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My Father's Death ~ By Jordan Jencks

I grew up south of Cheyenne, Ok, in the middle of the country. I lived with my mother, father, and older sister. We lived in a double-wide trailer house right next to my grandpa. The trailer house had 3 bedrooms, 2 1/2 baths, a small office, a large living room and a massive kitchen. I would consider my childhood ordinary except for my father's absence. My dad labored in the oilfield and made pretty decent money, but he never gave my mom a dime of it. My dad was an alcoholic and a drug addict. He wasn't there the majority of my childhood. My mom worked three jobs to make ends meet. She worked at Great Plains Bank in Sayre, LaDonna's Liquor Store in Elk City, and she has a billing service for the oilfield on the side. My sister and I didn't lack the things we needed or wanted. My mom made sure we had everything we desired. My dad would be gone for weeks at a time, and we didn't ever know where he was or when he was going to be coming back. I remember when I was 6 years old, it was my birthday and my dad wasn't there. I asked my mom "Why isn't dad here, he is going to miss my birthday cake that I made all by myself?"

"Your dad is at work and will be here tomorrow for your actual birthday, and we can celebrate again with him."

The next day he didn't show up. My sister and I got used to not even caring if he was there. On Christmas one year my dad was actually there, but he sat in his recliner passed out from drinking, it was almost like he wasn't even there. This was my childhood knowing my father but never really caring if he was there or not. My mom and dad divorced in 2006 when I moved to Sayre with my sister and my mom. We rented a small 2 bedroom house where I shared a room with my mom. My dad never came to visit, he would always call me and ask:


"When are you going to come out and see me?"

"Why should I take the time to come see you when you are always high?"

"I, your father and you should do what I say."

I would just get mad and hang up on him. It went on like this for years. On my 14th birthday he promised me that he would take my best friend and me out to the movies and dinner. When that day arrived I waited for

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him to call me or show up, but he never did. I tried calling him but of course he didn't answer me. A few days after, I called him to see what his excuse was for blowing me off.

He picked up "Why are you calling me, I'm trying to sleep?" He said.

"You never came and got me on my birthday or even called to cancel, you're my dad and you promised me some- thing and I didn't even get a call from you!"

He started to yell something at me and I just got mad and hung up. Three months went by and on December 15, 2008 my mother woke me up telling me that my dad was in a car crash and was dead. We drove to Cheyenne Hospital, just my mom and I. My sister despised my dad and didn't want to go. She told my mom "I'm happy that he's dead." When I arrived the nurse took me back to see my dad, it was the worst thing I had ever seen. There was my dad lying on a table frozen, when he crashed he couldn't get out of the vehicle and died of hypothermia. I walked over to him, kissed his cheek, and said "I love you daddy and I'm sorry." I walked away, I couldn't take it anymore.

At his funeral, I wrote a poem for him telling him that he wasn't perfect and neither was I, but I loved him anyways. The funeral was a hard thing to go through with everyone hugging me and telling me he was a good man and that he loved me very much. I couldn't help thinking to myself what kind of decent man spends all his children's childhood too drunk and high to even spend Christmas with them. I was mad that he never apologized to me for not being there for me when I was young. I was only 14 when he died, that was the time when I needed him the most and he wasn't there for me.

For the next couple of years, I experimented with drugs and alcohol to try to understand why he would pick that over me. I never understood. I have learned through my father's death that life is too short and even when someone can ignore you your whole life, they still need to be forgiven. I forgave my dad in 2010 when my boyfriend's father passed away and they actually had memories to remember him by. My father might not have been the ultimate dad, but he was still my father. I love and miss appallingly. I will never hold a grudge on anyone again because I never know when he might decide to get into a car crash and leave me too.

