



He who has a why to live can bear almost any how.

~ Friedrich Nietzsche ~

## Got a minute? Absolutely.



Dr. Cheri Brozen fingered the small hourglass in her lab coat pocket with her left hand. A good friend had recently given it to her and she had come to rely on it for inspiration. She tapped lightly and pushed open the door of Josh's hospital room. He was 18 years old with advanced Alveolar Rhabdomyosarcoma.

"Hey, Josh, what's up? The nurses said you wanted to see me."

"Hey, Dr. Cheri." Josh sat in one of the recliner chairs under the window, the shades slightly drawn to block the sun. His baseball cap covered his bald head and he looked paler today.

"Got a minute?" he asked. A notebook was open on his lap, his pen in his hand. He set them on the windowsill between the vases of flowers.

"Absolutely." She sat down in the chair next to him and wrapped her hand around his, surreptitiously checking his pulse. His heart rate was slightly accelerated but not worrisome. He'd patiently and good-naturedly endured months of radiation, chemotherapy and frequent hospitalizations in the last couple of years. Cheri waited, meeting his deep blue eyes directly.

"Is there any way to know how much time I have left?" he asked quietly. His voice didn't break or quiver. It was as strong and curious as it had been when she'd first shared the terminal cancer diagnosis with him and his family.



It was so like him to go immediately to the heart of his thoughts. She drew the hourglass out of her pocket and placed it in his hand.

Josh took it between his index finger and thumb and turned it over. He silently watched the sand filter through the center channel until it all rested in a mound in the bottom bowl. He looked up at her, his eyes softened at the edges.

“There is no way for me to know how much sand you have left in your personal hourglass, Josh. I can interpret what medical science predicts, given your test results, but I can’t tell you exactly how many days.” Dr. Cheri crossed her legs and folded her hands around her knee. “You know you’ve already gone beyond textbook projections.”

He smiled, “I know and I’m truly grateful. Remember when I was so worried about how much time I had left that I wouldn’t let myself sleep? I thought sleeping wasted time. I got kind of run down without enough sleep. Now, when I sleep, I dream about being healthy and strong. I even dream about flying.”

He turned the hourglass over and held it up to the window. “There isn’t much sand in this thing, is there?” he asked ruefully.

Cheri laughed and admitted. “Probably only a couple of minute’s worth.”

“How big do you think one of these would be if it really held a lifetime of sand?” They both watched the last few grains of sand fall.



She started to answer and stopped.

He leaned forward, handing the hourglass back to her. “I know: patient confidentiality.”

“Perhaps it’s not about the size of your hourglass but what you do with your sand that matters.” She closed her hand around his, both of them holding the hourglass.

