

The Funeral

Painful reunion

Freezing air

Jet-black ties

Fold-out chairs

Anguished hearts

Hardened fears

Clenched hands

Falling tears

Ashes to ashes,

Dust to dust

Cancer's knife

Already thrust

Coffin lowered

Body gone

A loving Grandma

Passing on

Her last smile,

And wrinkle lines

Forever imprinted

In my mind

Hands held

Hugs extended

Broken hearts

Slowly mended

Flowers planted

Every year

A reminder To

keep Those

we love Near

The Expedition

The cold air whipped around my face, stinging my cheeks as we began to climb. It was Christmas Eve, during the coldest winter the small village had seen in years. There were ten of us; ten who decided to hike up and over an alp, above the village of Tschier, Switzerland. As none of us were experienced hikers, we devised a deceptively simple plan.

1. Follow the red markers on the trail.
2. Trek over the mountain
3. Descend into the valley
4. Come safely back into the village.

After we explained our idea, our relatives from the village gave us one simple warning.

"Do not, under any circumstances, leave the path."

The advice was straightforward, so, with backpacks replete with water and food, we initiated our hike.

Our group began to follow the trail, in a single file. Being the youngest and only girl, I was determined to prove myself.

Most of the cold abated as we exerted ourselves, sweating through our clothes.

Despite the difficulty of the hike, the view of our surroundings was breath-taking. Everything, from the white crystals of snow, glistening in the sunshine, to the pine trees swaying lightly in the breeze, was so beautiful it could have been a painting.

Our laughter rang through the mountains as we joked, about how we looked like the Fellowship of the Ring as they travelled through Caradhras.

We stopped a few times for a break, opening trail mixes and sandwiches.

At around midday, the people in the front of the group suddenly came to a standstill, causing me to run into those in front of me.

We shuffled forward through the snow to see why we had stalled. Our view of the path we were following was obscured by rocks and trees. My dad started talking about a new trail and pointed to the slope to our left. I turned my attention to it and saw, for the first time, what seemed to be a direct path up the mountainside. He suggested that we should leave the path we had been following for hours and embark on this new route.

Forgetting the warnings, we all agreed to turn away from the marked path and follow what we soon realised was an old riverbed that had frozen over and been covered with snow.

At first the trail seemed easy, barely more challenging than our first path. We continued to climb, not noticing the quickly increasing angle of the slope. Our feet began to sink deeper and deeper within the snow.

The snow was getting thicker and began to inch up our legs as we climbed, but we weren't willing to turn around just yet. We knew we had to be close. The further we climbed, the more quickly the summit seemed to recede.

Continuing to climb, we were yet to realise the full extent of our mistake. We trudged through thigh-deep snow, relying on our fatigued muscles not to give way. Each time we pulled out a leg, the harder it became to pull out the next one. One foot after another, we were barely moving anywhere, almost immobilised in waist deep snow. Glancing back down the slope, we realised we couldn't go back. It was so steep we would risk our lives in an attempt to go down.

We came to a ridge and soon found ourselves trapped, not being able to go up, due to the incredibly steep incline, and not able to go down, due to the rocks and narrow path we had already traipsed.

The sun dipped over the next mountain and the shadows began to lengthen. The sweat that had soaked our clothes earlier in the day, now clung to our bodies, freezing us to the core. My legs ached with exhaustion and I couldn't go on. I collapsed, legs buried within the snow, unable to drag my legs out again. As if a light went out in my body, I gave in. I started crying. Cold, stinging tears streamed down my face, turning into deep, racking sobs, and, for the first time in my life, I thought I was going to die...

The Notification

Ding.

My phone's notification signal went off. A shout of joy escaped me. Hallelujah!! I hadn't received a direct message from Instagram in, like, a whole minute. I started to worry for a second there, but (thank the Lord) I was saved just in time by the beautiful, pitch-perfect note that rang out like music – my message alert.

I slid the Instagram notice across the screen with one graceful sweep of my finger. Instantly, the gorgeous colours of Instagram suffused the pixels on my phone. I breathed a sigh of satisfaction.

This was a rare and pure sight, full of beauty, that I have never grown used to.

The notification came from a DM. My face lit up with joy. Sitting there in my happiness, the birds started chirping merrily, and the sun started shining more brightly. I clicked on the recent messages page.

The message was from Alexandria.

You hear me, A-lex-an-dria.

The world went dark as I pulled my hood up around my face and whispered her name again.

Alexandria. I pulled the drawstrings on my hoodie tighter and sat in the darkest corner of my room.

Dark emo-teen music played in my head as I contemplated my whole life up to this point.

To fill you in, Alexandria - my post-best friend - and I had some beef the other day.

She left me on opened.

She seemed to think that I should care that her dog died. BUT SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO GO AND LEAVE ME ON OPENED, NOW DID SHE? That means she CHOSE to go on to my message and NOT reply because "her dog died." Lame excuse if you ask me. As you can probably understand, that was the end of our friendship.

As you can presumably comprehend, I am a very forgiving person, but this is one step too far.

Might I mention that, last week, she tweeted about her drive to school. This all seems fine, it's normal to tweet about your life, right? Except, I wasn't even tagged. I go to the SAME SCHOOL AS HER, and she didn't even tag me in her tweet. Rude.

The week before that, she shared a meme on Facebook with a friend of hers and didn't send it to me too. I mean, is she even my friend? Friends include friends in their meme-sharing. Then, she had the audacity to tell me 'it's no big deal.' No big deal??? That's a very big deal, if you ask me. She deprived me of my RIGHT to know about that meme.

Now she messages me???? What could she want?

No. You know what, POST BEST FRIEND? I'm going to leave you on opened, see how YOU like it.

After that I'm going to throw my phone across the room and never touch it again.

At least, until I get a new notification.

