

Hands around my throat... No air... I gasped and opened my eyes but couldn't see him in the darkness. I'd relived the attack a hundred times in my dreams and I was still yet to see him. I'd already lost – not only did he have me by the throat, but this fight had been fought and lost nine years before. I still tried to fight him off, but he was too strong.

My lungs found nothing but his hands crushing my windpipe when I gasped for air. There really wasn't anything to do but relax and close my eyes...

The heart monitor beeped rhythmically.

I wasn't quick to understand what it even was.

Never having been knocked out before, I didn't have any practice coming back around. It was a hard swim out of the darkness.

My room was still dark, but it wasn't the same kind of darkness my bedroom had. I figured they dimmed the lights so it wouldn't be so jarring when I finally opened my eyes. It really didn't occur to me that it was the middle of the night – I felt disoriented.

Expecting Mom or Dad to be asleep in the chair, or a nurse to stride into the room with a friendly smile (and explanation) I leaned forward and looked around.

I didn't find anyone and the disappointment was overwhelming.

It was easier to go back to sleep.