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Sleeping beauty syndrome is no fairytale for schoolgirl



No fairytale ... sleeping beauty syndrome makes Lois Wood attack family in trance
Caters News

By **KATY DOCHERTY** Published: 27th February 2013



SLEEPING beauty syndrome sounds like a fairy-tale but it's turned one schoolgirl's life into a nightmare.

Lois Wood, 14, says she has episodes that can last for up to 44 days at a time but she can jump out of bed to subject her family to attacks in a trance-like state.

When suffering an episode the once-promising basketball and A* student will smash her head against walls, gorge on junk food and attack her younger brother.

Despite appearing awake Lois is left with no memory of her bizarre behaviour and needs full-time care so she doesn't hurt herself or her family.

Her GP believes the teen, from Stevenage, Herts, suffers from Kleine-Levin Syndrome — a rare neurological disorder which is also known as Sleeping Beauty Syndrome.

Lois said: "I've woken up before and my hands have been covered in blood and my knuckles have been all bruised.

"When I looked in the mirror I had this big bruise on my forehead. My mum said I'd been punching a wall over and over again and smashing my head against a cupboard.

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Basketball ... Lois was once a promising player on the court
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"The weirdest thing I've ever done in episode is get my ears pierced and dye my hair red. When I woke up and mum told me that, I thought she was joking.

"I do things in my sleep that I would never do if I was awake. I get so aggressive and will hurt my little brother.

"I woke up once and he had a bruise the size of an orange. I hate myself for it.

The disorder struck at 14 when Lois came home from school one day and passed out face-down on the sofa.

Her family tried everything to wake her but she remained in a trance.

Lois said: "I remember walking into the living room and I was watching TV. The next thing I knew I was awake and the programme I was watching had finished hours ago. It felt like I'd only been asleep for half an hour."

The rare condition means clever Lois has missed most of her vital GCSE lessons at school and has gone from expecting 12 GCSEs to just four.

"I sat my history GCSE when I was in episode, but I managed to get a C! I remember walking into the room and sitting at my desk, but that's it!

"I was supposed to have a basketball scholarship to a college that would have put me in an Ivy League school.

"It's so hard to see my friends from basketball who are now going to be in the Olympics. I see them

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and I just wish I could still do that. But I can't."



Hitting snooze ... Lois can have episodes for up to 44 days
Caters News

Her mum, Setta, said: "We call her Little Lois when she's in episode, she is unpleasant and it's like she has severe behavioural problems.

"She goes from being like a zombie and ignoring me or huffing and puffing, to like a two-year-old, bouncing off the walls.

"Lois is now afraid to go to sleep in case she doesn't wake up again. It's been soul destroying to watch because she once had everything going for her."

Lois and her mother discovered KLS after internet research but in order to be officially diagnosed with the syndrome, doctors must exclude all other possibilities.

Lois said: "Most doctors haven't even heard of KLS. To an outsider, it could look like I'm skiving or insane.

"They thought I could be narcoleptic, schizophrenic or be suffering from chronic fatigue. But I had seen a documentary about KLS and both me and my mum knew that's what it was."

KLS usually strikes in adolescence and the main symptoms are long and disturbed sleep, altered behaviour and excessive appetite.

The condition can often be triggered by an infection or head injury and affects just 65 people in the UK.

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