

Only the Beginning: Cancer Couldn't Stop This ORU Couple

Editor's note: This article came in first place of the three winners selected in the competition for Christian Life Missions' Walker Journalism Award. You can read more about the competition [here](#).

"It was 2011, and I was looking for a homecoming date," he remembers.

This is where the love story of Jordan Lewis and Cady Kendall begins.

The two ORU juniors had heard great things about one another through mutual friends but never crossed paths, so Jordan took matters into his own hands.

Against his shy tendencies, he got Kendall's number and called her, asking her to meet him outside of the Towers dorms to ask her a question.

"I saw her come out of Towers, and I remember thinking, 'Wow, I'm way over my head. This girl is way too pretty for me,' and I got so nervous at that point."

After homecoming in January, the pair fostered their friendship over coffee shop adventures before summer came. Over break, Jordan traveled to Tanzania with ORU Missions on the Man Team. Cady moved to New York for an internship.

On the trip, Jordan was battling with what he thought to be side effects of a bad sinus infection.

"I was having daily nose bleeds and pretty bad headaches. My eyes even started to bleed at one point," Jordan said. "I was

on major antibiotics, and they just weren't working."

He returned to Tulsa to begin summer classes. Unable to identify the cause of symptoms, Jordan's throat doctor ordered an MRI on his head.

The results showed an orange-sized tumor that started in Jordan's sinus cavity and worked its way up to push against his brain. A biopsy on the tumor showed it to be stage 4 sinus cancer.

Forced to stop summer classes, Jordan flew home to North Carolina to begin immediate treatment, undergoing a major surgery to remove the tumor and chemo and radiation therapy to kill the remaining cancer.

He took online classes the fall semester of his senior year, and Cady returned to ORU. Their friendship continued to grow despite the distance.

They communicated over Skype or phone, and Cady sent Jordan care packages and encouraging text messages with scripture.

"I would go in twice a day for radiation therapy—one at 6 a.m. and then one later in the afternoon," Jordan said. "Every morning she would wake up at 5 a.m. her time and pray for me while I was going through these treatments."

That December, the doctors told Jordan he was cancer free. He returned to ORU for the spring semester of his senior year.

"At this point, he'd conquered cancer, we knew that we liked each other, and now I knew he was coming back for me," Cady said.

They attended homecoming together again, where Jordan asked Cady to be his girlfriend. They won homecoming king and queen.

They dated over a year, when in April, they began discussing an October wedding. In May 2013 Cady went home with Jordan for

the first time for a routine check-up.

After being in remission for 18 months, Jordan received news from the doctor that his cancer had come back in his head and metastasized to his lungs as two fairly large tumors.

"I was thinking of my journey last time and going through the process in my mind and I thought, 'There's no way I can do this alone without Cady. I need to be married to Cady through all this.' "

Knowing the treatment had to start as soon as possible, it would be a short engagement.

"I introduced myself and asked her if she would go to homecoming with me. She said yes to my surprise, and that's how we met," Lewis recalled in a phone interview Tuesday.

"Then I thought, I can't ask Cady, a girl who has probably been thinking about her wedding day her whole life, to just throw together a wedding and sacrifice these dreams she's had since she was a little girl to marry me. That's not fair to her."

Cady went over to hug Jordan and whispered in his ear, "Let's get married."

"I told him I didn't care if he got me a ring out of a quarter machine. I just wanted to be with him through this," Cady said.

Little did she know, Jordan had snuck out of the house that morning to buy an engagement ring. A week and a half later, he proposed on June 8.

"The timing was great. It was like God lined it up before we even knew what would happen when we were in North Carolina for that routine check-up," Cady said.

With the generous help of their church, community, family and

friends, they were married three weeks later on June 29 at a friend's ranch and honeymooned in Cancun, Mexico. There were 13 bridesmaids and 12 groomsmen.

Johnluke Lewis, Jordan's brother and an ORU freshman, was one of his groomsmen.

"I didn't know what true love between a man and a woman really was until Jordan and Cady's wedding," Johnluke said. "They have taught me so much about love and caring for one another just by the way they interact with each other."

Joy McLeod, a 2012 ORU grad, was Cady's maid-of-honor. When she heard of the wedding, she drove from Texas to Tulsa to help with planning.

"Even though this is a difficult season for Jordan and Cady, they are still the most determined people I know," McLeod said. "Jordan was created to overcome this ugly disease, and Cady was created to be his rock-solid wife."

"To pay for and plan a wedding in three weeks was just crazy, and we never asked for this help, but people were just so gracious," Jordan said. "They just stepped up and provided for us. Every- thing from the honeymoon to the venue was all given to us for free."

After their honeymoon, Jordan and Cady moved into a Tulsa apartment near the Cancer Treatment Center of America (CTCA).

The cancer in Jordan's head and lungs had now spread to his lymph nodes and was growing more aggressively. After undergoing two months of high-dose chemotherapy, scans showed the cancer was not responding to treatment. In fact, it had grown significantly. The tumor in his head was pressing against his right eye, and his vision was deteriorating. The doctor told Jordan that he was going to be blind within a week to 10 days.

“My faith wasn’t moved. I felt really beat up. I was discouraged and afraid, but Cady and I just turned to God. We decided that cancer was not going to take my sight and that I was going to see the faces of my grandchildren.”

In an attempt to find a second opinion, they met with 10 doctors in two days at the CTCA at the beginning of October. One of the most renowned neurosurgeons in Tulsa told Jordan that there was nothing they could do and that the cancer was going to take his life in a short period of time.

The doctor left the room and Cady pulled out her Bible and said, “While we appreciate the doctor’s report. That’s not the final report. That’s not the report of the Lord.”

Jordan and Cady attended Bethel Healing Ministries in Redding, Calif., where a guest speaker called Jordan out of the crowd by name and said that he would be healed.

“I didn’t know him and he didn’t know I was there, but he received this word from God and spoke it out and really just prophesized over me that I would eventually be healed.”

Two weeks later, after finding a doctor that would take on his case, Jordan went into his first of two surgeries on Oct. 24 to remove the tumor from his head. He underwent the second part of his surgery on Oct. 25, when the surgeon made a six-inch incision on the right side of his head.

The doctor had originally hoped to remove 70 percent of the tumor, but was able to remove 80 percent. During the major surgery, the doctor gave Jordan a prosthetic eye comb to support his eye and used one of Jordan’s jaw muscles to help support his brain from falling. It will take six weeks for his brain and skull to recover from the surgery before beginning further treatment.

He did not lose his vision.

Jordan spent seven days in ICU and nine total days in the hospital with Cady by his side.

“He’s confident that the Lord is going to heal him. It’s never been a question to him that this would take his life,” Cady said.

Both see this as only the beginning of their unfolding story of love and faith.

“There’s not bitterness in his heart about this situation,” Cady said. “He sees it simply that God is going to use this for His glory. The biggest thing I’ve learned from Jordan is his steadfast faith.”