

## What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger

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My heart skipped a beat when it suddenly dawned upon me that I had made an awful mistake. The noise was excruciating, the shrieks hedging my ears were pure torture. It was as though I were looking at myself from another dimension, an aerial view of my partially paralyzed body; my eyes pure dread and the sweat on my polished-looking forehead starting to fuse into notorious drops of fear.

What had I got myself into? Why had I volunteer for this? I had had the false illusion that I was doing it for my country, that this was the only way out, that this would eventually bring prosperity, that I would be making a difference and contributing with a noble cause. But now that I was in this battlefield I realized the degree of inaccuracy I had managed. I had imagined a chivalrous outcome; awards and bouquets of roses, but that was far from being the case. I was nothing more than a coward, I wanted to go home, I wanted to feel safe.

I couldn't escape; I was already in too deep, but I needed to find help. I couldn't do this alone, I needed to find an accomplice, someone who could guide me, show me the way, I was completely adrift. I scanned my surroundings in all directions, but all I could see was the enemy. They were close, too close, and beginning to corner me. They were barbarous beasts, of a kind I had never seen before, ruthless, willing to bring out the very worst in you, completely lacking any sign of humanness. The worst part was that they would win, eventually they would, and they would be in charge of the future, our fate would be in their hands whether we liked it or not, they *were* the future and there was nothing we could do about it but try to survive the present.

I knew that my only getaway was to find a path that could lead me to the other side. I would just have to take the bull by the horns and make a run for it. No doubt I was in for a pounding, there was no way I would get out of there unharmed, but I had no choice.

I took a big, fresh breath of air and began my odyssey.

I was receiving attacks from different directions and used my frail arms as protection. The shrieks got louder and louder and I was starting to go numb from the beatings. How do people volunteer for this torture? Who's mind would be so twisted to enjoy such savagery and viciousness? I thought I had made it when one of them was blocking my way and started chasing me like a wild animal. I managed to evade it with some slick moves and left it behind me.

I finally made it to the other side, a sense of hope filled my chest and I suddenly became optimistic that I might actually survive this. I looked in every direction in wishful thinking that someone would be there for me, and for a split second I almost gave in. Then I saw her. A savior of mankind, like an angel coming down from heaven and she was coming towards me. She read my distressed-looking face and immediately came to my aid.

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“Is everything OK?” my angel asked.

“No, it’s not. This is too much for me, clearly I’ve taken on more than I could handle and I don’t want to continue any further. I’m sorry but being assaulted by kindergarteners is clearly not my cup of tea, those little beasts need to be tamed and I have discovered in the last 15 minutes that my breaking skills are no match for their ferociousness. Now, if you’ll excuse me have to go to the headmistress’s office and present my resignation.” I walked down the hall removing chunks of chalk, broken pencils and (other sticky items I’d rather not identify) with my head held high and proud to say I was a survivor.