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ENGL 376

Professor Mary Carroll-Hackett

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Rekindling Faith

 As Maylee walks up to the little brick shop on the corner of Spurn Street to get ready to open for the day, a drift of wind pushes her aside causing her to trip over the invisible air. As she regains her balance, she rustles though her large black leather bag in search for the shop’s keys. As she grabs ahold of something that resembles a key, she pulls is out and lets out a sign of relief.

 “Thank goodness,” she exhaled as she unlocks the door quicker than she could turn the doorknob. Then simultaneously, she opens the door, flips the closed sign to open, and closes the door behind her. Her day has officially begun.

 Maylee is backed up on her orders, but recently this seems to be a rather normal thing ever since Vivian, her work partner and childhood best friend fell into a depressive state. Not more than two months ago everything was normal.

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 “Viv, wanna go get ice cream at Dock’s when we get off?” Maylee asked while elegantly wrapping a white bow around the neck of a translucent sky-blue vase that’s filled with yellow, blue, and white flowers of all kinds.

 “Without a doubt,” Viv responded without missing a beat.

 “Bet,” a subtle yet trying to be stern response given by Maylee as she looked over to Viv and they both proceeded to laugh in excitement.

Light instrumental music continues to play in the background that is loud enough to fill the shop, yet conversations can still be made. The light reflected though the glass windows surrounding side wall and front entrance. The bell continues to ring with each wave of wind that blows though the sun yellow painted double doors. Birds sitting on the tree that overshadows the double doors continue to chirp. People continue to laugh and conversate as they pass by the shop with an occasional wave or “hello” shouted into the doors.

 “Do you remember when our parents used to take us every Sunday after church,” Viv questioned.

 “Duh. That was my favorite part. That’s the only reason I got up for church, but don’t tell my mom that. I’d get a whole lecture,” Maylee rolled her eyes followed by a brief pause.

 “You know the purpose of church wasn’t to get ice cream,” Viv genuinely asked with a chuckle.

 “Come on Viv. Why are you acting like you’re my mother now?” Maylee didn’t want to get into it.

 “I just…I don’t know. It’s just…important to me and we’ve always been one in the same. It’s just weird,” Viv shrugs her shoulders.

 “We are one in the same. Forever and always. Let’s finish up so we can go get some coco coconut, your old favorite,” Maylee said.

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 To Maylee’s advantage, the start of the day was slow. She has three previous orders that were sent in a week ago that needed to be done by noon. One order is for a mother whose daughter is having her first ever dance recital this afternoon. The request was for a small bouquet full of mixed pink flowers and a pink bow wrapped around the stems. Another is for a man whose wife’s birthday is today and he wanted to surprise her. His request was for two dozen red roses wrapped in “elegant paper.” The third order is an order that was called in made by an anonymous caller that seemed to be a lady around the age of Maylee. Now, this request made Maylee’s head turn. The request was for a bouquet mix of yellow roses and sunflowers described as “the light of the sun.” Unsure of how to tackle this order, she went ahead and decided to save this order for last.

 “Alexa, play Stop This Train by John Meyer,” Maylee shouted from across the store as she was placing three pink tulips into a vase filled with daisies and carnations. It is a gloomy day out. The sun is hiding and there was much commotion outside. Maylee’s singing along lyric after lyric as if she has written the song herself. As she lost her thoughts in the lyrics, the bell connected to the door began chiming. Her head shot up with eyes wide open.

 “I’ll be right with you,” Maylee shouted as she wiped her forehead with her forearm. She turns down Alexa two notches and walks toward the women smiling at the counter. “Hi, how can I help you?” Maylee asked smiling.

 “Hi there. I’m here to pick up an order for Susan. It is for my daughter, Levi’s first dance recital.” The women smiled

 “I just finished it up,” Maylee carries it over. “How does this look?”

 “Absolutely beautiful. She will love it,” Susan exclaimed. “Thank you so much. You always do such an amazing job.”

 This remark brought a soft, yet bright smile to Maylee’s face, a feeling that she hadn’t truly felt in quite some time.

 As the women was starting to head towards the door as she stopped in her steps and twisted her body while slowing moving her feet to become realigned.

