

“One Last Time”

A short, dialogue-based twine story about regret

Standing outside the hospital room, a heavy mix of feelings washes the 12-hour flight grime off you. Because that’s what Hollywood teaches us you should do when a loved one is about to kick the bucket.

You brace yourself as you push the white door through the white walls surrounded by white scrubs. Dad’s breathing through tubes, hooked up like a robot. You quietly suppress a gag as he turns his head ever so slightly toward you.

[[Approach the bed | Approach]]

[[Give in and leave | Leave]]

::Leave

Too bad Hollywood doesn’t teach us how to deal with trauma. That one look was enough as you felt your heart skip 5 beats. You leave the room, the hospital, the country and hopefully the whole story behind you. END

::Approach

For the longest time, not a single word falls to the ground. Your father stares at you, you stare at the window, then back at the bed, you pick up the medical chart, you skim through the Latin and Greek medical jargon unsure of

"Why did you come?" he asks, stopping your eyes in their tracks.

You struggle, stammer, stutter, searching for the right words.

"I haven’t got long left, have I?" he finds some for you.

You just nod and swallow what feels like a whole potato down your throat.

[[Find the courage | Confront]]

[[Keep the peace | Submit]]

[[Give up | Leave2]]

::Leave2

Too bad Hollywood doesn’t teach us how to deal with trauma. That snark was pleasant memory enough for you. You leave the room, the hospital, the country and hopefully the whole story behind you. END

::Submit

You did it for years. You bite your tongue and fake it, one last time.

“Not long, no. I just wanted to see you one last time”

“Who said I wanted to see you?”, his eyes are the same as they have ever been. No consuming regret, no amends necessary.

“Please. I didn’t come to fight. We don’t have to talk if you’d rather not. Let’s just sit together, quietly, one last time.”

“Very magnanimous of you. Grab a chair and enjoy the show”

You sit with him, swallow yourself, almost reaching for his hand when his breathing starts becoming patchier and patchier. You won't ever get to hear what you wanted from him, never any other word in fact, and sometimes that's enough.

END

::Confront

You didn't for years. This is your last chance, one last time.

"Not long, no. I wanted to see you, one last time."

"Who said I did?"

"I don't care. You owe me. I kept the peace all my life. Afraid of what the family would say, afraid they wouldn't believe me. On her deathbed mum's eyes were begging me to say anything, and yet I kept quiet. I wanted to tell her so bad." Tears are now running off your cheeks. "And you knew. All my life you knew and yet not a single word from you. No regrets, no amends."

"I'm sorry..." your father whispers, extending his left hand to you.

[[Lean in | Lean]]

[[Stay still | Still]]

::Still

"... you are crazy." His words smack you right across the face and bring back echoes of that conversation in his studio, decades ago, back from Uncle's house.

"Still with this fantasy? Nobody would believe you because everybody knows you are crazy," he says as he falls back onto his pillows.

"You think I'd put your mother and everybody else through something like that based on the imagination of a 7-year-old? I won't drag the name of this family thr"

"Fuck the name of this family. It dies with you"

You suck back your tears as you slam the door behind you. END

::Lean

Struggling, you reach out and take his hand. As he pulls you closer his eyes widen as if really sorry. Your heart is swelling as you are bracing to become the better person you were always destined to be, the person the therapists would always rave about. But then his grip tightens and, with a pained grunt, he flies his right hand fast across the bed, hard across your face. You recoil in shock as his dead body falls to the ground with a smack and the machines start beeping. END