

## Chapter Two: No Will to Live

It has been six months since Benson's father, Jethro, passed away. He and his mother, Margret, have not had much to say to one another since then, and many dinners have been eaten together in silence. This family was not much into expression of tenderness, but there was always something to say at dinner. Benson and his mother would spend many dinners alone as his father would work double shifts to support the family. He remembered how even though the conversations were about nothing they still talked, but silence has been the conversation at the dinner table lately and Benson was starting to feel that there was nothing he could really do about it. "Mother, would you like more?" Benson asks as he lifts the bowl of mashed potatoes towards her; his mother nods "no". Alright then, if you are done I'll clean up, why don't you go up stairs and get ready for bed, I'll bring you up a cup of tea." Margret nods "yes" then stands from the table and starts to walk towards the stair case. Benson picks up the dishes and lays them in the sink as he stops to stare out the window that looked out into the dark of the street; suddenly he hears a loud thump coming from the staircase and out of his trance turns and runs towards the sound. "MOTHER!" he screams as he finds her lying at the bottom of the staircase unconscious from a fall! Immediately he picks up the phone and dials emergency services. "9-1-1 operator, do you need assistance?" asks the woman on the other side of the line and in a panic Benson starts to speak. "Yes, yes, it's my mother, she has fallen down the staircase and is unconscious, please send help!" "Yes sir I will do that right away!" Benson gives the woman all the information that she requires and hangs up the phone, he kneels beside his mother who is not saying a word but starts to talk to her. "Mother, can you hear me? Mother, I have called for help, hang on, they will be here soon!" And within minutes of his call paramedics come rushing in to tend to his mother. Benson watches as they evaluate her condition then they start to poke her with various needles, he listens as they call to the emergency with the condition of his mother. "Mercy, we are bring in a woman in her eighties, she has fallen down a flight of stairs, condition critical, patient is unconscious, right side hip is broken, there is internal bleeding and a slight swelling on the back of her head, we are on our way, arrive time is ten minutes." Benson listens in horror as they pick up his mother and place her on a gurney; "Sir, we are taking your mother to Mercy Hospital, please meet us there as soon as you can!" and with that Benson watches as they rush her out of the house and into the ambulance. As he stands in shock in the doorway of their home he watches them drive away! When he comes to himself Benson turns and rushes to the phone to call Doctor Charles Kramer, his parent's physician at Mercy to notify him that Margret is on her way and if he could meet him there. Dr. Kramer agrees and Benson hangs up the phone, reaches for his coat and house keys, and then rushes out the door to hail a taxi passing by. And with the offer of a little extra cash for his trouble, the drivers rushes Benson to the Mercy Hospital Emergency entrance.

As Benson walks through the door he sees Dr. Kramer turning a corner and calls out his name; "Dr. Kramer!" he calls as he walks quickly to him; "Have you seen my mother?" "Yes Benson I have, and to be honest it does not look good. Come, she is in here." They walk down the hall where Benson finds that his mother has been placed on life support for the moment. "What happened to her?" "Well, your mothers fall caused a few complications; first the fall broke her hip, when she hit the floor it also gave her a hairline fracture to the back of her skull, but when her rib broke during the fall it punctured her spleen. She has internal bleeding and that caused her to go into shock where during transport her heart stopped. We got her heart to start but she will need immediate surgery, we are not sure if she will survive the surgery, we put her on life support until you arrived, you have to make a decision to have surgery or not." With that Benson stares at his mother who is virtually lifeless on the bed. "If she doesn't have the surgery, will she live?" "I'm sorry to say that she will not." "But the surgery will kill her also?" "Yes, it may." "What are the odds of surviving the surgery doctor?" "Taking everything we spoke of into account, and the fact that she is in her eighties, no more than ten percent." Benson is in shock! Either way her mother has no chance of living! If

she goes into surgery she will die on the table; if she doesn't have the surgery she will die in this bed. Either way, his mother will be dying tonight. "Doctor, if we leave her like this how long will she have?" Benson asks with a shake in his voice. "A few hours, maybe a little more" replies the Dr. Kramer. "If she goes into surgery you will take her now?" "Yes, we would take her now." "But she will die on the table?" "Her chance of survival during surgery is less than ten percent; she will most likely die on the table." And with that Benson make a decision; "Doctor Kramer, I want her last few hours for myself." Dr. Kramer puts his hand on Benson's shoulder as Benson holds his mothers hand and is sitting next to her bed. "Benson, I agree. We will give her more morphine for her pain and I will be here when it is time." Dr. Kramer turns to make arrangements as Benson holds his mothers hand for the last few hours of her life.

He starts to talk to his mother; "Mom, please don't be upset with me, but I just wanted these last few hours to be with you. Since dad died you have been sad. You became so distant as if fading away from life. I tried to be a good son and I hope you don't think bad of me for not letting you have the surgery, but I would rather spend these hours with you then to loose you the moment they took you away." Benson starts to reflect within himself on the last few months he and his mother spent together. He could see that she was lonely; he could tell that she lost her will to continue to live. Finding happiness surround by memories of her true love was too hard to bare, her grief turned into loneliness, loneliness to sadness, sadness to silence. Something that Benson could not shake his mother out of. He was a poor replacement for a man that she loved for over sixty years; two soul that became one, torn into two to become one. Benson started to think that maybe this is what she wanted, in her silence it was as if she died too. Benson realizes that there was nothing that could have helped his mother live again, physically and spiritually, nothing and no one could mend a broken hearted soul whose one desire was to be whole again. And as the hour passed, the machines sounded and his mother's heart stopped. Margret, his mother, was now died. And with tears flowing from his eyes, Benson stands away from his now lifeless mother, turns and walks into an empty waiting area.

Dr. Kramer comes to consol Benson as he starts to make arrangements for his mothers viewing. "Now Benson, come with me and we will see Dr. Paul Hunt, the hospital's coroner, you can make all arrangements with him." Benson and Dr. Kramer start to go through the familiar steps that were taken when his father passed away. Here he was again, in the coroner's office, viewing now the body of his mother. And after speaking to Dr. Hunt about the funeral home pick-up and with all other arrangements made, Benson walks out of the hospital, feeling grieved and now alone, and into a home which is now empty and void.