

My Truth

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“You won’t be here for long. Soon, it’ll be over.” Those were the words I kept repeating to myself. Over and over again until I finally believed it. It kept me going, my anthem. Made everything easier. It was a way to remind myself that nothing lasts forever, that it would eventually stop. It did. And then it came back.

Somewhere, deep in my mind, there were whispers that had me believing that no matter how much I did, it would never be enough. The pressure was heavier than anything I’d ever experienced. Knowing what others thought of me and what they expected. It was hard to face them if I didn’t exceed their expectations; if I didn’t win. There was a part of me that was lost and hidden away from the world that I didn’t know how to get back. I felt hollow and numb, and in some ways, I was grateful for the void that hadn’t been filled. It allowed me to block it out for a while.

Soon, it became a mask. I wore it daily. Laughing and smiling at my peers, knowing that when I got home, my pillow would be soaked with tears. That the emptiness would return the second I was alone. When the sound of footsteps approached my door, my movements became robotic. I wiped my tears and hid the pain in my voice so that no one would notice. The hardest part about it all was being too stubborn to let anyone see that side of me. No matter how many times I was asked, I was okay. I was fine. I was the person that no one ever had to worry about. To them, I had everything I could ever need. I wasn’t supposed to feel this way. I didn’t deserve to. My problems were too ‘small’ to be important.

Sitting on the bathroom floor, my thoughts became a tornado, a whirlwind, really. It was unstoppable. Something about the cold floor made me feel safe; it made me feel, period. Reminded me that I was human; I was *allowed* to feel.

During it all, writing was my escape. Throughout the entire year, I poured myself into the words I wrote. It became a part of me; something I worked on during the nights when I had nowhere else to direct my thoughts. I pulled out my computer and I wrote for hours. There were so many of my thoughts saved there—hundreds of pages, thousands of my words. Writing was a way to express myself without saying it aloud.

This specific feeling always came back. There is a saying that the rainbow appears after the rain. To me, it seems reversed. I was happy, then I was sad. I enjoyed myself when I was around people, but even then, I’d always thought that they didn’t want me there. That I was annoying, and when the words actually left their mouth, joking or not, I felt alone again. It affected me more than it should. I was a sensitive person, they’d say. A crybaby. Drowning, but they didn’t know it. Sometimes, I wish I’d just reach rock bottom. Touch the sand in the ocean. Because at least then it couldn’t get any worse.

But I'm not depressed, it's only a moment in time. It'll pass; it'll be over soon, and I can go right back to being *'happy.'* I can go back to surviving, and no one will ever have to know I've felt this way.

School was a distraction for me. My friends were there. They might not have known it, but they gave me a sense of what it felt like to have siblings; they were my found family. As an only child, before I met them, it was just me. I matured way before I was ready. It was like I was always an adult stuck in a child's body. When I met my friends, it was like I found a part of my soul.

As the therapist friend, I was aware of every problem and hardship they faced. I was there to solve it. I knew that none of us were really okay. We all kept secrets, but for some reason, they felt comfortable telling me theirs, and when they did, I carried their burdens along with mine. We were all keeping afloat, barely keeping our heads above the strong currents. We were all being burned in our own ways. The thing that kept us together was knowing that we had each other. Well, I had them, but they couldn't have me unless I told them I was just as close to the edge as they were. And that was something I couldn't do.

My truth and voice never really mattered. I hope that one day, it does.