

Day 0

I feel ill, like not stay in bed all day ill feeling sorry for yourself. No not that kind of ill. More like the type of ill where you understand why you pay taxes. Finally using the tax system as invented. I open the uber and mark the destination as St. James hospital. The driver is 5 minutes away as I see the car icon spin in place a couple of streets away from my house.

Looking at myself in the mirror, I see grey. A grey human drenched in sweat. It dawns on me I should probably look almost presentable so that the uber doesn't turn me away. I walk to the bathroom splash some water on my face and try to throw up in the toilet with no success. When I check back in the mirror I appear marginally better. I guess it will have to do.

'Mark?' Abdul asks.

I nod my head in reply. I realise that if I open my mouth right now I may paint his uber in a way he wouldn't be too happy with. I close my eyes and lean against the window, covering his car seat in whatever was being secreted out of me. I could only feel apologetic with how untalkative I was being. Scared of lowering my uber rating, I half mutter responses back to his mundane questions.

'Have you had a good day so far?'

'No, not been feeling fantastic.'

'The weather is great today, might cheer you up?'

'Mmmm.'

'I see you're going to the hospital, anything I should be worried about?'

I could tell he's joking. A small smile creeps onto his face. I honestly couldn't tell him the truth to that answer so I manage to mutter to him 'No.' I reclose my eyes and try to focus on getting to the hospital, surely they can fix whatever is wrong with me.

'We're here.' Abdul calls back to me. I cannot muster up a reply, wasting away in the back seat. I hear the front door open and slam shut corresponding with the shout 'I need help, can somebody help me?'

In a matter of minutes, I am pulled out of the car and onto a stretcher and wheeled in. They hook me up to an IV. It's attached to multiple bags.

'What is your name, sir?' A bright light and stethoscope ask,

'M-m-m-mark,' I stutter and then I'm gone.

Day 2

There are muffled sounds coming outside my ...room? I look around trying to work out where I am or what is going on. Blinding lights reflect off the plastic walls that surround me. A sharp beeping starts increasing as I notice my breath becoming shallow. I'm panicking. Where is my family?

The people outside notice and rush in. A breathing apparatus is put over my mouth as I begin to calm down.

'How are we feeling today, Mr Davis? I'm Dr Thomas and have been treating you since you came in.' A woman covered in blue talks at me. I do feel slightly better, so I nod.

'You came in with a fever and chills. Also, you were non-verbal and kept losing consciousness. We gave you a saline drip and broad-spectrum antibiotics and that appears to have helped which has lowered fever and improved your other symptoms. How do you feel?'

I pull down my oxygen mask and whisper 'Better.'

'That's good, we will keep monitoring you throughout the next few days and hopefully we can discharge you within a couple of days.'

'Tent?' I ask wondering why a fever has put me in isolation.

'Ah yes, this,' She gestures around the room. 'It was just a precaution. We had no clue what you came in with and didn't want to get other patients sick, especially considering some of your symptoms correspond with some highly infectious diseases that have recently re-emerged.'

The eeriness starts to build as I look around and survey the room. Everything is immaculately clean and white. The only thing of interest is the beeping monitor that shows my heart rate. I've only ever seen it in films. Other than that, the room was bare, clinical. The people who walked in and out throughout the day to swab my mouth, draw bloods and take my vitals came in waves of blue. Blue scrubs, blue masks, blue gloves, and blue gowns.

When they thought I was resting I overheard a conversation between a blue gown and a white coat.

'His symptoms are unlike anything I've seen; his white blood cell count is worryingly low. No where near enough to fight off this infection. The antibiotics aren't working, and I don't know what to give him. What came from his labs?' Asked the blue gown.

'I honestly don't know. I ran all the tests, and they didn't help. A gram stain identified it as gram negative and cocci were grouped together in a chain suggesting that it is a streptococci strain, however the symptoms he displays don't match known streptococci caused diseases and when I was staring at that gram stain it didn't look like anything I had seen, I swear. We also ran a broth dilution test which we had no luck with. I couldn't believe it, so I also ran disk diffusions to check. There was no inhibition zone. I don't know what to do for him. I cannot find a treatment.' The white coat responded.

'We are going to have to wait and see, hoping that whatever this is, it goes away.'

That did not sound good.

Day 5

Apparently I still have a fever which isn't good, and my blood cell counts are not looking good or something according to Dr Thomas. She looks tired every time she comes in and I hope it isn't due to my case. There must be people who are sicker in this hospital that are more important to treat. Saying that, I haven't been able to keep any food down since I got here so I am hooked up to feeding tube as well as all the other wires and tubes that are coming out of my wrists, arms and chest. I feel like I'm being watched all the time. Sleeping is my priority. 80% of my time I am asleep. Partly so I don't have to focus on what is going on but also because my body just shuts down, incapable of being. Maybe I'm not as well as I think I am.

My mum visits from time to time and I can chat to her. She is in my plastic room and wears plain jeans and a t-shirt, staring at me most of the time she is here. Her voice is soothing to my ears as she sings me to sleep and strokes my hair.

'He is seeing her again.' Dr Thomas says

'How can you tell?' Asks a colleague who is also staring through the plastic.

'He always looks more at peace.' She replies.

Day 8

'Hello friend' I hear someone say

My head turns slowly as that is the best that I can manage. The face comes into focus and I recognise who it is. Abdul.

'They tell me I have what you have. Don't worry though I have been reassured that they are working on a solution. Don't worry.'

I try to nod but I think it only makes Abdul worry more as I cannot manage to do it. He looks afraid. I am too. Movement has been hard the last few days. It hasn't just been Dr Thomas who has come in, over time more and more experts in their field have taken samples, ask for timelines and then just left. Now, I have given it to Abdul. I am so sorry, I just needed to get to the hospital, I hope no one else gets this. No one deserves this.

Day 11

A tv screen in the infectious disease ward can be heard over the whole floor. It shows a news anchor in a medical grade mask stood outside a tented area that has been put up outside of St James hospital. He begins to speak, trying to hide his concern to the audience:

'On August 10th, a patient was admitted to this hospital behind me, St James, at 1:00pm. He showed a sign of fever, chills, sweating and lack of muscular strength. It has been confirmed that this patient has died from the disease late last night just 10 days after they arrived. Sources say doctors are struggling to find a treatment for this disease and there are currently 10 patients that are being isolated for the same illness, both confirmed or suspected. 4 of these patients had met another patient in the week before they were admitted, the rest are staff from the hospital including the hospitals leading clinical microbiologist, Dr Thomas. The government has tented and fenced off the hospital. They have contacted the people who have supposedly been in physical contact with anyone who has been admitted and has asked them to come to the hospital for testing. This is an unprecedented situation that I will keep on reporting as it unfolds. This has been Sam Williams, with your daily update.'

Someone from within the ward turns off the TV. The corridors are full of beeping as people run in and out with blood and swab tests. No one can figure out what to do. Dr Thomas had only met the patient with protective gear on and she still caught it. No one knows what to do.