“You know, oddly enough I don’t seem to know your name. Usually you’re in the back busy making these beautiful bouquets and Vivian is up here.

 “Oh…” Maylee looked down, but then followed by lifting her head back up. “I’m Maylee. I’m usually always behind the scenes as you can probably tell. Vivian is the who works with all of our customers,” Maylee tries to explain without tearing up and making a fool out of herself.

 “It’s so nice to meet you, Maylee. The name of your shop finally makes sense. Vivlee’s Florals. I love the ring to it.” The women once again smiled.

 “Thank you so much. It’s always been a dream of Vivian’s and my childhood to open up a shop of some sort together.” Maylee said.

 “Well Maylee, it sure is a success.” The women responded followed by a brief pause. “Do you by any chance know when Vivian is going to be back? I haven’t seen her car outside of the shop lately as I pass by,” Susan asked. “I just wanted to drop off this notebook that I got for her because she hasn’t been at church recently either which is quite strange.” The notebook had a bible verse on the cover from Matthew 17:20. It read ‘faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains.’

 “Aw, that’s sweet of you. Knowing her, she will absolutely love that. She had to take a break for a little while. She’ll be back soon…I hope. I miss her here in the shop… If you wanted to, you could leave it here and it’ll just be here waiting for her as a surprise for when she comes back. Just an option.” Maylee is having difficulty making eye contact as she keeps blinking and sniffling.

 “Thank you very much. It really wouldn’t be a burden? I just want to make sure she gets it so it’s not sitting in my car waiting for someone to spill something on it.” The women held onto it with one hand.

 “Not at all. I’ll leave it right over there.” Maylee pointed to the back counter that customers cannot reach.

 “Thank you, really,” the women said as she grabs her vase and turns her body to the double doors that resembles a rather mustard color yellow instead of sunshine yellow. “I’ll be praying for both you and her. Take care.” Susan once again turned around to say and then proceeded to walk out of the doors leaving the bells to chime.

 John Meyer continues to play in the background absorbing the bitter silence. Maylee stood still as she was staring at the bible verse written on the notebook. ‘Faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains. Matthew 17:20.’

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 Maylee looks over to Viv as Michael, our church worship leader is belting Reckless Love at the top of his lungs. Viv eyes are closed, her whole body is swaying to the beat of the song, and her hands raised up to the celling, yet Maylee is standing there still as can be with her eyes open watching the systematic movements of all the bodies around her. All Maylee can think to herself is why, what, how? Followed by questions is a perpetual stare.

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 What seemed to be a sudden change in song snaps Maylee out of standing comatose-like state. She shook her head as she snaps out of it thinking to herself praying…? Praying for what? Praying isn’t going to get Viv back here right now when I need her the most. This is BS.

 Maylee turns around to continue about her work before her next customer comes in to pick up her soon to be unfinished product.

 The music continued to play in the background as the door once again opens causing the bells to chime. This time it is an older man who seems to be in is 70s. His hair resembling chalky dust particles was all gelled back. He was walking with a cane supporting his left side and has wrinkles that seemed to be visible from a mile away. He was a frail old man, yet he was on a mission.

 “Good morning, sir. What can I help you with?” Maylee walked over.

 “Hello there. I am picking up an order for my honey.” He smiled lightly.

 “Ah yes, is it this one?” She held up a bouquet of two dozen red roses.

 “Indeed, it is. What a wonderful job. I know Mary Beth is going to love these. Thank you.” The frail old man started to tear up causing Maylee to stop in her own steps.

 “You ordered it. I just put it together. You have a great taste. If I may ask, who is this for?” Maylee was afraid to ask but didn’t want to leave the man crying.

 “My wife. There was a minute pause. “She died nine months ago. Every year for her birthday I ger her two dozen roses and a handwritten note...” He holds up the note in one hand while holding the bouquet in the other, “…but this is the first year she is not here with me physically.”

 “Physically?” Maylee blurted.

