

I've never been happier!

Glamour associate editor and leukemia patient Erin Zammett is feeling great—and this month, she's got exciting news that will change everything.

In November 2001, Erin Zammett, now 26, was diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML), a cancer that until recently proved fatal for most patients. For more than two years she has shared with *Glamour* readers her daily experiences of living with cancer—including, in April 2003, the shocking news of her sister Melissa's diagnosis with Hodgkin's lymphoma. Now both sisters are in remission (Melissa underwent chemotherapy and radiation treatments; Erin continues to take the lifesaving drug Gleevec every day), and all the Zammetts are focused on a happy, healthy future.

APRIL 28, 2004

Good news...

Nick and I got engaged! It's totally crazy and totally wonderful and I'm so excited. It's hard to say I was completely surprised—we've talked about it a lot and even went ring shopping last week (I showed him the exact one I wanted—he asked me to!), but I truly had no idea he was going to do it this soon.

I got home from work late last night and neither of us felt like cooking, so we went for a quick bite at a little Italian place in my neighborhood. It was a bit fancy for a Tuesday night, but Nick was sick of burritos and sushi, so I let him pick the restaurant (a rarity in our relationship). We had a great dinner, and just as our tiramisu arrived, he got all cute and self-conscious and asked, "Do you really want to marry me?" Normally, I'd just say, "Yeah, don't you want to marry me?" but instead I launched into a million reasons why we should be together forever. I told him that he's the best friend I've ever had and that even though we've been dating for almost five years, I still get excited when an e-mail from him pops up in my inbox at work. I guess that clinched it, because he stopped me and said, "I can't believe I'm going to do this right here." My body went numb. He told me he had something for me and pulled a little box out of his pocket. The rest is a bit fuzzy, but apparently he asked me to marry him and I said yes. We were both shaking and giggling and trying desperately not to make a huge, sappy scene. Sadly we'd lost our appetite for the delicious tiramisu, so we spent the rest of the night walking around the city hugging and kissing

“Nick and I both feel really lucky, cancer or no cancer.”



Me and Nick, all smiles at a T.J. Martell Foundation cancer fund-raiser in May

and marveling at our new state. "We're engaged!" we kept saying. "We're freakin' engaged!" After about an hour of enjoying our little secret, we called my family. They knew about Nick's plan—he had asked my parents for their blessing over the weekend—and they'd been waiting by the phone. These days, good news is a very hot commodity in my family. Everyone was thrilled.

My mom told me something a few weeks ago that made me so sad. Apparently, right after I was diagnosed, she sat down with Nick and told him that it was going to be a tough road and that if he didn't think he could handle it and wanted to walk away, everyone would understand. Nick's never mentioned it to me, but it still irks me. The fact that she would even think he would leave was insulting—to me and to him. Even writing it now seems crazy. If Nick were ever

going to break up with me, it would be because I turn into a lunatic every time I have to make the smallest decision or because I am always late, not because I have cancer. I suppose there are guys out there who would have bailed, and I should feel grateful and lucky that Nick hung around. And I do. But the truth is, I know he feels just as lucky to have me, cancer or no cancer.

MAY 10, 2004

...and bad news

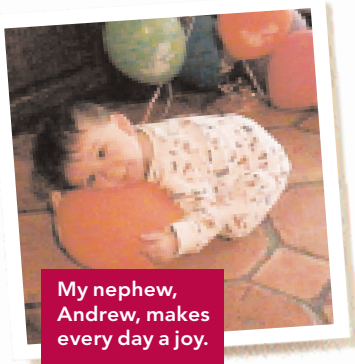
A few weeks ago, Melissa felt a lump in her neck (a lump was the first symptom she had when she was originally diagnosed with Hodgkin's). She'd been coughing a lot too, so she was completely convinced that her cancer was back. She's always been a major hypochondriac—every headache was a brain tumor, every stomachache an ulcer—but now that she really has something to worry about, we can't just roll our eyes and ignore her. Everyone was concerned, but she refused to see the doctor. She

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and her husband, Ysrael, just bought a house, and she said she couldn't deal with having cancer again. If it was back, she didn't want to know about it. Obviously, she was being melodramatic (also classic

Melissa behavior) and finally went in for a chest X-ray last week. The doctor read it immediately and told her everything looked fine. But a few days later, he called again to say that the radiologist took a closer look and saw a spot near Melissa's heart. She needed to go back right away for a CAT scan. By the time she got to the hospital for the test, we were sure she had relapsed—how can you not think the worst when the worst has already happened twice?

