to be made, helping to better other's lives. Things that *really* matter.

Chelsea eased into her vehicle and slowly drove off the mountain, thanking God for the peace she knew. Many more tears would follow, but she knew she would make the best of her time.

Chelsea started at the ringing of her cell phone, jerked out of her thoughts by the tune that meant her mother was on the other line.

“Hello, Mom. I’m on my way home. Has something come up?”

Mrs. Trussul’s laughing, crying, delirious voice cracked through the phone, “Honey, I can’t talk... I just heard... the doctor’s report... the lab said... it’s not quite what they thought! Your illness can be cured through medication and therapy! Oh, my baby!”

After she hung up, Chelsea pulled over to the side of the road, shaking and crying, unable to drive. She laughed. She cried. She choked and cried some more.

“Oh, God! Thank You! Oh, my dear Lord, You are so merciful to me!” Tears of joy continued to fill her eyes and soak her lap. When she finally looked up, spent of tears, she spoke, “It’s going to be a long, hard haul. I’ll need all the help I can get, Lord. But I know you’re there. You’ve never left me. But now I know what I must do. I’m going to look fear right in the face and go do what I’ve been dreaming for so long. I’m going to help people, be the change I want to see. You’ve given me back my life, so with your help, I’m going *to chase my dreams!*”

Written by April Barnhart