

ZANDRA by Janet Hatch

EXCERPT

When the finish line was drawing near, I could see the swell of supporters ready to high-five the finishers. I was excited to be amongst the people being cheered and felt personal satisfaction with my run. I knew that Zandra must have already passed through, as I didn't see her or pass her on my way. I was excited to hear about her experience and compare stories. She would have no doubt seen the supporters and taken notice of the same panoramic views as I had along the way.

Once I reached the end, reality stabbed me like a knife. I didn't see Zandra anywhere. I had expected she would remain alongside the finish line to welcome me across. I could feel panic getting the better of me, twisting in my chest and pounding against my ribs. I searched frantically across the crowd for a Diabetes Canada volunteer, looking for the same race tank that I had on. I commanded myself to come across calm, yet I'm sure that my fear betrayed me. I managed to locate one of our volunteers and they appeased me, telling me that Zandra had finished a while ago and shouldn't be far. I knew from experience that after an activity, when the adrenalin wore off, her blood sugars could plummet and she wouldn't even notice. I was calculating timelines and trying to anticipate her blood sugars. I knew she didn't have juice stands anymore or money on her to purchase any if she needed it. I had to find her immediately. I started walking around the crowds, growing more frantic by the step.

The race ended near the parliament buildings and I desperately began to scour all of the lawns in the surrounding area. After about fifteen long, uneasy minutes, I found her. She said she wasn't sure where to find me and had decided to hang out past the crowds. She didn't appear bothered by my anxiety, which struck an immediate nerve. I was angered that she hadn't waited or offered an apology, as she could see I was visibly distraught. I had to see past my emotions quickly and insist she test her blood. I was still concerned that she was low and needed the sugar I was holding. After testing, we found that Zandra's levels were remarkably good, reminding me that I could never know when my concern would be validated—not that I ever wanted it to be.