Accident

I just sat there on my bed blankly staring out the rain-splattered window of my bedroom. It has been raining for nearly three days. Ever since the funeral. I haven’t slept, eaten or showered since the accident. I’ve been lost in my own world blocking out what has been going on around me. My father puts food on my nightstand in the hopes that I will eat. Later, he wordlessly takes the plate away and puts the now-cold food in the fridge.

Before the “accident,” my life was already going downhill. My parents were fighting all of the time, and I was rejected from the college of my dreams. The worst thing that could happen? I lost my best friend in more ways than one.

I don’t know when it started exactly, but by the time I realized it, she was already gone. Carly was the best thing that has ever happened to me. She was the epitome of who I wished I could be. Outgoing, funny, smart, talented. Everything I was not. I didn’t realize until I read the letter that everything that I thought was true was not. The girl who seemed so happy and confident turned out to be just like me. Insecure and unhappy.

I must’ve missed something somewhere. Now, I don’t know what to do without her. CC helped me to fully realize my full potential and talent at singing and writing. CC was the reason that I tried out for the school musical. If she wasn’t on the sidelines cheering me on, then, I wouldn’t be where I am now. She was always there for me no matter how busy she was, especially when I needed a shoulder to cry on. Now that I’ve had time to think about it, I don’t think I’ve ever seen CC cry. That is how happy she seemed. I just wish I could go back and change the past.

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Excerpt from Carly Carder’s diary:
I cried as I wrote the letter that will change Ange’s life forever. I don’t think I’ve ever cried so hard in my life. I am finally telling her things that I never spoke of. Things that were constantly running through my mind and were torturing me.

Dearest

Angela,

1/06/05

I don’t know where or who I’ll be when you read this. I may be happily married or I may be a lonely old woman. I haven’t told you everything about me and I deeply regret that. I may come off as a happy and fearless person, but that is what I trained myself to be. It was the mask that I hid the real me behind.

I am aware that you haven’t met my dad. Every time you came over, I made an excuse as to why he wasn’t there. The truth is…my dad, Rob Carder, is dead. He died in a freak accident two years ago, six months before we moved to Sweetwater. I didn’t mean to lie, but I was basically out of my mind with sadness and anger. I started to pretend that he was just on another business trip and that is what kept me going.

While I am telling you everything, I should probably tell you about my life in Dolma. At school, I was always known as the shy kid, the geek, the one that hardly ever talks. I was picked on a lot and was made the butt of all the kids’ jokes. It’s kind of ironic how people talk about you when you are in the same room. They think you can’t hear them, but you can and you are crushed. I never had a true friend until I met you. When we moved, I decided that the new school was going to be different. I would make a name for myself. I buried the shy girl back in Dolma.

So, I became a risk taker. I guess that explains why I dated Gary. I never told you the complete truth about the night that we broke up. At first, Gary seemed very caring, but a few weeks later, he began pressuring me to do “IT” with him. I repeatedly kept saying no. One night Gary got really drunk. I remember taking a walk that evening. The weather was gorgeous. Anyway, he found me, and kept saying that I was sexy and beautiful and other lurid things. I, once again, said no. Then, he forced himself on me. He raped me. I didn’t come to school the next day because I was ashamed. I faked being sick so Mom would let
me stay home. I realize now that I should have told someone, but at the time, I thought things would go back to the way they were before at my old school. I should have turned to my friends, but I was afraid that they would turn on me and shun me like my old friends did. I still don’t understand why they stopped talking to me.

After reading this, you’ll realize that I’m not really who you think I am. Sure, I cannot ever be mean to others on purpose because I know what words and actions can do to a person. And I love to help others out because it gives me a sense of fulfillment and it helps me to forget. Forget until I am by myself where everything threatens to wash over me. I am not as put together as you think. I am so lost right now, and I feel like I’m screaming but no one hears. Things would be different if I just told everyone the truth. (My diary is in my desk.)

Please don’t think, after reading this, that you were a terrible friend. Honestly, you are the best friend that I’ve never had before and I am jealous of you. You are everything that I wish I could be. You are smart and beautiful. You can say exactly what you feel and think about things. Most of all, you are able to be yourself, no matter what, and I love you for that. I’ll understand if you never want to speak to me again, but no matter what happens, I’ll always be here for you. Love, your best friend, CC

I put the letter in a sealed envelope with Angela Anderson written on it in my loopy handwriting, and hid it in the second drawer of my dresser with my diary. Then, I cried until I couldn’t cry anymore. After I exhausted my tear ducts, I dried my face, and, then, I took a long hot shower.

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The last line continues to reverberate in my ears. “…no matter what happens, I’ll always be here… no matter what happens, I’ll always be here…” What did she mean by “no matter what happens?” Did she commit suicide? Why and how could she have done that? So many questions, almost no answers.

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The phone rings. The dispatcher answers on the first ring, “Hello, Sweetwater Police Station.”
“We need help,” the woman cried hysterically. “A car just crashed, and it looks really bad.”

“Please calm down, ma’am. Can you tell me where the car is?”

“On Shelton Road just south of Holly Wurst’s place,” the woman sobbed uncontrollably.

“What is her house number?”

“4431,” the woman choked out.

“Sit tight. We’re sending help.”

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Less than ten minutes later, several police cars and an EMS were on the scene. What they saw would be forever etched in their minds.

Apparently, the now-smashed-up car went off of the left side of the road, rolled twice and stopped because it crashed into multiple trees. All the windows were broken, the driver’s side door was torn off, and the roof was smashed in. Also, the engine had caught fire. If anyone was still in the car, they couldn’t have survived.

