

**1, 862 Days**  
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It's the perfect opportunity. The house is quiet and I finally have a weekend to myself.

I sit on the bathroom floor, a razor blade, alcohol wipes, peroxide, a washcloth, and bandages on my right. A bottle of red wine rests against my foot. A collection of pills (sleeping pills, muscle relaxants, you name it) on my left side. My back rests against the wall, the floor warm where I've been sitting for the past fifteen minutes.

I stare at the pills and my cutting paraphernalia. *You really shouldn't be doing this. Think of what you are leaving behind. How will your family feel? What will it do to them? How will they cope? How will they survive? Will they really be better off?* A part of me wants to reason thorough the intense emotions pounding through my body. But a larger part ignores them, pushes them away, shoving them deep.

My body is restless, exhausted, and I'm unable to sleep. I'm achy and feel like a taut wire bound to rip apart and slam against the wall, falling to the floor. I want to fall to the floor. I want to fall into oblivion and never return; stop the thoughts and emotions surging at high speed, ready to explode at any moment.

My chest is heavy, my heart cracking into tiny pieces – reminding me of all the things I'm trying to forget, all the things I *want* to forget. It's too easy to let the memories take over and drown out the noise reminding me to hold on...it will get better. That's what "they" always say: "Hang in there. Things will turn around soon." Or my all-time favorite, "Why are you so sad? Just snap out of it. Be happy. You have so much ahead of you, so much potential, so much to live for. Don't piss it away." But they are just ignorant. They aren't ever going to admit I am "sick." To them I am just "feeling sorry" for myself, making a mountain out of a molehill, blowing things out of proportion.

I tear the alcohol packet open and wipe the blade as well as a section of my thigh. I pick up the blade and run it slowly, savoring the pain as I feel blood ooze out of me, watch as it drips onto the floor. The warmth comforts me, envelops me in its arms, calms me, and beckons me to keep going.

I've been here before, able to control it and stop when I want. But I don't want to stop tonight. I want to feel physical pain to drown out all of the emotional pain I am feeling. The physical pain is real, not the emotionally charged sludge running through my mind, holding me down, keeping me stuck.

I don't want to be stuck anymore. I don't want to continue climbing up a hill determined to keep pushing me down. I don't want to hear the thoughts in my head, shoving me at every chance, determined to destroy me. The endless stream of harsh words, slamming prints into my mind, leaving their indentation, but always sitting on the surface, never forgotten.

I run the blade close to the other cut, more blood sliding down my leg. I close my eyes and take a deep breath, savor the burning. I watch as the blood pools next to me, visualizing much more, soon. I lay the razor next to me then pour the bottle of muscle relaxants into my hand. Just as I'm about to pop them in my mouth, swallow them with the bottle of red wine sitting next to my foot, a knock on the door tears me from my focus.

“Mom?”

My heart begins to race. I am not alone. My eleven-year-old son's angelic voice, pulls me back from the depths, showing up, yet again, to ruin my plans.

I quickly wipe the cuts on my legs, pour some peroxide over them and watch the bubbles overflow from my wounds. My cuts are beginning to look like a drawing of sorts, an artistic expression of the pain dwelling in my soul.

“I'll be out in a minute,” I say, forcing my “mommy voice” into control.

I pour the pills back in the bottle. I'll have to hold on for one more day. Tonight I'll be forced yet again to slip the mask over my face. Smile. Pretend everything is okay. My soul is raging, eager for the release of the toxins surging through me.

I wrap my cuts and clean my mess. Pulling my pant leg back down, I stand and my feet push against the cold tile and bring me back to the present. I put my stuff into a small case and hide it behind the boards in the linen closet. Before I slide the boards into place, I pull a pen from my pocket. Tears drip from my eyes as I draw another tally mark. 1,862. 1,862 days I've had to hold on and wait.

“Mom, are you okay?” He is impatient, his voice wavers.

“Just give me a few more seconds.”

I close the linen door, my heart heavy, and wipe my eyes. I paste a smile on my face, then open the bathroom door. My son's hazel, loving eyes tear into my soul. He takes my hand and smiles. He is the reason why I count the days. My heart knows I cannot let him down and my soul says it doesn't care. My heart always wins.

“We came home early to surprise you,” he says, and kisses my cheek.

“That's great!” I lie, forcing my fake smile a little bigger. Just one more day. Then I will do it. It's been my mantra for twelve years and although I want the pain over, my family is not ready for me to leave. They need me and I need them. I don't have the heart to let them down.