Fear in the Fog

It happened on a recent business trip – the day I stepped into eternity.

It was only a quick flight to Memphis and back - nothing stressful. I had forgotten my talk with the doctor, until I had that dream again last night. You know the kind...where you clench your teeth, muscles taut, cold sweats. You gasp for air, shaking, while your heart tries to beat its way out of your chest. That kind of a dream. Places were different each time, but the scenes are always the same. You’re blinded by a fog that shrouds everything. Fear grips you and your skin prickles, cold and clammy. Yeah. That kind of dream that terrifies you of the unknown. The horrifying nightmares have plagued my mind since my last medical appointment.

Last night I was on one of those one-person swinging footbridges suspended high above a supposed chasm. Dense fog obscured whatever was below or ahead. With calculated steps, I inched forward, urging my trembling body another foot. The planks were rotten, some broken, some missing; the rope frayed. I stumbled, reaching amiss for a foothold. The moment before plunging into the abyss below, an unseen presence enveloped me. I awoke with a start, gasping for breath, shivering and wet.

That’s how this day trip began. Shaking the premonition, I boarded the plane. I’d had no symptoms for eight months now, but the dream still unnerved me. I recalled that hot day last August, stunned at the bleak prognosis given. Only three to six months? I had driven home in a fog, barely able to see the road through misty eyes. Fear gripped my soul.

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Finding my seat on the plane, I pondered the dream. Silly, perhaps, but I had to work it through. The bridge in the fog had to have an end. Although obscured, it had to go somewhere. Just because I couldn’t see the other side didn’t mean it didn’t exist. Take one step at a time, I admonished myself. Although unsteady and unsure, I must move forward. The thought eased the stabbing jolts in my chest. Deep breaths. This will not get the best of me. Even if I have to take baby steps, I promised myself to keep moving and trust the unseen presence.

Halfway to Memphis, I felt drowsy and decided to nap. Soon I found myself again on the wobbly bridge, straddling rope-strung boards. Going back was not an option. ‘Move ahead,’ the voice invoked. Thick haze
made vision impossible. Something touched my neck, but I saw nothing. Shivers racked my body; my heart raced. Another step. Wavering, I reached to grab the rope, but it gave way. Something hard slammed into my chest. I wanted to scream but could not.

A strange invisible warmth grabbed my hand and wrapped itself around me – leading me onward. Just breathe, I encouraged myself. The fog began to lift, and my steps became more stable. The Presence gave me assurance: I will reach the other side.

The end of the bridge opened into dazzling brilliance as sunlight pierced the misty vale. It was beautiful beyond description. As I stepped across the threshold, I turned to view the terrifying footbridge now behind me. A sign read: DECEPTION PASS – WATCH YOUR STEP.

I choked as breath returned and blinked. White light blinded my eyes. Was I dead?

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“Welcome back. You gave us quite a scare.” The doctor waved his penlight in my eyes.

“Where am I?”

“You’re at Memphis Medical,” he replied, “lucky to be alive.”

“I sat beside you on the plane,” a young woman standing beside the bed said. “I’m a cardiac nurse. I suspected a heart attack when you slumped over. You had no pulse when I felt your neck.”

“Another passenger recently finished his CPR training. He started pumping your chest, but there was no response. You were dead for ten minutes. We thought we’d lost you. A doctor on board grabbed the defibrillator and brought you back. I held your hand until your heart began beating again.”

“Thank you,” I whispered. My eyes brimmed. “I was surrounded by angels.”

I smiled in amazing realization. My dreams finally made sense. DECEPTION PASS, the sign said. Those fog of fears will no longer cripple or deceive me because I’m no longer afraid to die. Death is only a bridge, and when my time comes, I will do it with bravery and confidence. I will make it to the other side.

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