

THE HEALER

By

Steve Meredith

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Steve Meredith  
StevenEMeredith@gmail.com

EXT-BEACH-DUSK

It is the middle of the summer, and many tourists are leaving the beach for the day. One man sits on the sand and seems out of place while everyone else around him leaves. He is watching the sunset. His name is JAYSON COLLINS. COLLINS is a young man of about 26. He is well built, and in typical summer attire of flip-flops, jeans, a t-shirt, and sunglasses.

Soon after the large group of people around him leaves the beach, COLLINS is joined by COURTNEY WHITE, a fellow EMT and a co-worker of COLLINS. WHITE sits down next to COLLINS.

WHITE:

Hey.

COLLINS:

Hey Court.

WHITE:

The sunset's beautiful tonight

COLLINS:

It's one of the advantages of this town, I'll give it that.

WHITE:

How are you holding up?

COLLINS:

I'll be alright.

WHITE:

You know, people die every day, Jayson. Today wasn't your fault. I was there, I watched you. Jayson, you were textbook in everything you did today.

COLLINS:

I know. I'm more frustrated than anything else.

WHITE:

Jayson, don't beat yourself up about this--

COLLINS:

I'm frustrated with God.

WHITE:

What? Why?

COLLINS:

Because I don't understand Him.  
I've never fully understood Him, and  
it's starting to piss me off. I'm  
starting to get really pissed at my  
own incompetence.

WHITE:

Jayson, sometimes it's just people's  
time to go.

COLLINS:

Then explain this, Courtney; why  
does God allow me to be there, and  
allow me to try my hardest to save  
those people, when in the end He  
knows that it's their time, and He  
knows I'm going to fail.

WHITE:

Jayson, listen to yourself. Why are  
you dwelling on the people who you  
can't save. Think about the  
countless others you have saved--

COLLINS:

(voice breaking a bit)

Because Courtney. The people I  
can't save are the only ones who  
matter to me. Yes, I've saved over  
100 lives in my three year career as  
an EMT, but the number eleven is all  
I care about. Eleven lives have  
been lost while I was on the clock.

COLLINS fights back a few tears.

COLLINS:

This whole situation just brings  
back bad memories.

WHITE:

You mean from your time in Iraq?

COLLINS nods.

COLLINS:

I remember one day in Fallujah, my  
platoon had come under heavy fire  
from the insurgents, and a good  
portion of the men had gone down  
with shrapnel wounds. The fire was

coming from one side of my tank, so the gunner moved the main turret and aimed it at the crowd. And as my friends lay there on the ground, I went down to the dirt and dragged each of them, one by one, to the other side of the tank. I saved six of them. Six out of eight. The other two were struck with bullets as I dragged them from danger.

Jayson takes out a silver chain from behind his shirt that is around his neck.

COLLINS:

Courtney, these aren't my dog tags. These tags are from the two men I couldn't save. After we got back to the platoon, my CO told me that casualties were a part of war, and that I did a great job out there. He recommended me for the Medal of Honor.

WHITE:

I didn't know you were a big time war hero.

COLLINS:

I don't think of myself that way. When I came back to the states, I wept, sometimes for days at a time, because of those two guys.

WHITE puts her arm around COLLINS

COLLINS:

I felt so guilty for just accepting what my CO had told me that day.

WHITE:

Jayson, don't do this. War is different. Soldiers come back and have to discover that they are human and that they feel. They feel pain, joy, defeat, sadness, the entire spectrum of emotion. The night's you spent crying was just your way of rediscovering the emotional spectrum.

COLLINS:

Sometimes I just wish I didn't

feel--

WHITE:

Jayson, don't say that. Your feeling makes you who you are. You need to let go of the guilt. I completely understand why you wear those tags, but those tags are as much a burden as they are a memorial.

COLLINS:

I wish I could get out of this job--

WHITE:

Don't say that either Jayson.

WHITE sighs.

WHITE:

Jayson, can I ask you something.

COLLINS looks over at WHITE.

COLLINS:

Anything, what is it?

WHITE:

How do you feel after you save someone's life?

COLLINS takes a moment to digest the question.

COLLINS:

Quite honestly, it's the greatest high I've ever felt.

WHITE:

And everyone can see that. Jayson, your problem is that when you realized that you could feel again after you came home from the war, in some ways, you let your emotions envelope you in this claustrophobic kind of way. And that's dangerous in this profession. Yes, you need to feel, but only to a degree. You and I are both people of faith, and I think you need to realize that God has a plan for everyone, and 95% of the time, his plan involves you saving someone else's life. The other 5% percent is just the

victim's time. And you know what, Jayson? When you say that you want to get out of this job, I know that's bullshit.

COLLINS:  
Why's that?

WHITE:  
Think about all the job's you've had, Jayson? You've been a camp counselor, a lifeguard, you've saved lives in war, and then you come home and you become an EMT. You'll never get out of this field because you love the high you get from saving lives. It's the same high that I get, and it's the same high that we all get. I'm not asking you not to feel, Jayson, because that's what makes you unique and special, and such a great guy. But if you don't let go of your burden of guilt, it will drive you insane.

COLLINS:  
So what am I supposed to do the next time I can't save someone?

WHITE:  
Give yourself credit for doing everything that you could. And furthermore, give yourself credit for being one of the good EMT's who has the ability to put themselves in the shoes of the victim's family. Jayson, do you know how many of our co-workers don't have that ability? There are quite a few, I can tell you that.

COLLINS and WHITE look out at the sunset.

WHITE:  
(getting up, brushing herself off)  
Come on, let's go to dinner or something.

COLLINS:  
(getting up)  
Sounds great.

WHITE:  
Hey. Come here.

WHITE gives COLLINS a hug. They embrace for a few seconds and COLLINS goes to pull away, but WHITE brings him back in to continue the hug.

WHITE:  
I know nothing will completely kill your guilt.

COLLINS:  
These conversations help.

WHITE:  
(chuckling)  
Well, I'm glad.

While they still embrace, WHITE discretely undoes the chain hanging around COLLINS neck. They release from the hug, and she takes his hand.

WHITE:  
(handing COLLINS the tags)  
Put these in your pocket. After dinner, I want you to go home, and I want you to put those in a safe place. You've worn your guilt around you neck for long enough. Those men don't hate you for not saving them. They admire you because you tried. And God is the same way. You don't know everyone's life plan Jayson. You get put in the position to save lives everyday. Some of them you will save, and some of them will slip away. What matters, and what God admires you for, is that you try. That makes all the difference, Jayson.

They start to leave the beach.

WHITE:  
You do know that the name Jayson, in the biblical sense of the name, means "healer" right?

COLLINS:  
I had heard that, yes.

WHITE:  
There's the second reason why you

can't leave this job. I mean, with a name that means the "healer," you'll be in a life saving position for the rest of your life.

COLLINS:  
(chuckling)  
Yeah, I'll go be a firefighter after this. What's your name mean?

WHITE:  
Well, as with any name, I'm sure it has a lot of meanings. But the english derivative means "protector."

COLLINS:  
Very fitting.

WHITE:  
Yeah, I think so.

The two exit the beach and head to dinner at a local boardwalk restaurant.

FADE TO BLACK

ROLL CREDITS

THE END.