

My Beautifully Broken Life

OH WHAT A STORY!

JUNE 6, 2016 | MY BEAUTIFULLY BROKEN LIFE | 2 COMMENTS

Today I was driving to church to drop my youngest at the nursery and head to Starbucks to sit with myself and ponder while sipping iced tea. I love getting to be there for an hour and to just sit listening to my thoughts and staring at trees for a bit. It has been a healthy thing to become more comfortable with just being me....enjoying something alone.

But as I pulled in, a young woman was sitting in a minivan with its hood up and crying as she talked on the phone. I couldn't stop on my way in....so I stopped on my way out and asked her if everything was OK.

She responded that her car had stopped working, and she had a tow truck on the way. So I told her I was running on an errand and would return to make sure her tow arrived. Then it hit me that she looked about my daughter's age. She was a little distraught and a little tired looking.....a bone weary....soul weary kind of tired. I thought back to the night my car had been on fire, and I was standing in the middle of the road texting my friend.....trying to figure out where to go and what to do. I recalled all the lovely people who had stepped in and helped me reorder my world that evening.

I headed to Starbucks and ordered two iced teas to go and a blueberry scone. I had no idea if she would even like iced tea but I figured...hot day....iced tea....what could go wrong?

When I pulled in, she had put the hood of the van down and was just sitting in her car waiting.....looking weary.

I walked up and told her I had some tea to help her pass the time.....and she looked at me with eyes that seemed to see hope for the first time in a LONG time. She started crying almost immediately....telling me she couldn't believe her car had broken down again....and she was on her way to work and now would be late....and that...her dad had just passed away last month!

Goodness.....that was a lot to carry in one heart. She was crying and telling me how thankful she was for this tea.

I was praying and just asking God to come for this little girl's heart. I told her I understood exactly how it felt to have a car die, and that I would be glad to wait with her while the tow made its way to her rescue.

She hopped out of the car and gave me a big hug.....and then started telling me her story. And what a story! I was close to tears for most of it. This little girl has faced a big, dangerous, pain-filled world in her 22 years. Her father passing away had rocked her stability and given her too much responsibility at so tender an age.

She told me of the abuse from her mother at age 5....a mother whom she loves fiercely to this day and cares for daily. She told me about her brothers who are much older but who contribute nothing to her well-being and instead live off of her small wages. She told me of her boyfriend and his child and the custody battles and the heartache of trying to make relationships work in a broken world. I heard about her very successful sister who lives so far away who already helps a cousin...."who needs it more than I do." she told me. I couldn't imagine someone needing help more than this one!

Then she looked wistfully out and said that she had been contemplating coming back to a church and asked me what denomination this one was. She had gone at one point in her life....but the church had judged her for her homelessness and been a dangerous place. She felt they had been fake and never really cared for her.

I told her that she was welcome to come to my church anytime! And I told her this was not a place where she would be unsafe....but instead would find people who would love her. I told her to come and look for me so she could sit by me!

She sighed.....and I knew that she was longing for someone to come for her....someone to take care of her...to make her safe in this broken world. She said she would think about it.

She told me about her dream job....working childcare. She is trying to take classes to earn her degree and had to quit to grieve her father.

She went on to tell me all about her good father....even though he dealt with an alcohol addiction....he battled through and taught her so much. She said..."I watched him. He taught me so much more by what he did than what he ever said." And those words rang so true in my heart. Fathers teach us by their actions.....not so much by their words.

She told me about her mother...and the schizophrenia that has been a constant battle in her mother's life. The sadness just continued to pour out of this young lady's eyes and heart.

"No one tells you how lonely you will be after high school." she said. I told her I knew how she felt. When we are in the world of grownups...we often forget to reach out and make friends. We get wrapped up in our world and forget that others need us to show up and help shoulder their story. I asked her to consider reaching out and finding a church....reaching out and finding friends and others to support her.

Then she told me of her other dream.....telling her story!

She said that somewhere inside she knows she is meant for so much more. So many people try to tell her that she will never become anything great....but she feels greatness within her!

I told her without a doubt that there is greatness in her. And she looked at me.....

"I want to write a book....I want to tell my story so others can see that people with hardship can make it. I am making it." she said. "I think sometimes hurting people just need to read about someone else's pain that might be similar to theirs...so they know they aren't alone, and they know that they can make it."

And I stopped and told her that when she is famous, I will remember her. I will say....*I took that beautiful girl some iced tea on a hot day.*

And she laughed....and looked at me and said...."Oh..without a doubt! You will get a shout out in my story!"

So here is to shout outs.....in other people's stories! Michelle....you have a place in my story! You have borne more than any 22-year-old ever should! I will be praying for you constantly! I am praying you make another stab at church.....trusting others to love you is vulnerable....but so worth it!

Here is to telling our stories! I cannot wait to read hers! She is right....sometimes we just want to read about someone else's pain...so we know we aren't alone and that we will make it!

I said good-bye that morning thanking her for her story. I told her I was blessed beyond measure to have even a line in her story.

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2 THOUGHTS ON “OH WHAT A STORY!”



shannon skinn

JUNE 6, 2016 AT 10:26 AM

You and your heart and your story huntress greatness are such treasures!! love you



Charlene

JUNE 6, 2016 AT 10:29 AM

Broken cars of broken persons! Ugh! Haven't we all been there?! His compassion for both of you is evident. 2 storytellers meet! A beautiful investment! True stories.