 “She is still here with me.” Another silent moment filled the air. “We would always celebrate by going to the Bonita gardens, but since she isn’t here anymore, I have to bring what I can to her. I’m bringing this beautiful bouquet you made to the Bonita garden with me and carrying it around as if she were with me. This is part of my life and it is what I physically have left of her. I prayed over her this morning, but I didn’t tell her the plan because I wanted her to b—” he was unable to finish due to Maylee’s interruption.

 “You prayed? I…I’m sorry. I just don’t understand. Someone earlier came in here and they said they would pray, but…I…I just…I’m lost.” Maylee looked down unable to rip her eyes from her feet as her hands held on to the counter. The old man leaned against the counter and placed his wrinkly hands on top of Maylee’s. Her head immediately swung up and saw his eyes closed as he starts to speak life into her.

 “Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for this day you have given us. Thank you for all the blessings you have anointed us. Thank you for gifting me with the love of my life that you are now graciously holding in your arms. I know she is home and well taken care of. I know she is happiest there. I am excited for the day I get to be rejoiced with her, but in the meantime, thank you for giving me…” His head lifted and eyes gazed my name plate on my right shoulder. “Thank you for giving me Maylee. May you bless her and open her heart to your love. May you guide her in the direction of your light. May you remind her of her worth and how valued she is by me and you, Heavenly Father. May you bless Maylee in every step she takes. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.” He opened his eyes and lifted his head once again as Maylee has tears running down her rosy cheeks.

 As he picked up his vase and wrapped it around his right arm, Maylee mumbled, “Thank you.”

 He responded, “Jesus loves you. You are his child.”

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 “You all know there are multiple ways you can love God. There no one specific way.” Pastor James emphasized while preaching while Viv nudged Maylee in the side with her boney elbow.

 “What?” Maylee shot her head over with a glare.

 “That was for you. Did you hear that?” Viv raised her eyebrows.

 “Whatever,” Maylee responded.

 “You can pray, you can write, you can sing, you can give. You can simply give a smile during a difficult time. There is no one way to earn Jesus’ love because Jesus already loves you. You are a child of God.” Pastor James reiterated.

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 In the process of Maylee attempting to regain herself, her eyes catch sight of the notebook left behind Susan. At once she reads ‘Faith the size of a mustard seed can move mountains. Matthew 17:20.’ Maylee hones into moments form the past. Unable to grasp her own emotions, tears started rolling down her cheeks. Maylee thought to herself I’m stuck in a life that I don’t belong in. A life that I have no control over. Viv is always so bright and happy and now I don’t even know what is happening to her. She won’t answer any of my calls, the hospital won’t give me any answers, I must work so I can’t go during visiting hours, I can’t do anything. I am completely helpless, yet all these people come in and tell me about something greater that I’ve always believed as just a story that people makeup to feel better about themselves.

 Maylee’s mind continues running one hundred miles an hour as she broke down from tears to sobs. She fell banging the ground repeating and pleading in a loud crying voice. “Please. I don’t understand. Please someone just help me. If I say I have any amount of faith, will someone just help me?!”

 Maylee’s tears suddenly stopped. She stood up as if she were being pulled up like a puppet on stings. She had no control, yet she had more control than she ever did. Unsure of what was happening to her, she finished up working on her final order. She suddenly knows what was meant by ‘light’.

 The door opened and the bells chimed. Focused on making this bouquet resemble what she knew to be *light*, she didn’t look up to see that light itself had entered the small floral shop.

 “Excuse me,” a voice Maylee faintly recognized echoed throughout the room. “I’m here to pick up flowers.”

 “I’m adding the final touches. I will be right with you,” Maylee responded without looking up.

 “Okay. Thank you,” the voice said gently.

 Maylee picks up the bouquet and carries it on over to the front desk, looking down at her feet to watch each step so that she didn’t drop it after all her hard work. As soon as she set it down, she looks up and falls to her knees. It was Viv and *light*. She finally understood. All thanks to faith the size of a mustard seed.

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Feelings

 I was born 12:04 PM on a sunny Tuesday afternoon in Arlington, VA. All was well in the world. I had nothing to worry about. Happy family, excited older sister named Emmerson that I often times called Em, and a fluffy white dog named Rascal. That all dwindled away when I realized the corruption of the world just outside of my own bedroom door around the age of five. It suddenly was as if I lived my life in a never-ending box of white walls surrounding me. I could scream, but no one would be able to hear me. I was stuck there all by myself with nothing but my own thoughts manifesting inside of me.

