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## Waiting is not an Option

It was about six weeks out now, and I was lying in bed as per usual. Before the surgery, I had moved my bed down to the dining in case I wasn't able to get up the stairs. The dining room's quite dim with only one small window across from my bed and an old chandelier hanging in the middle of the room, with two of its bulbs out. I've always found it a bit musty in there maybe that's from the lack of light or the fact that we never eat in there anymore. I had just started my chest and lung expansion exercises; the doctors gave me a clear small plastic container with a tube and a pressure gauge fixed on it. For exercise, I had to breath in the tube for as long as possible keeping the pressure gauge pointed at green. While I was doing this, my chest was starting to throb. I could hear ding, ding, ding; every time my heart beats, it's the sound of the titanium bar under my sternum popping off its small stabilizer plates. The feeling was excruciating. It felt like something was moving inside me. Dr. Adzick told me about this feeling some patients have. He said: "Some patients describe a feeling of wetness going down the side of their body, don't get too concerned if you experience this, it's totally normal." He was right, but also totally wrong, it wasn't wetness I felt, it was more like the feeling of blood seeping down the side of my body, I felt as if I could track its movement I could feel its warmth but when I would look at my side, there was nothing. The feeling was coming from inside, but it was "totally normal" apparently. How was I supposed to concentrate, it's early April now, and I only had a couple more weeks to get all my credit lineup, so I can graduate, I also I told my boss I'd be back

working in 3 weeks. There's no way I'm going to be able to keep that promise, I have to call him and tell him I can't work anymore, and I have to find a way to tell my advisor that I'm not going to be graduating on time. This surgery was too much. I keep thinking back on that, cold early January day. My mom and I were heading to chop (Children's Hospital of Philadelphia) we arrived at the woods center, a big old four-story brick building connected to the main wings of chop. We drove into the basement found a parking spot and get a slip from the attendant. I was starting to feel pretty nervous wondering what options I'll have. We take the elevator up to the 4th floor, sign-in and were told to take a seat in the waiting room. It's was a bright room, paintings of elephants, zebras, and giraffes cover the walls. There were little kids all around some coughing and crying as their parents try to console them, another's running around without a care in the world. I heard my name be called and the young nurse escorts my mom and I to room 6. We wait for surgent Adzick to arrive. After waiting about 30 minutes surgeon Adzick arrives, he knocks twice on the door and then proceeds to enter. He's a tall man probably 6 foot 3 with short gray combed over hair. He walks up to me shakes my hand and introduce himself.

“Hello Seth, my name is dr. Adzick and I'm the head surgeon here at CHOP for all pectus surgeries.” I can tell by the way he carries himself that he is a very confident man.

He then proceeded to say, “So Seth, after spending some time looking over your x-rays, I've come to the conclusion that your severe pectus excavatum is causing your heart to shift to the left and it seems to be putting pressure on your lungs. The pressure it's putting on your lungs could be the cause of your asthma. Do to your severe condition I would highly recommend surgery as

soon as possible.” I was expecting him to say this but even still hearing it out loud made it almost too real.

He then said, “This is a big surgery, so I highly recommend you taking the time to weigh your options. If you decide to do the surgery, beware that you could be out of school and work for some time.”

Adzick then said, “Another one of my patients was going to have the surgery in about three weeks so if you would like, I can get yours down then also or you can wait till school ends?” The idea of waiting months was overwhelming; I don't have the patience for that.

I responded almost immediately saying, “I'll do the surgery in three weeks, that works much better for me.” Little did I know that this surgery and the time that I picked would end up causing me my job and months of school work, I should have waited. I should have waited till the summer.