



A Turtle Necklace

Did my friend ever read the note and realize the significance of this gesture and just how close I really came to ending my life?

Every kid has that one special possession that they value above anything else. Do you remember what yours was and is there any circumstance under which you would willingly part with it? I once wore a dainty choker necklace made of simple black roped cord with an adorable baby turtle charm that sat perfectly in the hollow of my neck.

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I named that little turtle Tuckie and wore the necklace every day. I remember the day I said goodbye to the world and gave my favorite possession away to a friend. I had been struggling with a raging eating disorder for five years when the depression hit me hard with a feeling of hopelessness overtaking my life. On what was to be the last day of my life, the activities and social interactions were actually pretty uneventful. My parents gave me a hug in the morning before sending me off into the world. I got along just fine with my teachers all day long. Nothing was outwardly visible to those closest to me except I was exhibiting one quiet indicator of the dire state of my mental health.

I wasn't wearing my beloved choker necklace. You see, I stopped wanting to wear the necklace when it began to remind me of less complicated times before I got sick and when small gifts from my parents filled my heart with joy. I hadn't been happy for months when I decided to write my best friend a goodbye note and give her the necklace on our last walk home after school, a daily trip we had made together for years. The school bell rang and I made my way down to the walking path that lined our main street. I blended into the normal crowd of approximately fifteen kids as we walked together on the winding path away from school. My mood got heavier with each casual goodbye as I made a point to give a final hug to each of my peers before they broke away in their own direction.

I thought a lot during that long walk about the struggles that led me down this path as images of my family flooded my mind and I began to feel guilty about the thought of leaving my parents so devastated. By the time we made it to my stop, there were only the two of us left and I pulled the necklace out of my pocket and handed it to her along with my note. I remember the happy look she had on her face as she thanked me for the necklace before quickly stuffing the note into her pocket without reading. I watched as she continued down the walking path, turning back only once to wave at me before I lost sight of her around the bend. I used to wonder what came of my favorite turtle necklace? Did my friend ever read the note and realize the significance of this gesture and just how close I really came to ending my life.