Melissa called me in tears yesterday wondering how she'd be able to pay her mortgage if she had to go through chemo again and couldn't work. I told her, "You know what? If you have cancer again, you'll treat it again and beat it again."



Fortunately, she called me back a few hours later with good news: "It's just scar tissue!" she blurted out before I could even say hello. No more cancer for Melissa, at least for now.

MAY 20, 2004

Andrew's first birthday

Melissa's baby turned one today, and he couldn't possibly be any cuter. Sometimes I

think about what the past year would have been like without him in our lives, and I really can't imagine it. The fact that we can smile and laugh and feel so much love on a daily basis, regardless of the cancer stuff, is truly amazing. You really can't be around Andrew and *not* feel incredibly lucky. Nick and I have been baby-sitting him a lot. We take him for walks and give him baths and sing songs (his favorite is about banana splits). When I see how much Nick loves him and how good he is with him, it makes me a little sad. I know he really wants to be a dad—and I really want to be a mom—but we just don't know if that's going to happen for us. Dr. Mauro, my oncologist in Oregon, is looking into some options (Can

I get pregnant on Gleevec? Can I go off Gleevec for nine months?), which we'll discuss when we go out there for my next bone marrow biopsy. Now that Nick and I are engaged, the whole fertility thing is becoming more of a reality, and we're anxious to see where we stand. The trip won't be all cancer business, though—I'll also be looking at wedding dresses! As luck would have it, Dr. Mauro's wife, Anne, is a bridal gown designer—she worked for a couture bridal designer in New York City for years and opened her own shop in Portland about a year ago—and I'm going to meet with her about possibly making my dress. Nothing like a little one-stop shopping.

JUNE 3, 2004

Wedding plans

After much deliberation, we've set a date. Nick and I will be getting married in July 2005 at my church in Huntington, New York, where I grew up and where my parents still live. The reception will be at a beautiful old mansion on a golf course (my father has already asked if we can have a putting contest after we cut the cake). It's funny, I've never been one of those girls who dreamt about my wedding day—I always fantasized about *being* married,

about throwing dinner parties and reading in bed together and taking kids on vacations, but never about which color linens would be on the tables at the cocktail hour. Suddenly, though, I'm totally into it. Both Nick and I are so excited about the whole thing. The night we got engaged, while I was gazing at my hand, I told him that I felt bad because I got this awesome ring and he gets nothing. "Don't feel bad for me," he said. "I get you."

JUNE 7, 2004

Family victories

I'm in San Diego right now for the Suzuki Rock 'n' Roll Marathon. My younger sister, Meghan, the only one of us sisters who's not a cancer patient, is walking the 26.2 miles with the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society's Team in Training. She and her friend Tracy Weickel, who's running the race, teamed up and raised \$15,000 in honor of Melissa and me. I'm really proud of her—this time last year the only exercise she got was changing her outfit six times before heading to the bars. But since she found out she's my perfect bone marrow match, she's lost 30 pounds and has really grown up. Meghan's going to be my maid of honor; she was with Nick and me



Meghan, right, and her friend Tracy finished a marathon in my honor.

on our first date (a 311 concert at The University of Tennessee where we all went to school), so it's extra special for her. And for me too: Meghan could possibly save my life someday if I need a transplant. For now, though, she just has to plan a rockin' bachelorette party!

For me and Nick, being engaged is like our own little happy ending, a "we showed you" to the cancer gods. Sure, I have this

disease, but I can still be in love and get married and live happily ever after. So there! Of course no one knows how long that happily ever after will last, but I feel confident that as long as Nick and I stick together, we can handle anything that life may—or may not—bring our way. ☺

Read past installments of Erin's diary at glamour.com. Click on "Health & Body."