

KIDNEY THEFT

GET TO
HOSPITAL.
YOU HAVE
ONE KIDNEY LEFT.
CALL FOR HELP NOW.



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Introductory Questions

1. Is it possible for someone to steal a person's kidney?
2. If so, why would they steal it?
3. And could the victim survive with only one kidney?

Kidney Theft

The first thing I noticed was the cold.

Not a little cold. Freezing.

Which was strange because yesterday had been one of the hottest days of the year.

So why was I so bloody cold?

Maybe I'd left the air-con on. I'd done that before. Come home drunk, switch it on, take my clothes off and collapse on the bed.

Then wake up shivering.

Not clever.

But this was different.

This was ice cold.

I shifted my weight and felt something hard moving beneath me. Little pieces of something knocking against my skin.

I opened my eyes.

Bathroom.

What was I doing in here?

I looked down.

I was in the bath.

Well, that was new.

I'd woken up in some strange places over the years. The small patch of grass outside my block of flats was a favourite.

Mrs McQuaid had something to say about that.

She'd once pushed a note under my door.

FOR THE ATTENTION OF FLAT 204.

She couldn't even bring herself to use my name.

Then followed a detailed account of the horror she'd experienced on finding me unconscious on the grass at seven in the morning.

FOR ALL THE NEIGHBOURS TO SEE.

I doubt anyone else cared.

Just Mrs McQuaid.

I'd passed out in pubs. In the back of taxis. On night buses.

And plenty of times on my sofa, the living-room floor or my bed.

But never in the bath.

This was definitely a first.

I raised my head.

The bath was half full of water.

And ice.

Dozens of ice cubes floated around me.

I stared at them.

What the hell?

Then I felt the pain.

It came from my left side, sudden and deep.

I stopped breathing.

Waited.

Another stab.

That woke me up.

Whatever fog had been sitting inside my head disappeared.

Images from the night before began coming back.

Leaving my flat.

Avoiding one of the neighbours on the stairs.

The Merry Lizard.

A few pints.

Maybe more than a few.

Football on the television. Some pointless argument with
Ralphie about something I couldn't remember.

And then the woman.

She'd come in alone.

That should have been the first warning.

Women like her didn't go into The Merry Lizard alone.

To be fair, women like her didn't go into The Merry Lizard at all.

But there she was.

Dark hair. Red lipstick. Black coat.

And she was talking to me.

Me.

Of all people.

She'd bought me a drink.

That came back to me now.

I remembered telling her she didn't have to.

She smiled.

"It's already paid for."

There had been something about the way she said it.

I'd noticed it at the time.

Then forgotten.

I remembered her laughing at my jokes. Leaning towards me.

Her perfume. Her hand resting briefly on my arm.

I remembered looking across the pub and seeing Ralphie watching us.

He wasn't smiling.

That was odd.

At the time I'd assumed he was jealous.

Idiot.

The last thing I remembered was leaving The Merry Lizard with her.

Getting into a taxi.

After that, nothing.

The pain came again.

I clenched my teeth and shifted onto my right side.

Bad idea.

Something tore through my left side and I almost blacked out.

I took a breath and somehow managed to lift myself slightly out of the water.

That's when I saw the bandage.

Except it wasn't really a bandage.

It was a bloody piece of gauze stuck to my side with strips of silver duct tape.

It looked as though an electrician had patched me up.

A thin cloud of blood drifted into the water.

Now I was frightened.

Properly frightened.

Why was I lying in a bath full of ice?

What was underneath that dressing?

I knew I shouldn't touch it.

So of course I did.

I caught the edge of the tape and pulled.

The pain made me gasp.

Underneath was a wound.

A long cut in my side, badly closed with a row of metal staples.

For a few seconds I just stared at it.

This wasn't some drunken accident.

Someone had done this to me.

I needed help.

My phone.

Where was my phone?

I had to get out of the bath.

I grabbed the side and tried to pull myself up. Water and ice crashed around me and my hand slipped.

I fell back.

Pain exploded through my side.

I tried again.

This time I got one leg over the edge.