The girl in the car had been thrown a good twenty five feet away from the wreckage. She was lying on the ground with her arms spread out, kind of like Jesus’ arms on the cross. Her eyes were wide open and glazed over. Her body was basically broken. Cuts covered her entire body and blood covered a huge spot on her right leg. Right away, it was obvious that the girl was dead.

The Deputy, Sam Marshall, found a plain black purse that was also thrown from the car. He found the girl’s driver’s license in her wallet. The dead girl’s name was Carly Carder. She was only seventeen.

Deputy Marshall called Carly’s mother. Mrs. Carder answered, “Hello, this is Mary Carder.”

“Hello, Mrs. Carder, this is Deputy Marshall,” he responded.

“Hi, how are you?”

“Honestly, I am not good. I really wish that I didn’t have to make this call.”

This comment immediately triggered a reaction from Mary. “Why? What’s wrong?”

“Mrs. Carder, your daughter was in an accident. It was really bad.”
“Is she okay? Carly’s not hurt, is she?”

“She’s gone, Mrs. Carder. I’m sorry.” Deputy Marshall heard something drop to the floor. “Mary? Mary, are you all right?”

“My baby,” Mary began to sob over and over again.

The deputy comforted Carly’s mother and, then, he told her to meet him at the hospital.

As I drove to St. Joan’s Hospital, I had this deep-seated gut feeling that something had happened to CC. I began to get more anxious as the seconds passed and, by the time I arrived at the hospital, I had broken into a nervous, cold sweat.

I met Mrs. Carder and Deputy Marshall in the hospital lobby. Mrs. Carder was crying and Deputy Marshall was trying to comfort her. As soon as Mary saw me, she rushed forward and enveloped me in a very tight hug. If it is at all possible, Mary was crying even harder than before.

Now, I was really beginning to freak out. Something terrible must’ve happened.

“Mary, would you like me to tell her?” Deputy asked.

“N-no, I m-must t-tell her m-m-myself,” Mary choked out between body-racking sobs.

“Mary, what happened? Is CC okay?” I asked with a panicked look on my normally calm and smooth face.

“C-Carly is d-dead.” If Mrs. Carder was not holding onto me so tightly, I would have collapsed on the floor. Everything that happened after that was a blur.

The next day, Mary brought a blue envelope over to the Anderson’s home. No one answered the door when she rang the doorbell, so Mary wrote a note saying, “Angela, I found this envelope in Carly’s desk last night.”

Mary’s handwriting was very wobbly instead of its regular, precise neatness. Mary finished writing the note, and put the note and letter in the Anderson’s mailbox. Taking one last look at the grand home, Mary climbed in her black Volkswagon Jetta and slowly drove home to an empty house.
The next few weeks after my best friend’s funeral were very rocky, to say the least. I became so withdrawn to the point that my parents forced me to go to a psychiatrist.

At first, the hour went by without me saying that much, just an occasional yes, no, or okay. Slowly, I began to tell Ms. Jenny about the nightmares that have been plaguing me since CC’s “accident.”

The dream would always start out the same way. We were at my house fighting about Gary Stephens. Carly left in a huff and slammed the door. I began to run after her, but I just couldn’t catch up. I felt like I was running in slow-motion as I watched Carly lose control of her car and crash into the trees. By the time I got to her, her eyes were open, but she was already dead. Carly’s baby blue eyes stared up at me accusatorily, as if she blamed what happened on me. This is the spot where I always woke up screaming.

At first, my mom would come into my room and try to comfort me. But after waking up the same way for nearly two weeks, she stopped coming because I wouldn’t, or couldn’t, tell her. That’s when my parents forced me see a shrink. I didn’t want to go, of course.

After I told Miss Jenny about my dream, I began to tell her a bit more about my dead best friend at every succeeding session. I told Miss Jenny about CC’s personality, her likes and dislikes, and virtually everything that I had known about her. Eventually, I decided to tell her about CC’s autopsy.

The autopsy was performed directly following the accident and the results came back a few weeks after Carly Carder was laid to rest. The results showed that Carly’s BAC was well over the legal limit and many of the injuries were caused from being thrown from the vehicle. Her left lung and stomach were punctured, and many bones were either broken or fractured. Also, her right leg was torn near the hip, exposing bone and muscle. Cuts and bruises covered her body and were the only minor injuries found. The coroner also found partially-healed cuts on her stomach, as if from a razor blade. Suspicions of self-inflicted bodily harm was confirmed when the Sweetwater Police Department found a razor blade hidden above the Carder’s bathroom doorway.

Not only did I have to deal with the fact that CC is gone forever, but I also had to deal with the new-found information of the circumstances surrounding my best friend’s death.
The SPD had ruled CC’s death as a suicide.

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I am standing before you now, seven years after I lost my best friend, to prove that I overcame that major obstacle in my life. I am here to tell you that no matter how terrible your life may seem to you now, later you will look back and realize that you’ve become a stronger person because of it. I can attest to that. I had a very rough time during the first year following CC’s death, but I made a promise to myself. I would tell the whole world my story.

By traveling around the country and telling my story to many different races, age groups, and walks of life, I am trying to get across the point that poor communication is the reason for so many misunderstandings and social problems in our society. Some things are not said because the person may be afraid that he or she will be judged or made the butt of everyone’s jokes. He or she may be afraid of being shunned by his or her friends or family. That should not be the case, though. We should be able to tell the people we trust about our thoughts, feelings and problems without worrying about being made fun of or shunned. Instead of assuming that we will be made fun of, we should give a trusted person a chance to be there for us, to support us, and to help us throughout our times of trouble. CC never really gave me that chance because the events that occurred in her life were not unveiled to me until after she passed. I am telling you now to take every opportunity to say what you are feeling, and to say what you think or believe. I am telling you to open up so that someone may have the opportunity to help you. I have told you mine, so now it’s time to let your story be heard.