

The girl with cotton in her ear

Chapter 1

My childhood was as good as any child's or at least that's what I thought as a child but little did I know that fate had such pain and hardships stored for me and my family. I was born in Huston both my parents are from Huston.

My dad is a simple man he owned a recycling business in Austin. We had a big family so can tell that things were very lively at our home. We were six sibling some of them are half siblings to my mom so you would think that we would feel a bit separated from them but my dad raised us all and treated us equally so we hardly ever felt different from them and grew up as full siblings.

I had a good childhood although sometimes it was hard as there were so many of us. So it was natural that we always didn't get what we wanted. We had to share things and there were times we didn't get along and fought over things like all children do but those fights didn't last long and we got along well.

My parents struggled together at first after all it's not easy to raise six children but eventually they settled down. The house that I currently live in is the same house in which we lived after we moved to Austin I was two years old at the time so I pretty much spend my childhood in that house. My parents renovated the entire house when I was a child. I had made many beautiful memories there one of which is that I learned to swim in the bathtub. Then when I got a little older I started swimming in the pool in when it was put up in what year I don't remember. I love swimming it was my passion I enjoyed playing in the water it made me feel peaceful and calm.

I have made many beautiful childhood memories with my family. I remember that as I child I used to go camping with my family, we would go to the lake a lot and ride on the boats. I enjoyed the boat ride the gentle breeze brushing through my hair and the sent of earth in my nose. We would also go to visit my dad's family in Huston so basically I spend most of my childhood in both Houston and Austin.

Once I started kindergarten things were pretty lively as I was a Tom boy so I was always getting in trouble doing things a girl wasn't supposed to, messing around with boy stuff. I was always outside playing with the boys in my neighbourhood. But life doesn't always stay the same the happiness of childhood could only last so long.

When I turned seven I started noticing things like pain in my ears at first it was mild and I ignored it but then it became severe so my mom would buy me ear drops. I didn't thought much about the pain, I believed that it was probably like a cold that would go away if I just took the medicine. Then when I was in third grade they did a simple hearing test and I failed at it. Up until now I didn't felt that I had hearing problem I just though t that it was because of the pain and that it was nothing to worry about. My mom on finding out first consulted our family pre nutrition who suggested that I probably have a normal ear infection and he flushed my ear to clear out anything that was in the but it didn't work as I was still experiencing pain.

I experienced pain mostly the days I went for swimming or when it was cold or rainy but it made me sad because I enjoyed swimming and now I couldn't do it without having to bear the pain, on a regular day all I felt was a kind of drainage, a leakage from my ear that caused an awful smell which made me feel a bit embarrassed. It also made it difficult for me to learn at school even though it was

not like that I paid much attention to what the teacher was saying but having so much cotton plugged in my ears made it impossible to hear half of what the teacher or anyone else was saying. It made me feel separated from my classmates as if I was the odd one out and on occasion I thought maybe if my hearing didn't get better I would like to go to a special school for deaf children. I was desperately hoping that something would fix me.

After the flushing of my ear didn't work the doctors recommended me to a specialist. He sent me to an ENT to **Dr. Erin Cultrin** who treated me first by giving me ear drops and doing a hearing test which I failed pretty badly. It was not like I was expecting to pass the test anyway.

After that he recommended my first surgery which would involve applying an ear tube to my ear. On September, 11, 2014 I had an ear tube surgery at **thena** doctrine surgical centre. I was very excited that day because I believed that all my pain, drainage and the foul smell would disappear and I would have my ear back. I could again enjoy swimming without having to experience pain afterwards. I didn't know what surgery would be like I was a fifth grader at the time and I probably thought that my ear would automatically be fixed without causing me any pain. I just thought that all would be good again. I was eleven years old at the time of my first surgery.

Chapter 2

It was when I at the hospital changing in to my gown that my nerves kicked in I was a little scared by seeing the equipment and when they put the I'd on my wrist I hated it. I felt this burning sensation all over me that frightened me. The nurse told me to say goodbye to my mom which only made me feel worse because I didn't want to be alone and she took me back to the operating room. While I was laying there I began to cry because I couldn't hear anything even though there was movement all around me it was like the whole world had gone silent and it made me panic. The doctors tried to comfort me they ask me if I was alright they injected me and I started to fall asleep, I became unconscious.

After the surgery when I woke up I could see the lights above me and I realized that I was in excruciating pain. I cried and cried. I couldn't catch my breath all the nurses and my mom were trying to calm me down by saying "your ok sweetie your fine" but I was hyperventilating. I was scared when I woke up but after a little while I calm down a little bit and the nurses tried to give me some pain medicines but I didn't want to take it as it hurt when I tried to eat. At first I stubbornly refused but they reasoned with me that the pain would me momentarily and after I take it I would quickly feel a lot better. After I took the medicine I finally calm down. I was still feeling a bit pain in my ear but now I was better then before.

After I went home things were pretty great for at least six months. Every thing was back to normal and I was filled with a new found happiness, I could once live like a normal child and swim for as long as I wanted without feeling any pain. We occasionally went for check ups and I was fine. The doctor also gave me custom made ear plugs that only fit my ear that I used when I was swimming.

But my relief didn't last long because the drainage eventually came back and with it came the pain. I was once again struggling at school and having to constantly put cotton in my ear was irritating and infuriating. My mom decided that we should approach a second doctor as the first's method didn't work. My mom asked the first doctor to recommend someone else and he recommended

Dr **Hawfre**. When I went to the second doctor he examined my ear and on doing so he told us that the ear tubes they had put in my ear didn't reach the ear canal and the surgery hadn't really done anything to help. I was really disappointed I went to all that pain for nothing but I wasn't going to let my hopes down I believed that the second doctor could surely fix me. He first gave me ear drops and antibiotics but when they didn't work he examined the ear and pulled out a fungus ball from my ear. The doctor thought maybe the fungus ball was the problem so he again continued with the antibiotics hoping that it would kill what ever was in my ear but it just came back.

But despite of my condition and the pain I felt I didn't let it take over my life. If anything I was outgoing and made friends very easily. I didn't let my condition interfere with my social life. When people asked me what was wrong with my ear I just told them that I had an infection. I didn't go into detail about my disease because I didn't wanted to make a big deal out of it. Sometimes people could smell my ear infection that's why I used as much cotton as a could to cover up the smell.

In 2015 after few more check ups my doctor suggested that I should go to Texas children because he didn't exactly knew what my condition was or how to fix it. Once again I was disappointed. So I went for session to Texas children and every time we tried something new or they told me something I got my Hope's up that it will fix me and I would get better but every time they tried something and failed . I just started losing hope. I became very sad and would not cooperate with them at times but my mom tried to reason with me that it's not their fault. Which I knew that it was not their fault but after being let down so many times I started to feel like it was all in vain.

My mom was with me through all this. I was very close to my mom as she was always by my side. She took me to countless sessions and was there when I had my first surgery. My dad was close to me to but he was always busy with work. I shared a really strong bond with my mom that was unlike anything I had ever felt with anyone else. I am internally grateful to her for staying with me and dealing with me even when I was throwing a tantrum or when I acted stubborn or sad. At times I felt better thinking that no matter what our relationship will stay the same and that I will always find a friend in her.

But when I went to Texas children everything started to change. I think it was probably because I didn't mentally understand why I was there and I had a hard time adjusting to my environment. All this stress caused depression and I started to act out in a way. I was different now from when I was younger, I used to be shy and embarrassed but I guess nothing stays the same.