Then the other.

One last push and I fell onto the bathroom floor.

I screamed.

Someone must have heard that.

Mrs McQuaid.

For once in my life, I desperately wanted Mrs McQuaid to complain about the noise.

Then I saw the mirror above the basin.

Something was written across it.

Red.

Lipstick.

The same shade she'd been wearing in The Merry Lizard.

I blinked and tried to focus.

Three lines.

GET TO HOSPITAL.

YOU HAVE ONE KIDNEY LEFT.

CALL FOR HELP NOW.

I read them once.

Then again.

For a few seconds, they were just words.

Then I understood.

Reading Comprehension Questions

1. Is the narrator warm or cold?
2. What was the weather like the day before?
3. What does the narrator often do when they come home?
4. Does the narrator like to drink?
5. Is the narrator in the living room?
6. Which room is the narrator in?
7. Is the narrator on the floor?
8. Where are they?
9. Is this the first time the narrator has woken up in the bath?
10. Who is the narrator's neighbour?
11. Where did she find the narrator passed out?
12. How did she react?
13. What is the narrator's flat number?
14. Was the narrator's neighbour happy to see them passed out in front of the building?
15. Name three places away from home where the narrator has passed out.
16. Name three places in the house where the narrator passes out.

17. What is in the bath?
18. What sensation does the narrator feel? And where?
19. How does the narrator feel after seeing the dressing and the blood in the water?
20. What can the narrator remember from the previous evening?
21. What is the name of the bar that the narrator regularly goes to?
22. How does the narrator initially explain Ralphie's reaction?
23. What does the narrator see attached to their left side?
24. How is the gauze held in place?
25. What does the narrator compare the dressing to?
26. Can the narrator see any blood?
27. What can the narrator see under the tape?
28. What kind of tape is it?
29. Does the narrator try to get out of the bath?
30. How does the narrator get out of the bath?
31. What does the narrator see on the bathroom mirror?
32. What does the narrator finally understand?

Essential Vocabulary

freezing	frightened	pulled
unconscious	stab	skin
air-con	fog	wound
collapse	disappeared	gauze
shivering	warning	metal staples
passed out	pointless argument	tore through
ice cold	assumed	gasp
half full	jealous	basin
shift(ed) my weight	perfume	lipstick
ice cubes	black coat	shade
stared	leaning towards	blinked
floated around	patched me up	understood
deep	duct tape	kidney
clenched my teeth	blacked out	call for help
took a breath	drifted	hospital
desperately	dressing	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:

Shivering – shaking slightly because you are cold or frightened.

Collapse – to fall down suddenly because you are weak, tired or unconscious.

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

I was shivering after waiting outside in the cold.

After the long journey, I wanted to collapse on the bed.

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

1. What do you think of this story?
2. 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.
3. Do you think the narrator is a man or a woman?
4. Why do you think this? Give good reasons.
5. Do you think this story is credible? Could it really happen?
6. What kind of person is the narrator? What kind of life does this person have?
7. Has the narrator had his or her kidney stolen? If so, why?
8. Who stole it? The woman in the bar?
9. If the woman stole the person's kidney, what will she do with it?
10. Can people sell kidneys on the black market?
11. How much can a kidney sell for? And why would someone want to buy one?
12. Do you think the narrator was targeted by the woman? If so, why?
13. Do you think the narrator could survive his ordeal? If so, how?

14. Is organ donation legal in your country?
15. What are the legal complications of stealing a kidney?
16. Is it acceptable to donate an organ?
17. What if someone has died? Can someone take their organs to give to others?
18. Is it acceptable to take prisoners' organs? Do we need their consent?
19. What is an organ donor card?
20. Should everyone carry an organ donor card? Why/why not?

21. Would you donate any of your organs?
22. After your death, would you like your organs donated to others?
23. Would you sell one of your kidneys? If so, how much would you want for it?

24. Do you think rich people can benefit from the sale of organs? If so, how?
25. 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 called to the scene of the crime in the person's flat

The Situation

The police have been called to Flat 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 Flat 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 Flat 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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