

BLUE - TRUTH

“Gabby came into the kitchen one morning. I was sipping tea at the table with my head resting in my hand.

“Good morning, Mom,” she said. “I’d ask how the book is coming along, but I see that might be a loaded question.”

I loved my kid’s sense of humor. She brought a smile to my face before I said, “Good morning. I’m just struggling with this section of the book, Babe.”

Gabby was a strong writer. It was one of her many gifts. She was a published author by the age of ten for her poetry. She re-lived her story through the words in her poems and understood without any words what my story really was about. She also had a passion for acting and took classes where she played characters of all kinds. Her story with her dad allowed her to go to dark places if the script called for it.

She grabbed the milk and the chocolate syrup out of the fridge and started talking. Gabby never stopped talking. We found humor and laughed when I stared off into space before she was finished switching from subject to subject. Long gone were the days she wouldn’t notice I’d checked out of the conversation. That’s what happens when they grow up. They start to notice when you’re listening and when you’re not. We knew these days were soon to be a memory since she was leaving for college in less than a year.

While she was pouring half the bottle of chocolate syrup into her milk, taking a second to breathe between her stories, I took the opportunity to ask, “When you have to do a really tough scene for your acting class or when you’re writing a poem that is too close to your truth, what’s your process?”

Stirring her extra chocolatey milk reminded me of the days we used to make chocolate milk when she was little and drink it from a spoon together.

She was so little then, and now she looked at me in the most poised, serious adult way, continuing to stir her milk, “You lock yourself in your room,” she said. “You allow yourself to feel and you tell yourself it’s okay for right now. You have to get these words out. Nobody will know how you feel until you come from a place of raw emotion. You listen to some music, cry about it as hard as you want to. Then shut your eyes and remind yourself you’ll wake up in the morning before you go to sleep. It’s all over. You don’t live there anymore.”

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Staring back at me was my thirty-eight-year-old self in her eighteen-year-old body reiterating what I'd been teaching her in effort to save her. In this moment, she was my teacher. The power behind my intention of breaking the cycle for them showed up that morning over English breakfast tea and chocolate milk. I took a deep breath, kissing her forehead before she left for work at the car wash. I watched the back of her red sweatshirt and laughed as her chocolate milk sloshed around everywhere. She was running late and also liked the cup without the lid." © Sapphire Rain