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 My dad is an alcoholic who loves my sister more than me. What can I do about that or even how, might one ask? Trust me. My mom is a workaholic. I guess she had to compensate some way for all the alcohol being bought. She is a real trooper. My sister? She is a stuck-in-the-world-oholic. Basically, she is sucked into all the surrounding things like Tic Tok, Twitter, Netflix, so on and so forth. All that brainwash stuff that kills the individual. Its literally like a paper with her and the world, but the paper is ripped in half separating her and the world indefinitely. It is as if she doesn’t exist because she is stuck in this world that is not reality, but the world created it, so would it be considered more of a reality than anything else in the world at this point? Sure.

 I guess my reality is being stuck with no reality. But let me share with you what I like. I like chasing the sunset. I like camping on a cold night only to wake up wrapped in a blanket with cheeks rosy red, hood covering my messy curly hair wrapped in a bun, and the warmth of a hot cup of instant coffee that was made by the portable stove. I like when I’m sitting on the shore and the waves crash underneath by bottom as my bottom sinks into the sand simultaneously. I like hanging in my hammock on a breezy spring day looking up above at the trees swinging in the wind. I like the moments where I can sit and collect my thoughts while evaluating what life is that lies around me every which way I turn. The sad thing about this reality is that, it is invisible… just like me.

 It’s not fun being invisible, but the pro is that I really learned how to take on the world by myself.

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 I am sitting and waiting for someone to pick me up crisscrossed applesauce on the green ragged carpet while Veggie Tales is playing right in front of me. My sister is across the room so in tuned to the singing of the red tomato and green cucumber. I am lucky enough that it wasn’t a sing along, although, I will admit, some of those songs are quite catchy. I gaze over at two of my teacher’s chit chatting about who knows what, but they are so wrapped up into the conversation that I was paralyzed and couldn’t take my eyes away. I snap back into the reality of this two-dimensional world when I recognize the subtle sound of keys clinging in the distance. I jump up and run to the door almost running into a chair that someone didn’t push in after snack. My dad’s arms wide open ready to catch my jump and my sister behind me as she is running the path, I just made clear.

That was the last hug of its kind.

“Buckle up,” dad announced as we got to the car about to head home.

“Buc….” I got interrupted by Emmerson.

“Buckled,” Emmerson yelled stealing the spotlight as always.

“You are the winner today, Emmerson,” dad announced as if he were a game show host.

“Buckled.” I whispered underneath my breath.

Finally, home I thought to myself as Toby Keith was blaring though the speakers of the blue Hyundai Elantra. One thing I knew I could always count on was my love for music. It was unlike anything else. In a matter of roughly four minutes, a whole lifetime can be built, emotions created, and feelings made. I guess I knew that as a five year old because I spent a lot of time in my own thoughts.

“I need help with my homework, Daddy.” Emmerson pleaded.

“Okay, I’ll be right there. Get it all set up. I am going to take out the trash and get the mail. Come on, Rascal.” He waves towards the dog and shuts the door behind them.

“Em, I’m going to go outside and ride my bike. Do you want to come?” I ask Emmerson.

“No. I have homework that Daddy’s going to help me with,” she responds not even paying attention to me.

“Oh. Okay.” I walk towards the door to open it and find Rascal running around with no care in the world as Dad is walking up the driveway shifting though the mail.

“I’m going to ride my bike,” I shout across the yard in hopes my dad will stay out here with me.

As he looks up from the stack of mail he sighs. “Let me open the garage so you can get your bike.”

“Are you going to say out with me?” I question.

“I have to help your sister with homework and then I’ll be out. I’ll leave Rascal out here though, so keep and eye out for him. Don’t get too close to the road and if anybody comes up you get back in the house. You hear me?” As he proceeds to rustle though the last of the mail and opens the garage simultaneously.

“Okay,” I say quietly under my breath with no response or question that I heard him.

That was the last real effort of its kind.

