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### **When I Die**

My life ended a regular day, or you could say that my life began this day. The real life began the day I died.

All my life I've been normal: neither more nor less than the average. I'm not fat but not skinny. I'm not tall but taller than the shortest. I'm not rich but have money to spend. I'm not a geek but absolutely not popular. I don't talk but I have something to say. I think a lot but no one really knows.

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I grew up in a small town far away from anything, with two busy parents. It was always something going on, work, friends, childfree evenings with you know what. They could go away a weekend just to spend with each other, "you always have fun, why can't we too" they did always tell us. They never knew that I never enjoyed the hours alone in my room, doodling in my notebook or thinking. While my siblings have boys over here to do the S thing or having late intimate parties with hefty boys with straggly, dirty ash blonde hair.

When they drove off, they left me alone with my older sister, Cora. To be eldest in my family means to have the most power, such as to decide what to eat or what to do. The eldest is the cleverest and most educated, and better, in all ways. So when mom and dad left, they gave all responsibility to Cora, mommy's favorite, who never did anything wrong, what they knew about. The perfect daughter was an angel with a benevolent smile and an arrogant soul. Cheerful in every way and situation, and the girl everyone wanted to have as an ex-girlfriend because it never lasted more than a month. She used boys as straws, new and fresh each time. I have an older brother too, Chris. He was too interested in football, which I've never understood, (understand me correct when I tell you that his love for the sport made me repel it from my life). He didn't have time to even care about girls, so he fell in love with his teammate and lucky for him, it worked out.

Then there is me, always in the shadow of Cora's talking or bossing around, Chris' hobby and later my one year younger sister. The cutest girl in the world, who always got the attention, phrases like "Amy standing on her own for the first time", "look at Amy she's riding her bike" or "congratulations, Amy, straight A's, you're amazing" was more than welcomed in my family. She was the pain in the ass.

She was always too much, said too much and cared too much. She entered my room one evening, not bothering to knock, and started interrogating me about why I don't participate in our family discussions. It could be to about which superpower I would like to possess or why it matters which day we children go to the park, Saturday or Sunday. I don't have anything in mind anyway.

When I was 6 years old, mom and dad figured that six persons in a small house were way too much, so we moved into the city. When I came new to this big class, first grade, it was hard for me to find friends. It took me one month before I talked, one month to me to say hey, and the saddest thing is that the girl didn't even answer, she just walked away.

A half year later, a new Sam started, we already had two, but this one unlike the others was extrovert and kind of easy-going, and too often considerate against people who didn't deserve it.

One sentence was all that it took to make everyone loves the energy and generosity he had. I had no idea what to do when the Sam, with a big bright smile, came straight up to me and started talking to me about nothing at all, me, a flower, fragile and untouchable, who stutter when talking and never says a word during classes. I found out that Sam loved nicknames, calling the teacher, Mrs. B, when she had a surname starting with B but also always buzzing around in the classroom. Classmates had been called different kinds of food, geographic words or stuff, and always with a funny twist underlying. The rowdy boy who had sitten next to me for 4 months, John could we talk about behind his back, with the word Penne as the secret identity, Penne like the pasta. Sam thought that he had nothing inside, a big fat shell with an empty pillow, without the pearl.

Strangers we walked past on the street where called things like Monkey, considering their way of walking, and sun, when the man whereas happy as a child on Christmas.

Sam was sincere and honest about how the world was and how it was structured, knew no one noticed me and that I was a nobody, so there my name, Nobody. I gave Sam the nickname Everybody after he completed my quest, walking up to the group of 3-4 year older students and saying hey. Not only a hey that would have made the whole conversation stiff, but also did he give a tip to the quietest girl in a worn-out scarlet hoodie, that she should wear more soft dark autumn colors. Everybody always did everything better than anyone.

Who knew he would change my life? My life was great and I was happy three years from that, thanks to Sam.

On the night I became thirteen, Sam and I slept on the beach, studying the waves crashing on the shore and watching the Ursa Minor and Ursa Major. We're laying on blankets and are turned up to the sky, Sam's talking about what the stars symbolize and that the sky, the moon and the sun, and how the universe has an impact on us. Saying that "You become a star when you die" and kept asking or talking out loud about things like "You're happy right?" and "You'll be okay". And around five o'clock the first light hit our raised hands and Sam says a sentence I'll always remember "I have cancer and I'll die within three months" not the typical sensitive Sam I'm used to. I don't know what to say or what to do, I don't even know when it means to have cancer, how it feels or how it worked, and when Sam tries to explain, I can't hear because of my loud sobbing.

I will never know where in Sam's body it all started or when he found out, I never asked and four months after he told me, I wore black at his funeral.

In my family, the past stays in the past. We don't have old photos on the wall or in every room and we never talked about what we did as children, our setbacks, and successes. There's no point in reminding us of the past, we can't change it, we'll remember the good things and try to forget the negative things. But that doesn't mean I'll forget him, I'll never forget him, Sam, my best friend Sam.

I went to a typical high school, with arranged parties and prom, the last Friday in May, with prom kings and prom queens. They had football games, math and spelling bee competitions with other schools. The principal encouraged the students to do charity things. The teachers had home studies for the students that did not pass the course. We all voted for a head boy or ahead girl to represent the grade. And the senior year when everyone realizes that this year determines our whole future, everyone studied too much for our own good. Perhaps studies so much that your rich parents can pay the rest for a couple years in college or be so smart or athletic that you get a scholarship to the college you've dreamed your whole life about. To me, it was enough to just be accepted to one because that was mine in case of an emergency future plan.

I tried all these things, maybe to find myself, find out who I am. Find me. What my story is. So when someone asks me to tell them about my life, it would take a few minutes or pages to go through what I have done. So when I tried to do things like Cora or Chris, my parents or teachers, or Sam, just to lengthen the story, but I drowned centimeter by centimeter. After all these years with pretending, I lost myself. I don't know who I am anymore, I'm no one and everyone at the same time.

One day, I tried to be Sam. I started talking with this new twins Scarlett and Simon who started in our class only days ago. I thought they liked me when they at least answered my questions and laughed at my jokes, but when I walked away I saw them whispering and talking about someone in my direction.

I've tried to be alone too, I didn't care about someone looking after me in the corridor after Sam's death, or sitting alone in the lunchroom and doing nothing at home while the time pass and the world moving on without me. But being alone was never good for me, when I'm alone I think, and when I think I'm dying, slowly.

Since that day, or the days I spend alone I've thought that this could not be the only life. If this was the real life, I could not spend a day more living in this empty and meaningless world. When I was at the bottom, all I could do for hours was to just stare at the ceiling and pray for something to happen, for a change or a sign, a bright sign that would lead the way to something, anything at all is better than this gray wall. Real life has to start the day I die.

This day, the day I died, I understood everything, when I lied there on the bathroom floor and cried quietly. I understood that I've always followed destiny and let it lead the way. If it wanted me to be happy, I was. Wanted me to have a friend, I had. Wanted to kill the friend, it did.

I don't have any power in my own life, nobody has. I was born in this family, with this appearance and this personality, and there's only one thing I can change, is that I can decide if I'm gonna have a life or not and I have made my choice.

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I reach for the wooden box with the knitted details, I open too many empty yellow medicine bottles only to find a few pills in the small plastic bottle at the bottom of the box, I feel the taste of victory and pride when close my eyes with one last thought

Next time will be better.

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