

Will I ever be cured?

Glamour associate editor Erin Zammett and her sister Melissa faced cancer together. Now they're both in remission—but the future, especially for Erin, is as uncertain as ever.

In November 2001, Zammett, now 26, was diagnosed with chronic myelogenous leukemia (CML), a cancer that until recently proved fatal for most patients. For two years she has shared with *Glamour* readers her daily experiences of living with cancer—including, one year ago, the shocking news of her sister Melissa's diagnosis with Hodgkin's lymphoma. Now that both sisters have responded well to treatment (Melissa has completed chemotherapy and radiation; Erin continues to take the lifesaving drug Gleevec), they're embracing life—and the future.

NOVEMBER 15, 2003
Celebrating remission

If cancer were a competition—and really, everything in my family is—Melissa would win. Within six months of her diagnosis, she had completed chemo and radiation and was mixing passion-fruit daiquiris to toast her remission. Things are going well for me, too. Today is the two-year anniversary of my diagnosis, and I've never felt better. Dr. Mauro, my oncologist in Portland, Oregon, called to tell me that even when the lab cranked up the sensitivity of the tests done on my latest bone marrow biopsy, they could not find my leukemia anywhere. Of course I'm not sure what the hell all of this means. I'm in remission, but it's different than Melissa's because I'm still being treated. The only known *cure* for CML is a bone marrow transplant, a grueling procedure that could kill me.

Tonight we had an end-of-treatment party for Melissa. I'm so happy for her. It wasn't easy, and she made it through with a smile on her face. If only one of us can be cured, I'm glad it's her.

When I look at her with her baby, Andrew, I can't even fathom the thought that she might not be there to watch him grow up.

DECEMBER 30, 2003
Goodbye to a tough year

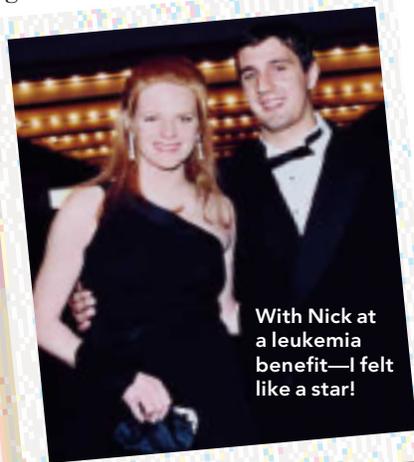
We survived the holidays—and then some. It's been a crazy month for my family. My younger sister, Meghan, graduated from the University of Tennessee (my alma mater) a few weeks ago, so we all went to Knoxville to celebrate. It was a typical Zammett family weekend—plenty of food and wine and an



I'm in love with my nephew, Andrew.

extra helping of drama. Some jerk Meghan was dating at the time told her that he would be concerned about getting into a serious relationship with her because of the family's "history" with cancer. When she told me, I wanted to kick him in the balls. I just never thought of my disease in that way—I mean, look at us, we're fine! Any guy would be lucky to be a part of our family. But in a way I can't blame him for being wary. I don't know if I'd want to date someone who had two sisters with cancer.

Meghan is clearly upset, and it makes me feel so bad for her. I can handle whatever this disease throws *my* way, but when it affects my family—especially Meghan, who's just starting her adult life—the whole thing seems unfair. It also makes me so grateful that I have my boyfriend, Nick. Things have been really good between us lately. He spent Christmas with my family for the first time. My mom goes totally overboard with the holiday—matching Santa pajamas and sentimental ornaments for everyone—and I'm so glad Nick got to be a part of that. We're starting to let ourselves talk about our future, about getting married and starting a life together. It's exciting and scary at the same time. So many things in my life haven't turned out like I expected; it seems like tempting fate to put our plans in print. Still, I can't wait!



With Nick at a leukemia benefit—I felt like a star!

