

KINDNESS MATTERS



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Introduction

Is it possible for someone to steal a person's kidney?

If so, why would they steal it?

And could the victim survive with only one kidney?

Kidney Theft

The first sensation I had was of being cold.

Not just a little cold, but really cold.

Which was strange because the outside temperature yesterday was around 31 degrees.

So why was I so damn cold? Maybe I left the air-con on.

I did that sometimes when I went to bed drunk. Get back to my place, flick the air-con on, take my clothes off and collapse on the bed.

Then wake up shivering.

Not good for the body. Not good for the immune system.

But the kind of cold I was feeling now was nothing like that.

This cold felt ice cold. Like ice touching my body.

I shifted my weight, and it was like I was surrounded by pieces of Lego.

I opened my eyes and saw the bathroom.

What was I doing in here?

I looked down and saw I was in the bath.

This was a new experience.

I'd never woken up in the bath before.

Woken up in some pretty strange places. The front lawn of the apartment building where I live was a common one.

Mrs McQuaid had something to say about that.

She sent me a letter. Or rather, a note shoved under my door.

For the attention of room 204.

She couldn't even bring herself to use my name. Just the room number.

Then a complete description of the horror she experienced at seeing me passed out on the lawn in front of the building.

For all the neighbours to see!

I doubt if anyone else was horrified. Just old Mrs McQuaid.

I'd passed out in bars too, of course. In the back of cabs. On the subway.

And many times on my sofa, the living room floor or my bed.

But never the bath. This was a first.

I raised my head and gazed down.

The bath was half full of water. And ice.

Lumps of ice — ***ice cubes*** — floating around in the water.

What was this? This was totally new.

Then I felt it.

A sharp pain in my stomach.

I clenched my teeth in pain and froze.

As I slowly exhaled through my teeth, I relaxed my stomach muscles. But another jolt of pain shot through my body.

What the hell was that?

Panic seared through my veins and the hazy feeling in my head cleared away. The fog of whatever happened last night evaporated and my brain revealed a slide show of events.

Me leaving my apartment.

Avoiding eye contact with one of the neighbours as I went out the building.

Going to The Merry Lizard for some drinks.

A hazy recollection of conversations with some of the locals there. A bit of sport on the TV.

Then a woman.

And she was talking to me.

Me. Of all people.

And she was kind of hot.

Like, what would a woman like that be doing in The Merry Lizard?

What would any woman be doing in The Merry Lizard?

Other misty scenes of her laughing at all my lame jokes. Of her

leaning close to me, very close, and whispering something.

The bar owner — *Old Ralphie* — looked over at me with an expression of complete surprise on his ugly mug.

Then a final scene of me leaving The Merry Lizard with the woman and getting into the back of a cab.

After that, nothing.

But the pain in my side...

What was it?

I clenched my teeth and shifted my weight to my right side. A sharp, stabbing pain flooded into my left side. Unbelievable pain like I had never felt before.

I took a breath and managed to raise my left side above the water and lumps of ice.

And then I saw the bandage. A bloody rag glued to my side with what looked like duct tape. Like it had been put there by an electrician or a plumber.

A small cloud of blood shifted out from under the loose tape and another sharp lightning rod of agony.

Panic now got my full attention.

What the hell was I doing in the bath filled with water and ice?

Why did I have this big lump of tape glued to my side?

And what was it covering?

Without another thought, I yanked at the tape and pulled it off my skin.

Beneath the tape, a half-gaping slit in my body. The sides of it held together with a series of metal clamps.

It looked like something from a horror movie.

I gasped for air, pulled oxygen into my lungs, and then, with a trembling hand, reached out to touch the wound.

Electricity bolted through me as soon as my fingers touched one of the small metal rods.

Something was wrong here. Very wrong.

I had to get help. I had to get out of the bath, find my phone — ***where the hell did I leave it?*** — and call for help.

The pain no longer mattered. The only thought in my head was to get out of the bath.

I pulled at the side to get out, the water and ice sloshing around and making me slip back into the tub. But I managed to get myself halfway out.

One more surge of fear-driven energy and I landed on my back in the bathroom.

Indescribable pain surged through me again and again. I

screamed out.

One of the neighbours must be able to hear me.

Mrs McQuaid. She would hear. She would call the police. Call someone.

I gazed up and saw some writing on the mirror above the washbasin.

It was red, the colour of lipstick. The same shade the woman wore on her lips in *The Merry Lizard*.

I blinked the tears away from my eyes and focused on the words written there.

YOU NEED TO GET TO HOSPITAL.

YOU HAVE ONLY ONE KIDNEY.

CALL FOR HELP NOW.

I read the words, read them again.

Then, once I registered what they meant, I screamed.

Reading Comprehension Questions

Is the narrator warm or cold?

What was the temperature outside?

What does the narrator often do when they come home?

Does the narrator like to drink?

Is the narrator in the living room?

Which room is the narrator in?

Is the narrator on the floor?

