

## The Truth Hurts

*I don't know if it's just me but I hate being the only one that cares. Where you feel stranded there's nowhere to go, no place to feel "okay". Then there was that one moment I broke.*

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Tears streaming down my face in an endless pool. Nothing could stop me this time, no people holding me back. I declare myself an apostasy from the person I was. I power off my phone angrily, the the non-stop text messages popping up. Saying, "The truth hurts is the one thing I remember him saying, my grandpa. My tears broke the barriers I just had. Sitting alone in pain, I just feel nothing but pity. I'm not missing him, I'm missing that I can't have anymore memories with him. I feel that lump in my throat telling me I care, I love, I have hope. The non-stop I,I,I,I. It all has to do with my thoughts and his being deteriorated by death not letting him speak.

My desperation for something to cling on to. Just to let me know something will be okay. My bedroom is quiet from not hearing myself sob anymore. Laying in my bed sweaty and soaked from tears , finally my mind feels "okay" again. Wandering thoughts make me pick up my phone and turn it on again; more messages filled my lock screen.

Why? Why do people care about me? They never cared before so why now? Oh okay, I'm hurt, so what? Tossing and turning to find sleep in the restless mind of myself. That thought still lingers from before, why now?

I woke up tasting a dry mouth and pain in my chest. The alarm glowed bright blue 8:30am . My heart felt on fire and my mouth felt relieved to the sip of water I just took. That sip felt endless almost like I couldn't take a breath of air without losing a part of me. Only for a second I felt weightless.

I put the water down, laid back and waited for my 9:00 alarm to go off.----Beep, Beep, Beep, I hit the alarm and roll from side to side wondering why, why am I still here? I sit up and want to start over . Wanting and wishing is my constant mindset. My mom calls my name, "Julia you have to come down for school.", this loathes me, I look like I haven't slept or bother to do anything to myself for days. My grandfather died yesterday and I'm going to school. Just to to take my mind off him ,but it's really just to act like I'm fine.

I brush the knot my hair has become ,and put on my school clothes. I feel in shock, like everything around me has become a nightmare. My reflection changed. I felt lost and my world is tumbling down in the broken pieces of me. I grab my purse and my phone and walk down stairs. My mom's face looks white as if she lost everything she'd

had, hope. Death would be the end of us, I walked out to the car, knowing I want to break but if I do then broken is all I'll be.

I walk into school an hour late. I go into the office and they give me a late pass to my first period. Writing, everyone stares at me, I hand my teacher my pass, and sit down trying not to draw anymore attention to myself. It felt like my insides were crushed by everyone staring as if they were throwing stones to break me more. My teacher gave me paper to work on an essay and I stared at it, nothing came to me. All I could put my attention on was him. I look up to realize I'm tearing up, trying to swallow the pain trying to stay strong for him. My teacher calls my name zoned out in my own thought she asked if I was alright. I sat there and said I'm fine and flash a fake smile, nods her head and the period ends in a minute's time.

I walk to my locker to get my things for my second and third period classes, staring at the photos of my childhood.. I wander down the hallway in a blur of blue, childhood, so carefree, full of love and compassion, innocence to the bad the people in life. Making my way around to the other side of the building some of my friends from first period come to my side. They look at me and I wondered if they could see through, if they saw something was wrong but I didn't say a thing. Just walked into room 400 and sat in my seat, science class because I never learned science in elementary school. This teacher could tell something was wrong, she knew me well, almost if she had a sense for it. She gave me a look and almost walked over but turned away. My face looked drained of color, obviously the flash of a smile i gave wasn't gonna work on Mrs. Natalie.

After she went over the do-nows she pulls me into the hallways. Mrs. Natalie asked me what was wrong, I could feel it again a bottle about to burst because of all the pressure inside. I answered feeling like I couldn't breathe, "No" as if it was a cry for help to set me free. She asked me why more concerned and sympathetic. The tears filled my eyes and poured down my face, " My grandpa died yesterday and I can't, I can't." She had me sit down on the desk outside her room, she told me to wait one minute. My tears dried on my face. I felt relieved to let pain out as if pressure disappeared off my chest. She came back outside the classroom and asked if I wanted to go to the bathroom and clean myself up ,and told me I'd make it out okay in the end. This was the beginning not close to the end .

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Throughout the day I felt nothing but I can't. I could barely breathe without tears. Couldn't look someone in the eyes and say I'm good, I couldn't walk another step without tripping on a trail of my faded spirit. I saw her my best friend Jen, she was on the phone with me yesterday when i found out. She told me over text yesterday night, not to come to school but, I had to push through my feelings. It was Jen, I haven't seen her all day , when that's all li needed a hug and my bestfriend. I collapsed in her arms everything in me broken. Jen asked me why I came to school, I said to let everyone know I'm fine. She looked at me and said," Jul, you're not fine, you're a broken heart in a million pieces." those thoughts echo through me, a million pieces scattered on the floor for me to pick up and put myself back together again. The question was, could I? We walked down the hall to the stairway doors, Jen had questions that we both knew I couldn't answer them yet. The world was a cloudy nightmare wishing and wanting to wake up.

