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A Life Changing Moment

By Brean Rossiter

Our lives are made up of moments, and this day would be made up of a lot of different moments for my little sister Katie. She was bringing her seven month old daughter Makaela to Ireland to spend time with Paddy, Makaela's father. My older sister Tricia had traveled with them. They were due to arrive at Shannon airport early that morning. My parents had come down to Georgia to spend the weekend with me. We had a day of go karts and shopping planned. We waited to get the call that they had arrived safely. I could not wait to hear how things were going. Katie had been so nervous about the trip. I knew Tricia would have been trying to make her laugh and relax the whole flight over to the country Katie loved.

We waited and waited to hear from them. We started to worry, so I went to the store and got a calling card. We called Makaela's grandmother in Ireland and found out that the car Paddy had brought was too small to carry all the suitcases. So Paddy, Katie and Makaela had driven half way back to meet Paddy's brother and hand off some of the

luggage. We were relieved. So we decided we would play a board game and wait to hear that they were all safe at my uncle's house after their long journey. An hour passed. Then, another hour passed and still no word. We all knew the roads in Ireland were not the greatest and thought maybe they had just gotten stuck behind a big tractor. Maybe they had just stopped for lunch. This, at least, was what we kept telling each other.

As the minutes passed by, the air started to feel thicker. There was an unspoken fear that we all felt. We waited. We talked a few times about leaving and just getting ahold of them when we got home, but none of us would make the move to go.

Again we called Ireland. We could not get a hold of Makaela's grandmother, so my dad called his brothers. I could tell by my dad's face when he talked to his brother Billy that something was not right. He got off the phone and said his brother Pat was going to call, because he had talked to them. Again, we waited.

The phone rang. My dad answered. It was his brother Pat. Then I saw a look on my dad's face I had never seen before, and it sent a chill down my spine. I heard the words, "Katie" and "no" come out of my dad's mouth. He was shaking his head and repeating the word no over and over again. We already knew what had happened, but my mom and I kept asking, "What is it?" He hung up the phone and said, "There was an accident; Katie is dead."

Those words must have weighed a ton. It felt like a sumo wrestler was sitting on my chest. It was hard to get even the slightest breath. My mom kept saying, "What?" All my childhood memories of my sister began to rush into my mind. I could not understand how God could have taken such a wonderful person at only twenty years of age. Her life was just beginning. I kept repeating, "Not my baby sister." I hit the wall, sobbed, shook my head and hugged my knees to my chest. I was so angry that I had not been there. If I had been there, I thought, I would have protected her. In that moment, with those words, "There was an accident, Katie is dead." My life was changed forever. I felt sick, confused, helpless, hopeless and scared. Then questions filled our minds. How is everyone else? We had to call back. We needed to know everything right then, but answers were few and far between. We found out that everyone else was alive. Paddy and Tricia had some bad injuries, but Makaela was not hurt. She had two bruises from her car seat, but would only have to suffer the emotional trauma of never truly knowing her mother. That morning, that moment, when my Father's face went white, a part of my heart died and a part of my life changed forever.

About Brean Rossiter

I am 28 years old and just married in April to my wonderful husband Patrick. I live in Odenton, MD. I have been in the Air Force for over ten years and plan on staying at least ten more. I am a linguist and love my job. I spend most of my free time these days wedding planning, doing school work, and hanging out with family.