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 I’ve always felt deeply. Even at five years of age. I longed for a connection. More than the connection that I gave off, but the connection for someone to give off on me. My dad wasn’t a man who gave that connection to me, but he gave it to my sister. I never really understood why except for the fact that I stood up for myself.

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 “What do you girls want for dinner?” dad asked with a foul smell in the air after I already made myself a bowl of cereal.

 “Doesn’t matter,” Emmerson shouted from in front of the television screen.

 “I already ate.” I pointed to the cereal bowl I just put in the kitchen sink. “Do you know when mama is coming home?” I questioned dad.

 “I’m not sure. How about you call her?” He snapped with no help whatsoever.

 “I already tried.” I walked away towards the back of the house where it was quiet.

I try calling her one more time as a last resort. It is 8:19 PM. I normally go to bed at 8:30, but I hate going to bed without my mom. I ran to her room to wait it out. The phone rang, and rang, and rang. On the last ring I hear a…

 “Hang on one second sweetie.” A sigh of relief came from the bottom of my lungs from the sound of my mom’s voice on the other line.

 I was lucky enough to have a connection though the phone because other than that, I lived in a box. Rascal came up and plopped right next to me. A tear rolled down my cheek as I waited and waiting to hear my mom’s voice talk to me rather than the invisible man that she is talking to over the phone.

 “Hi sweetie. How are you? I’m sorry I’m not home yet. Today was very busy.” Mom got out all in one breath.

 “When are you coming home?” Disregarding the ‘how are you’ question.

 “It’s going to be a late night tonight. I wish I could be there to snuggle with you. Get in my bed and tuck up in the blankets. Turn on a movie or a tv show. Try to get some rest. When I get home, I’ll give you the biggest hug and kiss. I want you to get you sleep though, okay? Promise me you’ll get to bed?” Her voice peaked.

 “Yes.” That is all I could get out of my lips that started to get salty and wet due to the tears that were rolling all the way down.

 “I love you, sweetie. I’ll be home before you know it. Goodnight.” Her voice calmed it.

 “I love you too. Goodnight.” I managed to get out without sounding like I was sad.

That was the last time I called in desperation.

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Years have passed. Anger and rage grew. Feelings have been suppressed. Work continued. Technology took over. The box continued to grow, and grow, and grow until it stretched further than my horizons could reach.

Emmerson drove us home from school and immediately plopped on the couch. I knew that car ride was the last bit of interaction I would get out of her from the night as I began to hear Tik Toks playing in the distance as soon as we got home. I walked to my room and closed my door. Thinking about it in my room, it wasn’t as if there was much interaction in the car in the first place, but I at least got to see my sister see a snippet of the world as we passed by Arlington National Cemetery.

 As soon as my dad got home 3 hours later, he immediately went downstairs and disappeared for an hour.

 “Em, you wanna go make dinner with me?” I asked as renegade blasted in the background. “By the way why are you trying to learn that song? Our six-year-old cousin dances to that. You’re not six. You’re literally an adult.” I remarked before she could even respond about dinner.

 “Shut up. Come over here and look at this Tic Tok,” she said as I began to walk over. It was a video of this puppy growing up throughout the years. Woopdy-do.

 “Cute, now come on. I’m hungry and we all know dad is not gonna make dinner for anybody but himself now-a-days.” I started walking out of the door heading to the kitchen. As I got closer and closer to the door, I could hear glass bottles classing into one another coming from the basement. The stairs heading to the basement was right next to the kitchen making the noise most prominent there. I looked behind me to see Em following and breathed out “what’s new? Am I right?” Followed by a quick laugh and head shake.

 As I started rummaging through the cabinets in an effort to find at least one thing that was appetizing Em plopped up on the counter with her air pods in laughing historically at whatever she happened to be looking at on her phone. I could take a wild guess though. Maybe… Tik Tok?

 “Guess it’s just me and you sis,” I said out loud and fist pumped my left hand into my right hand followed by a little hand explosion.

I finally came across some Kraft mac and cheese in the back-right corner of the wooden cabinets. As I jumped on the counter and stretched out my arm to grab it, my phone started buzzing almost knocking me down. It read mom. I hoped off the counter and picked up the phone.

“Hello,” I said.