Where are they?

Is this the first time the narrator has woken up in the bathroom?

Who is the narrator's neighbour?

Where did she find the narrator passed out?

How did she react?

Which room does the narrator live in?

Was the narrator's neighbour happy to see them passed out in front of the building?

Name three places outside where the narrator regularly passes out.

Name three places in the house where the narrator passes out.

What is in the bath?

What sensation does the narrator feel? And where?

Describe the narrator's feelings at this point.

What can the narrator remember from the previous evening?

What is the name of the bar that the narrator regularly goes to?

Who owns the bar?

What does the narrator see on his stomach?

Is there glue there?

Did a plumber put it there?

Can the narrator see any blood?

What can the narrator see under the tape?

What kind of tape is it?

Does the narrator try to get out of the bath?

How does the narrator get out of the bath?

What does the narrator see on the bathroom mirror?

What does the narrator do at the end?

Essential Vocabulary

sensation	panic	yanked
damn	seared through	skin
air-con	hazy feeling	slit
collapse	evaporated	sides of it
shivering	recollection	metal clamps
immune system	hazy	bolted through
ice cold	conversations	trembling
surrounded by	locals	washbasin
shift(ed) my weight	kind of hot	lipstick
Lego	hazy recollection	shade
gazed down	lean(ing) close	blinked
floated around	complete surprise	registered
sharp pain	expression	kidney
clenched my teeth	agony	call for help
exhaled	shifting out	hospital
jolt of pain	agony	focus(ed) on

Exercise

There may be a lot of new or unfamiliar vocabulary to you in

the story. This is the perfect time to get to know these new and strange words and phrases.

Write down all the new words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look up the meaning of the new vocabulary in a dictionary or online and write down the meaning next to the word or phrase.

It should look something like this:

Sensation – *a physical feeling when something comes into close contact with the body.*

Temperature – *the degree of heat we can see from a thermometer or by physical touch.*

Then write a sentence of your own that uses the new word or phrase correctly.

I stood up too quickly and got a strange sensation in my head.

The temperature outside was not too hot. Just right for going to the park.

If you do this correctly, it will help you learn many new words and phrases. This will build your English vocabulary and writing down all the words and phrases, making sentences of your own,

will all help you to remember all of this new vocabulary.

Discussion Questions

What do you think of this story?

Tell the story in your own words. If you are in class, go around the class and each person says what happens next in the story.

Do you think the narrator is a man or a woman?

Why do you think this? Give good reasons.

Do you think this story is credible? Could it really happen?

What kind of person is the narrator? What kind of life does this person have?

Has the narrator had his or her kidney stolen? If so, why?

Who stole it? The woman in the bar?

If the woman stole the person's kidney, what will she do with it?

Can people sell kidneys on the black market?

How much can a kidney sell for? And why would someone want to buy one?

Do you think the narrator was targeted by the woman? If so, why?

Do you think the narrator could survive his ordeal? If so, how?

Is organ donation legal in your country?

What are the legal complications of stealing a kidney?

Is it acceptable to donate an organ?

What if someone has died? Can someone take their organs to give to others?

Is it acceptable to take prisoners' organs? Do we need their consent?

What is an organ donor card?

Should everyone carry an organ donor card? Why/why not?

Would you donate any of your organs?

After your death, would you like your organs donated to others?

Would you sell one of your kidneys? If so, how much would you want for it?

Do you think rich people can benefit from the sale of organs? If so, how?

Do you think poor people suffer from the sale of organs? If so, how?

Role Play

This is a role play activity.

There are two characters in the role play.

Mrs McQuaid — the neighbour in the story

A Police Officer — who has been reported to the scene of the crime in the person's apartment

The Situation

The police have been called to apartment number 204 after a person was found lying in their bathroom.

It is believed that the person had been drugged and one of their kidneys removed without their consent.

One of the police officers is talking to the neighbour, Mrs McQuaid, about what happened.

The police officer is trying to get as much information as possible about the person who lives in room 204 and what kind of life they lead.

Mrs McQuaid is telling the police everything she knows.

In the role play, choose which character you want to play.

You can decide whether the person in room 204 is male or female.

And you can say anything you want about the person.
Maybe Mrs McQuaid thinks the person is good but needs help.
Or maybe she thinks the person is no good and always getting
into trouble.

Create whatever story you want.

Take some time to prepare your role play.

Then, when you are ready, show your classmates and teacher.

Writing

This is a creative writing exercise.

Imagine you are the main person in the story. You are in hospital recovering from what has happened.

You only have one kidney, but you are alive. You will not die.

As you are lying in the hospital bed late at night, a woman comes into the room to talk to you. All the other patients are asleep.

It is the woman you met in the bar.

She comes to tell you why she took the kidney.

Write your story in whatever style you want. It is your story, and you can choose whatever ending you wish.

When you have finished writing your story, read it out loud in front of your classmates and teacher.

Ask your classmates and teacher for feedback.

Credits

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