

"I can't get up."

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"I can't get up."

by [AutisticWriter](#)

Summary

A look at Connie (and, by extension, Stevonnie) as she, Steven and Jeff go through the events of Mindful Education.

[Prompt 9: "I can't get up."]

It is horrifying how quickly your reflexes can kick in. Useful in battle, but dangerous in real life. Connie learns this one afternoon at school without ever seeing it coming.

She wanders down the hallway at her school, surrounded by her fellow students but not feeling crowded. But then... a boy isn't looking where he is going, and as they pass each other, he walks to the side and knocks shoulders with Connie.

And... and she panics. Her battle training kicks in and all Connie can think about is Steven and Rose's sword and Stevonnie and learning how to fight – and then she is grabbing the boy by the wrist and flinging him through the air, and he flips and slams hard against the floor.

Connie freezes, horrified. The boy looks up at her, and his eyes are wide and full of tears. She wants to ask if he is okay, to apologise for hurting him, but... she can't. so she turns and hurries away. But as she does, Connie hears people crowding around the boy, whilst everyone she passes looks at her with wary expressions, and it makes her want to sob when she realises they are worried she might hurt them too.

“Are you okay?”

“My arm... it h-hurts,” the boy says, and his voice hitches like he is crying.

Connie keeps walking, not turning around, and stares down at the floor.

“Why's he crying?”

“Where does it hurt?”

“I think his arm's broken!”

“Can you sit up? You need to go see the nurse.”

And the boy's voice is full of such fear and pain and he sobs as he says, “Ow, it hurts. I... I can't get up. It...”

And he dissolves into hysterical sobs. Connie breaks into a run, bursting into the bathrooms and shutting herself inside a stall. And as she thinks about the look of terror on that poor boy's face, Connie rests her face against her knees and starts to cry.

She can't stop thinking about the boy. She keeps crying at first, but soon just does numb. Everything seems dull. She... she sort of hates herself.

It even starts to affect her friendship with Steven. He tries to make jokes and chat with her, but Connie barely responds. And when they go to the sky arena with Pearl and Garnet and do some fusion training, her stupid emotions even ruin that. She and Steven fuse into Stevonnie, but during the training fight with the Holo-Pearls, she starts having thoughts about injuring the boy. And Stevonnie panics and they break apart. Feeling useless, Connie runs away.

When Steven finds her, she tells him everything. About how flipped out and hurt the boy. Steven tries to comfort her, but it doesn't really work. Nothing works lately. She just feels so guilty and sad and horrible.

But being with Steven helps. If only a little bit.

Garnet decides to take her and Steven to the beach. They fuse into Stevonnie again, and they sit on the sand opposite Garnet and try to copy her meditation techniques. Closing their eyes, they listen to Garnet's voice and try not to think about sad things, and the part of Stevonnie that is Connie hates that being fused means Steven can feel her emotions too.

"Here comes a thought," Garnet says.

When Stevonnie opens their eyes, they are in a different place. This place is blue and calm, and Garnet is still sat opposite them. And Garnet begins to sing, singing in a beautiful voice that Stevonnie recognises from a memory of Steven's.

"Take a moment to think of just, flexibility love and trust," Garnet sings.

And as she sings, Stevonnie looks around and sees Ruby and Sapphire, both of them dealing with the thought-butterflies in different ways.

"...Something you did, that failed to be charming..."

Stevonnie thinks about the boy, and the part of them that is Connie feels so ashamed.

But Garnet's voice is so beautiful. They try to listen to the lyrics, realising that they paint a picture of her anxieties when everything gets too much.

"...And, oh, you're losing sight, you're losing touch. All these little things seem to matter so much..."

Ruby and Sapphire are struggling, Ruby chasing after a butterfly as Sapphire crouches low, overwhelmed by a huge swarm of them.

"...But it's not, but it's not, but it's not, but it's not, but it's not. It's okay, it's okay, it's okay, it's okay, it's okay. You've got nothing, got nothing, got nothing, got nothing to fear..."

And now Ruby and Sapphire are okay. They're crying but Ruby is calming down and Sapphire isn't overwhelmed by the swarm and they are together, and things seem to be better now.

And even though they don't even know if they can sing, Stevonnie finds herself singing the next part of the song.

"Here comes a thought, that might alarm me," they sing, their voice soft yet hesitant. *"What someone said, and how it harmed me..."*

And now they can see Connie and Steven walking along, and they both look miserable. Of course Connie looks miserable, but why is Steven sad too?

“...Something I did that failed to be charming...”

And Stevonnie thinks about the boy again, but this time Connie is too, looking at a butterfly that shows the memory of her flinging the boy through the air and hurting him. And Connie is crying.

“Things that you said are suddenly swarming,” they sing, and Connie’s backpack swells and bursts, exploding with butterflies.

And Connie and Steven are crying, so overwhelmed by negative emotions. Stevonnie keeps singing, wondering why they aren’t crying too; to be honest, they actually feel very calm.

Soon, Garnet sings along with them, and now Steven and Connie and Ruby and Sapphire are interacting, and Connie feels like Ruby and Sapphire are her friends despite never having met them.

“And it was just a thought, just a thought, just a thought, just a thought, just as thought,” Stevonnie and Garnet sing, their voices harmonising beautifully. *“It’s okay, it’s okay, it’s okay, it’s okay, it’s okay.”*

Connie, Steven, Ruby and Sapphire lie on the ground on their backs, staring up into the sky. They look at each other and smile, and no one is crying anymore. They just look... at peace.

