

Book excerpt from Chapter 14

A brief tap on the door and a man in a white coat and bow-tie walked in.

"I'm here to inform you that your cells are delayed," he proceeded to tell me.

"Delayed?" I asked with curiosity and concern. It's almost as if his words transported me back to the skydiving airplane and he had just pushed me out. Wait, I didn't even get a 1, 2, 3..., I thought. I didn't have time to anticipate.

"Yes, they are coming from a long distance and won't make it to the hospital in time to begin the transplant tomorrow. We will implement the transplant on June 5."

I chuckled, "They got delayed in Chicago, right?"

His serious expression didn't change. "Well, we don't know their exact origin, but I'm sure transportation has something to do with it," he responded.

I could tell that there was no way to connect with this doctor. I let him continue his job of informing me of this change and nodded my head. He walked out the double doors

Everyone was gone—chemo had finished for the day, my parents had left to have time outside of the hospital and I was alone.

The "what ifs" started to congregate in my mind. It was a scary place to be. A completely depleted immune system and cells that are late. Now I felt empty.

June 3, 2013

God, you're never late. What in the world? Talk about having to trust You. My life is so in Your hands. Thank You for not letting go. Thank You for being my Protector. Thank You

for life—for every moment. Thank You for Your strength pumping through me—for being my Sustainer.

Isaiah 46:4, "I will BE your God throughout your lifetime until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will CARRY you along and SAVE you."

Something a friend had said came to mind, "It's in that emptiness that hope is found. This sums up the gospel." Jesus came, to be our hope in the middle of emptiness and loss. And fear and uncertainty. And when we think the stem cells don't show up on time. Hope has never left. He will be. He will carry. He will save me.

The morning of June 5 arrived. Nurse Maggie entered to say that my cells had arrived and soon they'd begin the process of transferring them into my body. My mom had returned to the hospital with a birthday balloon and a pack of four cupcakes from a bakery back home.

My stomach didn't feel like cupcakes even two days after all of those popsicles. The chemo was working. My body was depleting. Even my appetite.

But hope was on the way. Someone else's blood to give me a fresh life.

The nurse brought the cells in the room. She hung the bag on my IV pole. After connecting me to the bag of blood, she set the system to regulate transplanting cells slowly. Too fast, and I could have an allergic reaction.

"The thief's purpose is to steal, and kill and destroy..." (John 10:10a).

Cancer had the opportunity. It had come in to steal, kill and destroy me. Satan's plans were obvious.

"My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life" (John 10:10b).

As the red trickled from the small plastic tubing into my body for five hours, I knew somehow God saw life and hope among all the losses and emptiness. I hoped I would be able to experience this fullness of life He saw without the looming dark cloud of cancer ever again.