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Kaylee Patton

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Never Forgotten

by Kaylee Patton

Everyone thinks that I am too young — to understand what is going on. In some ways, I am. In others, it is not hard to figure out what has happened. I don't want anyone to realize that I understand, or else they will sit me down and have "the talk" about the circle of life. I hate those talks. They are long and boring and make me sad. Everyone is too sad right now. I don't want to be sad. I try to act like my normal sassy self, but it is becoming difficult. Everyone keeps telling me it is all going to be okay and that I am fine. I know that I am fine. I feel perfectly fine. But I'm not.

Time seems to fly whenever a tragedy happens. One second, I am at my grandparents' house just getting back from church. The next second, I am pulling up into my driveway at home wondering what is going to happen next. To this day, I still remember the look on my grandmother's face when she was on the phone with my dad. Her eyes went wide, then closed, then her head fell into her hands. It was when she looked at me with tears in her eyes that I knew that something bad had happened. Everything was so quiet while we packed our bags that you could hear a pin drop from across the house. I was dreading the two-hour drive home, but to my surprise, it was quite fun. My sister and I joked around with our grandparents and cousins, and for a split second, it felt as if nothing were wrong. But only for that second.

As soon as we pulled into my driveway, I felt a sense of sadness rush over me. There were cars lined up in front of my house and down the block. Usually when I see this, I get excited because that means we are celebrating something. But not this time. I was the last to walk into my house. I didn't want to see anyone crying or upset. I finally got the courage to step through the doorway, but I instantly regretted it. The first person to catch my eyes was my mom. Her face was red, blotchy, and swollen. Her eyes began raining tears as she ran over to me and wrapped me up in her arms. I was her baby girl. I didn't know what to do. I wanted to stay there and hug her, but then again, I felt really uncomfortable and wanted to go to my room. She finally let me go so that she could talk to my sister and grandparents, and I slipped into the shadows.

Situations like these make me uncomfortable. I feel like if I say something, I'm just letting off a bomb of emotions that I won't be able to control. I am not the type to let people see me cry. Even at six years old, it made me feel vulnerable. So, I ran away to my hiding place: my bedroom. As soon as I got to the door, I immediately froze. I had forgotten that this wasn't just my room; it was hers, too. The door was shut, and I began to wonder why. All sorts of questions that I now feel dumb for thinking were running through my head: *Was the door locked? What was inside? Was she in there? Did I just misunderstand and she's actually just napping in there? Or, is the door shut because this is where they will keep her until the funeral?* I must have stood there for a good thirty minutes before I finally twisted the knob.



The first thing that I noticed was how bright it seemed. The light was shining through the window, and it looked just as we were always taught to imagine heaven. The second thing I noticed was that she wasn't in there. Her bed was neatly made, as it hadn't been in who knows how long. All of our stuffed animals were sitting on the bed, just as they had been whenever she got scared, and I would surround her with them to comfort her. I looked at the dresser and saw a bag of Goldfish. Instantly, I remembered the time I put them into her feeding tube because she told me she wanted some. My mom didn't believe my excuse, but still took a picture because it was funny. I guess I should have remembered one thing: my sister wasn't able to talk to anyone except for me. That wasn't entirely true, but I was the only one who knew when she wanted something. I knew when she was happy, sad, upset, hungry, or sick before anyone else did. It was always a weird bonding thing we had. Then, it hit me: my sister had really passed away, and that bond was now broken.

That is all I remember from that day. As soon as the realization that my sister was gone hit me, I went brain dead. I didn't really see what was going on around me anymore and just went along with what everyone else was doing. It took me about a month to go back into that bedroom. It is full of so many good memories but also the worst memory of them all. I ended up moving into my other sister's bedroom just to get away from the hurt. Now it doesn't faze me to go in our old room. It has changed so much that the memory doesn't cross my mind when I walk in. But this doesn't mean that I don't still miss her. I still cry at night sometimes. The months of May and August are the hardest because one is the month she was born and the other is the month she died. Other than those times, I am fine. I know that I am fine. I feel perfectly fine. But I'm not.