I headed home, for only a second it felt like nothing had changed. That he wasn't gone. Brianna, my sister walked home with me, she asked me how school was and I didn't want to answer her so I asked her the same question. We didn't respond to each other, we just knew . Our silence was a language communicated through spirit. I walked up to our house and opened the door, the fall air outside was now the pass. I ran upstairs to my room and plopped down on my bed. Pure emotion poured out of me: tears, headaches, non-stop thought. My body physically hurt from crying, I laid there for hours. Watching the clock on my cell phone tick by. By about six o'clock, my dad called my sisters and I went down for dinner. No one had an appetite to eat. The food went in my mouth without taste , everything without senses. With only 10 bites of my food i was full, I gathered my dishes and put them in the sink, just walked back upstairs. Back to where i was motionless listening to silence or crying of my home. Home meant safe, happy but full of the things that were yours and sometimes brought sadness. Until now I never knew what sad felt like.

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The morning felt dull, I didn't want to move the spot i was. I didn't want to get in black clothes, didn't want my hope, my idol be buried in front of my eyes. Nothing felt right. He felt like he was alive, fighting cancer for so long and always putting on a strong face but weak. That last breath was the end of his strong face, was him giving his body his last bit of stress out, his way of saying I'm done. For some reason it still felt like I wasn't going to his funeral . I got on my black dress, grabbed a wad of tissues and stuck them in my purse. I came down stairs to everyone sitting on the couch on their phone's.

We were headed to my aunt's house to meet up before the funeral. In the car that feeling of not wanting to move was back, stiff from trying to hold myself together. In

those thoughts of don't cry, my sisters in the backseat with me, it just felt normal. As if we went over my aunt's house for a football game and my grandpa was there dinner and to see my sisters and I. That memory quickly flashed into reality, I'm going to my aunt's house for a funeral, his funeral. My dad had parked the car, and for him I put on my strong face, to show I was "okay", though I was being devoured from the inside.--- The door unlocked to see family, a lot more than expected but, I knew he was so loved. Every space crowded, we met here before the limos were to drive arrive.

Only twenty minutes past, waiting for these limos. I stared down at my phone thinking, days earlier we were at his nursing home, with a pizza and a bread ring around my neck. Not realizing how close death was. That day, that day I remember, my mom and I were at a restaurant and I remember saying can we visit grandpa, she said she was too tired, we'd visit him tomorrow. Little did I know, minutes later my mom receives a call from my aunt Chuckie that my grandpa died. The shock could only be read in between the lines but no deeper emotions. I remember getting to the nursing home seeing his face and broke into tears . Why do the good people have to die? My head hurt so bad from crying, I felt like it was throbbing. My face swollen, his final fight was done. I was sitting on the couch waiting to see his face for the last time in front of me. The last time felt like, just another day though, yet it felt so traumatizing to think about.

I got up and looked and looked out the front door to see the limos were here. I told my family, so the select people for the limos got up. We walked out. The black Cadillac looked shiny, his favorite car, memories continue to flash through my head, as if I made a collage in my brain. Every memory felt like yesterday. My head stuck in yesterday.

I was in the limo with my aunt Liza trying to change the subject, but she was about to bury her father. The limo was about to circle the place my mom grew up in Glen Oaks, Then to his final resting place. I couldn't imagine what was going through my aunt's head versus mine. Her childhood on replay in joy and color to a faded black and white image of gone. ---- We were five minutes from Glen Oaks, the funeral cars were a train through Eve's garden of where they used to live. The cars lined the street, with the house in view.

The driver of the first funeral limo got out and placed a red rose on the step of where his feet once touched not thinking about death. The tinted glass of my window felt opaque to see through, like my outlook on his death, unreal. We passed the house now in a blur beside me was houses of no meaning no story to me. The next stop was the last stop, the grave. My aunt continues to tell her last childhood story of color. I continued to think in black and white. Everything with static as if this already happened but he survived. There was an alternative story in my head. Then we pulled up to the curb with a field of stones to find him being carried to his. The pressure inside of me rising, I felt dizzy, I opened the limo door to meet a goodbye. Slowly approaching the

open grave next to his wife. How could my mom watch her dad be buried next to her mom in sync from 34 years ago. We waited for 10 minutes till everyone arrived, surrounding the cold ground of where we'd bury love along with the man himself. What could I think in this moment other than I love you? I love how he cracked jokes, stayed strong in pain, would always want the best for us, thought we were cheap dates, or could never pronounce quesadilla at friendly's right, before dance class. I could no longer speak to the man I loved. Why wouldn't he wake up?

The service was beginning, the two soldiers perfectly in sync, clicked their shoes, saluted, and folded the American flag into an arm size triangle, the synchronization with each fold amazed me as the flag was saluted to my uncle Mike's hand for my grandpa's service in the army for WWII. His life was being remembered today, 92 years being remembered for a man I'll never forget. The Soldiers walked aside, everyone was now handed a rose in an assortment of colors. Mine was red, a red rose. We said our prayers and then were to throw them onto of the casket. I watched the rose I had stand out among the dozens. I stood there, we were supposed to leave but, I couldn't wrap my mind around this was the last place I'd ever see him, his actual body before it was tucked away six feet under the ground. My feet were weights to the car, i didn't want to leave. I wanted to stay. I wanted him to stay alive, his love, his care, him fighting in war, or fighting lung cancer, walking away was like robbing me of everything he meant to me. Love doesn't begin to explain love... I muttered under my breath,"I love you."