“We can watch, we can watch, we can watch, we can watch them go by. From here, from here, from here...”

And the next time Stevonnie opens their eyes, they are back on the beach. And they are happy. They smile at Garnet, and she smiles back.

“Thank you for the help,” they say.

Garnet nods. “Not a problem.”

When Connie goes home, she hums the song Garnet and Stevonnie sang. It is amazing how Garnet basically took the method of meditation and calming yourself down when your thoughts overwhelm you and put it to song. She knows she is never going to forget that song.

Even at home, when her parents talk about what happened at school and express their displeasure that Connie hurt another student, Connie doesn’t feel sad. Well, she cries a bit, but she now knows that you have to accept the bad emotions before you can feel the good ones. So she hugs her mom and cries and promises to apologise to the boy tomorrow, and she knows she means it and she is really going to do it, and when her parents tell her they are proud of her for being mature she cries happy tears.

In bed that night, anxiety starts to creep up on Connie. But she closes her eyes and takes deep, slow breathes and clasps her hands the way Garnet and Stevonnie did and sings the song in her head, and her fear fades away.

Connie sleeps soundly.

The next day, she locates the boy at school. Her anxiety starts to rise, guilt clenching in her stomach, but Connie hums the song (Take a moment to think of just, flexibility, love and trust) and manages to stay calm. She flinches when she sees him, walking down the hall with his arm in a sling, and Connie nearly cries. But she breathes deeply and approaches him.

“H-Hello,” she says.

The boy steps backwards, his eyes wide. “H-Hi. Um... you’re not gonna hurt me again, are you?”

Her eyes fill with tears, and Connie wipes them away. “No... no, I’m not. I just wanted to say sorry. I’m so sorry for hurting your arm. I don’t want to give you an excuse, but I’d like to try and explain the reason why I acted that way.” The boy just stands there, listening. So Connie carries on. “I do a lot of fight training, with swords and things like that. And that means my reflexes are always heightened. So when we bumped into each other, my fight reflex kicked in and... I hurt you. And I really am so very, very sorry for hurting you.”

The boy smiles. Why is he smiling? Did she do something funny?

“It’s okay, you know,” he says. “You don’t need to keep apologising. I understand. And, you know, I wouldn’t mind doing some of that training with you. So... I accept your apology.”

“Really?” Connie says, the knot of guilt and fear finally starting to unravel.

He nods, his smile getting brighter. “Really.”

Connie lets out a nervous giggle, smiling broadly. “Thank you.”

“You know, we’ve been though all this and I don’t even know your name. I’m Jeff.”

Connie stares at him, still amazed that he accepts her apology, that he doesn’t hate her for what she did. “I-I’m Connie.”

And Jeff holds out his hand and they shake hands, and Connie realises that she might be making her second ever friend.

The next time Connie trains with Steven, she is feeling so much better. She tells him about Jeff, and she’s so glad her stomach isn’t clenched all the time. She finally feels better, and the song helped so much.

But, this time, it is Steven's turn to break. They fuse into Stevonnie and the part of them that is Connie can feel his fear, his confusion, and Stevonnie is about to break. Stevonnie stabs a holo-Pearl through the abdomen, but then they see a Gem that Steven's memories call Bismuth, and he is so upset and Connie doesn't understand why and Stevonnie is about to unfuse...

But Garnet is here, telling them to stay calm. They breathe, Steven calms down, and the training continues. Soon, however, the same thing happens again. But it is even worse this time. there is a Gem called Jasper with something horrible happening to her arm, a Ruby with her gem in her eye socket, and... and Steven's mother, glaring at them as though they have done something horrible.

And Steven is freaking out and Connie can feel his terror, knowing who these Gems are but also not knowing them at all, and Stevonnie is so dazed and confused and they step backwards and—

They fall.

They tumble down... down... down, spinning as they free fall through the air. And finally the fear is so strong they break apart, and Connie looks at Steven. He hunches in on himself as they fall, covering his face with his hands. He sobs, tells Connie how he tried to help those Gems but it wasn't enough, how he hates feeling so sad.

And Connie is so scared, knowing they need to fuse to use Stevonnie's floating powers so they don't fall to their deaths, but Steven is far too distressed for them to have a chance at fusing. He just looks so broken, sobbing and whimpering about how his negative emotions are so horrible and he is sick of feeling like this.

And she knows what he means, knows how horrible it feels to feel sad and scared and regretful, but she also knows you can't push bad thoughts away. So Connie holds Steven and tries to reason with him, telling him all she has learned these past few days about facing your emotions, because she knows how you have to feel sad and process it all before you can move on and feel happy again.

And it must work, because Connie and Steven are clinging together and they spin as they spiral down to the ground, but then they fuse and Stevonnie forms. And they clumsily use their floating powers to lower themselves to the ground.

When their bare feet touch the grass, the realisation that they are safe makes them sigh with relief. Stevonnie lies down on the soft grass, staring up at the sky, and they finally let themselves smile.

She is on the beach. The sun shines, the ocean sparkling and shining blue as the clear sky. It is warm, a fresh spring breeze rustling her long hair. Connie sits down, digging her feet into the soft sand, and watches Steven and Jeff running through basic sword fighting techniques with wooden swords. And Jeff isn't wearing his sling anymore and everyone looks so happy, and she hums that wonderful song Garnet taught her...

Connie is at peace.

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