Melissa (center), Meghan and me in Miami

Now my mom, Melissa, Meghan, baby Andrew and I are in Miami for a quick girls' (and little boy) trip to celebrate the end of a roller-coaster year. It was our Christmas/remission present to one another, and it's been totally worth it. We've been getting to the beach at 10 A.M. and staying until 6 P.M., drinking mojitos and completely unwinding. My mom is in heaven—she's got her three girls, her grandbaby and a new favorite cocktail. Andrew (who's seven months old now) has been an angel, napping under the umbrella, eating his mashed carrots at sunset, checking out the topless women. He's so cute that I can barely stand to be away from him. But when I look at him, I get a little sad, too. It makes me wonder if Nick and I will ever be able to have babies of our own.

JANUARY 12, 2004
Another cancer scare

Everyone kept me in the dark about this at first, but right before Meghan left Tennessee she found a small lump in her neck. She had to have scans and see specialists to rule out cancer. From beginning to end it took a month to get the results. I spent half the time thinking, there's no freakin' way that she could have cancer—what are the odds? And the other half thinking, well, of course she has it—isn't that just our luck now? As it turns out, she's fine. The lump was just a lump. But the whole ordeal was a little too familiar for all of us.

JANUARY 30, 2004
Thank God for my friends

It's my birthday! Ten years ago, for my sweet 16, my parents took my five best friends and me into New York City for the weekend—we went ice skating at Rockefeller Center, ate dinner at a fancy French restaurant and saw a Broadway play (it was *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*). We had our own suite at the Marriott Marquis in Times Square and ran around the hotel like silly teenagers. After going our separate ways for college, we're all back in the city now and closer than ever. So this year we decided to go back to the Marriott Marquis for drinks and old time's sake. We went up to The View, the revolving bar on the top floor, and reminisced over blue cheese martinis (delicious, seriously!) and incredible views of Manhattan.

When the six of us get together, it's like we're in seventh grade again, still cracking up at Erica's impersonations, still oversharing about boys and bodily functions, still talking about the crazy things we did when we were kids (we once camped out in my backyard for three days straight). Nothing has changed, but at the same time, everything has changed. We've all been through so much—first loves, parents' divorces, our Grateful Dead phase—but no matter what happens, we always wind up together. When Lucy's dad, who was just about the coolest guy around, died in the World Trade Center on September 11, we were all devastated, but we headed to Long Island to be there for Lucy and for one another. And when I was diagnosed, all my girls were there for me. I remember Erica saying that if any of us had to get cancer, it *should* be me because I'd be the one to beat it. Everyone believed her, and so did I.

My friends are so important in my life, especially my life with cancer. Every time we get together I think to myself

how lucky I am to have them. I've always loved my birthday, but now it means even more to me than cake and presents. It's a reminder that I'm still living.

FEBRUARY 7, 2004
The next challenge

My mom and I are back in Portland for another bone marrow biopsy. Because a transplant is still a viable option for me, Dr. Mauro wants to continue to test my blood—if there is even the slightest change in my counts, he wants to know about it. It's been six months since I've been to Oregon, and I hadn't spoken to Dr. Mauro in person since I achieved remission, so I had a lot of questions for him. After touching on my blood-shot eyes and my muscle cramps, I got to the big one—my fertility. "So what's the deal with getting pregnant?" I asked coyly, not wanting to rock the remission boat too much. I think he was a little surprised: His top concern is my health, and here I am possibly wanting to jeopardize it already. When it comes to CML patients and pregnancy, he said, he recommends "avoidance." But he knew that wasn't going to cut it for me and promised to do some research to see what other women on Gleevec were doing. It's not that I have baby fever, but now that Nick and I are planning our future, I want to know what that future may or may not hold—and I've always wanted a family. I feel a little greedy, like maybe I should just be happy to be alive and well, but even with cancer in my life, even with all the uncertainties, I can't help wanting more. ©

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To read past installments of Erin's diary, go to glamour.com.