“Hi hun. I got out a little early tonight. Is there anything you want me to pick up on my way home?” Mom asked.

“No, I’m good. Thank you. I was just about to make some mac and cheese and maybe some broccoli if we have some,” I responded back while walking over to the freezer to see if we did in fact have broccoli.

“Okay, well if you think of anything just give me a call, okay? I love you,” she said cheerfully.

“Will do. I love you too.” I pressed the red circular button to end the call. My stomach growled.

“Emmerson…hello.” I snapped in her face. “Earth to Emmerson.” She looked up as her air pods still blasting who knows what through her ears. I held up the Kraft mac and cheese box and broccoli bag followed by a thumbs up and a thumbs down. She responded by a thumbs up and refocused her attention back on to her phone. “Mac and cheese and broccoli. Cool, cool yeah I love that,” I said out loud looking at them in my hands.

I turned on some Michael Bublé in the background while I poured the Kraft mac and cheese into the boiling water and then next the broccoli. Suddenly I hear the stairs creaking and my dad pass by stumbling over air. While I do nothing to acknowledge him, Em stood out. “We’re making dinner! You want some, dad?”

He turns around slowly in an effort to not lose his balance, comes over to the stove and looks in the pots and says “no.” A whiff of this potent substance burned my eyes and my nose hairs. He immediately turned arounds and left the kitchen.

“Em, do you ever think he’s gone just a little too far?” I asked out of curiosity whole rubbing my eyes followed by my nose in an effort to get the stench away.

“What?” she said taking one air pod out.

“Do you ever think dad drinks a little too much?” I reworded my previous statement.

“I mean…I don’t know. You can always have too much of something, but he’s just trying to handle things the best he can,” she responded.

“You’ve always been glued to him. Of course, you would say something like that to defend him. What even does he have to handle?” I shot at her while grabbing the spoon and lifting the lid to the pot with mac and cheese in it to stir it.

“Dude what? You can’t even say that. You are velcroid to mom. You don’t even know dad like I do. Ever since you were a child you never hung out with him. Plus, he could be going though anything. We don’t know. People handle things in different ways,” she rebutted.

“First off, no, mom is never home, so how does that even correlate? At least she still cares and does everything she can to support us which dad doesn’t even help up make us dinner anymore. Second, I know dad. I know him more than you do. You’re just stuck in a trap that you can’t see. By the way, I did try to hang out with dad. You just always stole the spot light.” I put the lid back on and picked up the lid for the pot with broccoli and began to stir that one.

“Literally shut up. You don’t know what you’re talking about. All you ever want to do is start trouble and divide this family even more than it is now.” She jumped off the counter and stopped into her room slamming the door behind her.

I was literally just trying to have a real and honest conversation, and this is what I get I thought to myself. Shortly after Em slammed her door dad comes stomping in causing me to jump while I am draining the water from the mac and cheese almost burning my hand because of the boiling water.

“What did you do to her?” he yelled as his hand was gripping the edge of the counter tightly to the point where I could see his veins protrude and his foot tapping the ground aggressively.

“I didn’t do anything to her. She was being dramatic and slammed her door,” I responded while walking to get butter and milk from the fridge.

“You better drop that attitude of yours.” His voice and tapping picked up as I grew anxious, but carried on with cutting butter, plopping it into the raw noodles and splashing a little too much milk in the pot. The room was silent minus the boiling water from the almost overcooked broccoli and the obnoxious tapping of his shoe which I hate that the wears throughout the house. Talk about the germs.

“Did I mumble?” He tilted his head and loosened his grip only to lift his hand and slam it on the counter.

“Nope. You were loud and clear.” I looked at him directly in the eyes even though my hand was shaking as I went to pour in the cheese in. “Emmerson dinner is ready. Come on before it gets cold,” I shouted across the house a lot louder than I normally would in an effort to end all of this.

As Emmerson came moping out of her room with sweatpants and a hooding with the hood covering her head because I dragged her from her precious phone, dad immediately relaxed as if what just happened never even occurred.

As Emmerson and I ate dinner dad went back downstairs. I heard a car come up the driveway and got a little overly excited like I used to when I was little. I had a plate set out for mom when she got home and luckily, she was just in time.

