
My Personal Experience: Encounter with Death

Different significant and pivotal moments in my life involving animals or death? There has been no lack of death in my family, animals and people included. The first thing that comes to my mind when I think about animals or death was when my dog Makana of 12 years died. It was absolutely heartbreaking, specifically remembering the day she was put down still brings tears to my eyes.

I remember being taken out of school early and my dad driving straight to my aunt's house, I got out of the car and saw her lying on the floor just looking around at everything. The sight of her in pain immediately caused me to start crying. When she noticed me coming she tried to get up, her hips wouldn't support her weight and she fell back to the ground. I heard her whimper and let out a small whine of what I assumed was irritation. I ran towards her and immediately laid on the cold and hard ground next to her.

I started to stroke her fur in attempt to comfort her, with every stroke chunks of her fur came out. As I moved my hands lower I felt the cause of her pain, the tumor growing on her chest. It was hard and big, you could say it felt like a kids football. The ground smelled of dust and mud, while Makana smelled like her favorite rose shampoo. I don't know how long I laid next to her crying, listening to her whines. She was my first dog.

The dog I played hide and seek with for hours, the dog who I watched grow from the cutest little puppy into a beautiful guardian (she was my protector.) Makana was my baby, If I was crying she would run up to me and lick my face until I started laughing. when my parents were going through their divorce she wouldn't leave my side, she took naps with me in my fireman tent, and she was always excited to play hide and seek. Eventually it was time to go to the veterinarian's office to have her put to sleep. The car ride was filled with the sound of my tears and nothing else.

I carried her myself into the office as the tears were streaming down my face. While the Veterinarian did his examination I was holding onto the hope that in some miracle he could remove the tumor and give us more time with her. After a few minutes of silence my hopes were crushed and the water works started up again, the Vet explained to my parents that Makana's tumor was inoperable and she would only continue to suffer the longer we held on to her. Within her last few minutes of life, the many happy memories of our time together played on a loop in my head. My best friend was no longer going to lick my face when i was sad or play hide and seek with me, she was going to heaven. He then began explaining the process of putting her to sleep while I held onto her paw hoping this was all a bad dream.

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At the time of my parents divorce i don't remember spending much time with my mom. I was always with my dad or at my grandparents house. My dad's sister lived with my grandparents and she had spent a lot of time with me when i was over. I used to ask to spend the night at their house because I wanted to hang out with auntie Julie. She made me feel like I was her own child. Auntie Julie was my favorite, I used to sit outside of her room for hours waiting till she said it was okay for me to come in.

I loved being around her because she was always so excited to see me and spend time with me. Her room smelled like nail polish and plumerias, weird combo right? she had a countertop full of all different kinds of nail polishes and the pretty little gems that you put on one finger. I would always try to be sneaky and grab a color to paint my own nails but she would always catch me in the act and say "don't try to be sneaky with me little lady" followed by her tossing me onto the bed and tickling me until I said I wouldn't try it again. Her passing didn't have much of an effect on me when I was little, I had no idea that she was gone.

I think I finally understood what I lost when I was about 10, I remember asking my dad "why doesn't auntie Julie come home early to visit me anymore?" and asking my grandma why she didn't pick me up at the park or let me pretend drive in the garage like she used to. Now that it's different I look back and think about all the toys that she used to bring me or how much she would make me laugh and I miss it so much.

I have this wall dedicated to her in my room and it's just pictures of her and all of her friends, all the adventures in places that she's traveled and it's kind of my way of staying connected to her. Everything that she's experienced I put on my bucket list, I have a list of the spots that she traveled to when she was in Europe and where she went in the states and someday I hope I get the chance to re-create her pictures. Looking back at the pictures from her funeral, I have no memory of that day. My dad in these past couple years has told me that she died during complications of surgery but I have no recollection of attending her funeral or them packing up her things. I wish when I was younger that I understood more, I wish I understood that she was gone and that my best friend auntie Julie wasn't there anymore.

It's weird now, since sophomore year i've wanted to live my life the way she did, desired getting the same piercings as her and wanting to make her proud. Recently I found her trunk of pictures and letters from friends, and things that she hung up in her room. Going through them brought tears to my eyes because everyone had something great to say about her. She had several collages decorated with pictures of us, going through those definitely made me smile. There was this picture set, the first few pictures were of me on a swing and the next two shots were taken by me, they were really close to her face but her smile was so big that just looking at it could make you smile. I just hope that I made her proud and hope that someday I can go on all the adventures that she did.

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Halloween 2015, that's when i got my first dog since Makana passed away. My dad had texted me earlier in the day saying that we were going to go look at some puppies down on the North Shore, keyword look. I convinced him to let my best friend come along in hopes that she could help me convince him to let us go home with the dog. The drive down to North Shore was filled with singing and laughter, I think it was so loud because me and my sister were so excited about the possibility of getting a dog. After an hour of driving we had arrived at what looked like a farm, it definitely wasn't the cleanest, there was mud everywhere not to mention it smelled like poop. There were at least 10 little dogs running around.

The farm had a one room house where the guy who was selling the dogs slept, outside there were trees, mud and a big area for the pups to roam. Off to the side there was a little food area outside filled with dog snacks and dog food. I remember my dad being skeptical about the dog's health because it wasn't the cleanest environment, but the owner assured us of the dogs health and he really wanted to make sure that they would go to a loving home. As i recall he wanted to make sure these dogs would go to a family who would give them lots of love and wouldn't cut their ears and throw them into a dog fighting ring.

He only fed them food without corn and wheat, he fed them ahi fat slabs that he would go bright and early in the morning to pick up from Foodland. While my dad was talking story with him my best friend and I took turns carrying three or four different dogs while my sister had picked up another dog and refused to put her down. That's when my dad knew he was screwed, my sister wanted one dog and I wanted a different one. At first he said "if we're going home with a dog it's only going to be one not two, you guys better figure it out."

We both sat there for about twenty minutes waiting for someone to give in when all of a sudden the biggest dog from the litter comes running out from under the house, sees us, then runs right back under. My dad immediately says "oh let's get that one, it's antisocial just like you Michaela hahaha" My sister looked like she was going to cry and my dad gave in. Fast forward an hour and were sitting in the car on the way home with not one but two puppies. My sister got the dog that she wanted and I got the big antisocial puppy.

I remember bringing them home and not letting them out of my arms, I was too happy & way too excited that we had two new additions to the family. I had friends coming over in a couple of hours to get ready for Halloween so I put some tarps and blankets down on my bedroom floor and carried my dog in there. Koa's first look in the mirror and he was scared, he jumped at it, he scratched it, he tried to bark at it and he watched the dog in the mirror move back-and-forth along with him but had no idea he was looking at himself. A year and a half later and the dogs have gotten huge and we couldn't have been happier to have picked these specific puppies.

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