

## Tears

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There was a call. "Your father is dead."

She was in shock and could not utter a word or even shed a tear. She rushed to her father's house. After four hours' drive, she finally arrived at her father's home, which was an extremely old single-storied house. It had been a very long time since she left this home. Standing outside, she could see light blazing in that old house, as if someone was waiting for her already. And through the living room curtains, she could see that there was indeed someone in the living room.

Her uncle was already in the living room when she entered the house. It seemed that her uncle was calm. The girl didn't say anything and neither did her uncle. Silence surrounded them. She desperately dug the memory of her father, trying to find something about her whole family. But she couldn't. She just couldn't. Because the little girl knew that she did not have the so-called "family" at all.

Her uncle told her the way her father died—he was lying alone in his own house, for three days, waiting to be found.

A couple of hours later, a tall man came. He said he would take them to the funeral home. As they drove up to the funeral home, she felt that her stomach was not only in her throat, but that it had actually escaped through her mouth. Her limbs felt as if it was filled with cement. She now opened the car door, crossed the gravel drive and entered a funeral home to view her father's body.

The girl had no idea what happened to her father. It drove her insane. She hated to imagine the scene that he was cold and alone before he died, but she could not control herself. She repeatedly told herself that what was lying now in the coffin was a shell of a man, but just the body happened to be her father's. She was still too stunned to make sense of what she was now feeling. Her stomach was knotted and her hands numb. She heard his footsteps clacking along the cold floor. She slowed the pace. Now she was standing outside the funeral home, feeling her own foot totally numb before the gate.

They were greeted by a tall man with a sympathetic face. It was an expression she knew it couldn't be from his heart. This was business as usual. The girl seemed to hear the voice in his heart saying --*thank you, come again!* She felt a strong antipathy towards him.

*Such a hypocrite! Everyone around me is hypocritical!*

Also, the atmosphere of sadness disgusted her. Was there anyone who was really sad or were they just pretending to be sorry about the death for her?

The coffin was opened by the tall man. Her attention could not be stripped

away from his body. Standing there, the girl saw the cold dead man with a terrible expression, which was filled with hopelessness, fear, and loneliness. She saw a teardrop falling from her uncle's cheeks.

She knew that the body would lie forever still in the plain wooden box. Ironically, the little girl's eyes gave him no sign of love or farewell.

She knew he was gone. This was no longer her father. She wanted to cry, but it seemed that her eyes were permanently dry.

*I don't know who I am, nor even what I live for. Why is life so hard?*

She thought that she would feel herself absolutely free; however, she could not sense this kind of freedom. Her face was paler than before. Now as she closed her eyes, none of the shifting images would hold steady in her brain. She still could not remember any happy memory about her father, as the shifting images were played in her mind. It was too messy for her to think of anything. And she did not know why she could not even shed a tear for her father's death. Maybe her heart had become frozen cold since the day her father started to become a crazy alcoholic, and since the day her mother left this family without a goodbye. Or maybe she was too tired to cry. But who cared? Who really cared about her?



She had plunged into the pool of memories.

*Why was my father a crazy alcoholic and my mother, such a cruel woman? Why didn't she take me along the day she went away? Why couldn't I have everything my friends have? Why is my life a tragedy? Why? It's unfair! It is totally unfair!*

A hand touched her shoulder and it was her uncle's. She was still in the funeral home. For the girl, the rest was a blur yet the time at the funeral home felt like eternity.

She was ashen-faced, lost for a while.

"I can't keep looking back," she murmured.

She could hear herself talking but it wasn't really her. All of a sudden, a great wave fell upon her soul. She shed a tear before she knew it. The tears started to flow out from her eyes. At first she just blubbered quietly. And then she started crying, breaking down and sobbing aloud. Now she howled out louder, letting out her long-year-suffering once and for all. Her tears like cataract of rain flooded the street, drowning her, sinking her into the deep sea of sorrow.....

*It was New Year's Eve. My Dad lifted me onto his shoulders so I could see what I wanted to see in the crowded faces. My Mom was right by my side..... I finally recalled something about my family.*

And now she realized how much she truly needed a big cry to let out her pain, to let everything go. And how much that goodbye was necessary. The

death of her father let her realize that she still loved her father, but it was too late to express any feelings to him. It was too late.