“Hi girls,” she said upon entering the house.

“Hi, hi. There’s a plate for you in the kitchen if you wanted some dinner,” I responded happily.

“Oooo, yummy. Where’s dad?” She sat her purse down and was heading to give both of us a hug and a kiss.

“Downstairs as per usual,” I said following by shoving a forkful of mac and cheese into my mouth.

“Why do you gotta be like that?” Emmerson added while looking directly at me.

“Alright were not going to start this as soon as I get home. Let’s enjoy dinner,” Mom stated.

After dinner I cleaned up the dishes and went to my room to do all of my homework that I procrastinated on before the night got started. As soon as I got in the zone, I heard a massive clash coming from what seemed to be the basement.

In the distance all I could hear was “how can you do this? Yeah, they are not 5 anymore, but you are still their dad and you should be caring for them when I’m not here!” My mom yelled using her loud voice that I don’t hear often. Although she was yelling, it was very faint because it most definitely was coming from downstairs.

“They don’t need my help! They can take care of themselves! They haven’t burned down the house yet.” I could hear my dad yell as I continued to ease drop. It’s hard not to.

“That’s not the point! Those are your daughters. They need a man to look up to and right now you aren’t being that man. You want them to marry a drunken like you?” The loud yell was followed by an even louder clash and smack that vibrated throughout all of the walls in the house and then a gun shot.

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 I had never heard a gunshot in person. Let alone did I know there was a gun in the house. Everything was a blur from that day except for that sound. The sound that gashed my heart even though I was in no vicinity surrounding it.

The only thing I had ever known in my life had slipped away. I always thought of myself inside this box, but I never really was until now. I sat on the edge of the bed holding her hand as she was connected to what seemed to be hundreds of wires. As her eyes remained closed and her hand grip not there, I hoped for a miracle. A miracle that would change my life from this moment right now. It was a dark and gloomy day. The rain just began to pour as the doctor whose name I couldn’t remember came in the room confronting me.

 “Ma’am..” he spoke softly followed by a brief pause. “My name is Dr. Harmon. I have been taking care of your mother…would you like to sit for a moment?” He spoke gently directing me to a chair with his arm that I could see out of the corner of my eye. With no real indication of what he looked like I continued to stare at the ground, look up at my mom, and then back down at the ground again. “Your mother has sustained very serious injuries. She is currently on life support which is why there are so many wires connected to her. This time is undoubtfully tough for you I can only imagine, so I want to give you some time with her, but know that we do need to start thinking about how we want things to progress. When you’re ready to talk, I will be here. No rush at all.” I looked up to meet his eyes as a single tear rolled down my flushed cheek. I could taste the saltiness of my tear as it reached the edge of my lip due to how my face was formed.

 “Yes sir,” was all I could manage to get out as I fidgeted with the bottom of my shirt.

 “I’ll be right outside at the nurse’s station for a little bit if you need anything within the next ten minutes or so. If not, the nurse will be here, and they know how to get in touch with me if you have any questions.” He gave me a slight smile and nodded his head before he turned around to head to the nurse’s station.

 “Thank you,” I spoke a little louder trying not to shout but still catch him before he was too far to hear me. He looked back and smiled acknowledging me.

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 As hard as it was to process everything that happened that day from the gun shot to taking my mom off of life support, I look at what my life has turned into. It has been a miracle. Nine years later I have a handsome husband who loves me through all of my flaws, three beautiful children, a boy and two girls with another on the way, and a lovely place that I can call home. Guess what our favorite things to do are? We love chasing sunsets together. We love camping and roasting marshmallows next to a bonfire while we laugh and sing songs together. We love going to the beach to make sandcastles and fly kites together. We love going to the playground to slide down slides and swing as high we can while reaching for the sky together.

The day I decided to let go of my past was the day I became free. My walls broke down. My comfort zone smashed. Chains ripped apart. My life is so different from what I could have ever imagined, but every door is now wide open and that is what I am going to take advantage of. This is how my mom would have wanted me to live life. This is what she so desperately ached for me to have. I no longer have to take on the world all by myself and I am more in tune with my thoughts than ever.