

Years 5-6 Category Highly Commended

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Weathering The Storm

An unexpected gust of wind blew the light out of our lives. The sky darkening by the minute. Our lives flooded with hard rain, washing away life as we once knew it. Lightning cracked, leaving us stung with an unbearable pain. Grief.

2015 started as a wonderful year. A new kindergarten student, a new big sister. Who knew the year would take such a sudden, unimaginable turn. In the October school holidays, our family of four, took a vacation to Bicheno. An unforgettable holiday, for all the wrong reasons. A tragic event occurred towards the end of our trip. My perfectly healthy 19 month old sister tragically passed from myocarditis, a condition that attacks the heart.

It feels like the world stops. It feels like you are lost, with nowhere to go. Unknowing of what to do next. For a while you feel like you are frozen in that memory. Reliving that same day, over and over, until you can't go on. Until you break down into tears. Until the world feels like it's just came tumbling down and you're stuck under the debris.

There isn't one way to deal with grief. It's different for everyone. There are hundreds of books about grief, but no story will be the same as yours. Your story is one that only you can write. There'll be triggers that'll pop up out of nowhere, these triggers will be different for each member of your family. No one can comprehend grief until they live it. I didn't want to have to miss my sister, I still don't. Grief is painful. Grief is diverse. It is the hardest thing that I've ever experienced. But, essentially grief is just remembering someone that you love. A reminder of someone who is no longer with you physically, but someone who's ever present in your life. In time, you'll stop feeling so sad every time you think of them. Sadness will start to swim alongside happiness, overwhelming you as you recount who they were, the memories made and the impact they had and still have on your life.

The sun rises and sets. The clock keeps ticking. People continue their busy lives. Life goes on, it has to. But life won't ever be the same. Conversations will arise, questions will be asked. When I moved schools, a common conversation starter was, "Do you have any siblings?" How do you answer, those ordinarily simple questions? You don't know whether you're trying to protect yourself or the other person in your response. There are all sorts of triggers that people will never begin to understand. Grief can make you feel alone. Like a harsh beast you have to keep locked away. The truth is you can't; it's a part of who you are. Grief isn't a battle you can fight alone.

The ocean washes away her name written in the soft sand. A heart filled with seaweed and shells is made in her memory. Ladybugs subtly bring her into our thoughts. Fond memories are retold. Friends comfort me, surround me with support. People that never knew her, still make tributes to her. Her memory lives on. She continues to make an impact. Never forget them because it's too painful to remember. Traditions are made and instead of making memories with them, you make memories about them. Memories that would never have been made if it wasn't for them. Dark clouds always loom, threatening to burst even on the happiest days. The love for them will always be there, like warm rays of sun shining through gaps in the clouds.