

PRWC 14- "If I Were Never Here..."

*"I've lost loved ones in my life  
Who never knew how much I loved them  
Now I live with the regret  
That my true feelings for them never were revealed  
So I made a promise to myself  
To say each day how much she means to me  
And avoid that circumstance  
Where there's no second chance to tell her how I feel"  
~ "If Tomorrow Never Comes" Garth Brooks*

Darkness. That's all I could see was darkness.

"Where am I?" I called out.

No response.

"HELLO? Is anyone there? Where am I?" I called out again.

"You are here." A voice said.

"Ok. Where is here?" I asked.

"Here is here." The voice said again.

"Who are you? Show yourself!" I commanded.

A woman stepped out of the shadows. She was very pretty and looked kind of familiar.

"Who are you?" I asked.

"My name is Helen Bradley. I'm your grandmother."

I gasped, "Dad and Uncle Blake's mom...but you're de...am I dead too?" I asked.

"Not yet. Harley, you are at an in between world. You get a rare choice. You get to decide if you go on living or die. It is your choice but you don't have a lot of time to make it." Helen said.

"What's the point of living? Everyone would be better off without me anyway." I said.

"You really think so? Ok. As a gift to you my dear granddaughter I'm going to show you what the world would be like in 10 years if Harley Bradley were to die." Helen said.

"Ok, take it away." I said.

"Any requests on who you'd like to see first?"

"Sure, show me the Academy."

We got to the Academy and it was run down and empty.

"What happened?" I asked.

"After your death your parents closed up the Academy. They didn't have the will to work with all the troubled kids when they couldn't even save their own child."

"Oh god...but I'm sure they moved on to better things. Where's my Dad?"

"Which one?"

"Hunter."

"Let's take a look at that son of mine."

We appeared at an apartment. I looked around. It was small and was very messy.

"Where are we?" I asked.

"Hunter's apartment." Helen said.

"It's small. How can Mom stand it?"

"Michelle doesn't live here."

"What?"

"Hunter blamed Michelle for your death and he divorced her and never looked back. He tried to get Cam back but he was happy with LeAnn so Hunter took Felicity and got a job as a mechanic to support them. Watch." Helen said as we looked on. Felicity walked in the house. She was about 13, pretty girl...but she was dressed very slutty. Black tube top and matching mini skirt and jacket.

"Felicity Elizabeth Bradley it's way past your curfew." Dad said.

"You act like I care." Felicity said.

"Where were you?"

"With Snake."

"He's 25! You're 13! I told you that you weren't to see him anymore!" Dad screamed.

"Bite me. Be happy I came home at all." Felicity said.

"You want to end up a slut like your mother? That's exactly what's happening."

"So what? You know I'm sick of listening to you. Forget this. I'm out of here."

"Felicity get back here."

"Fuck you." Felicity said walking out.

"That brat!" I cried.

"She didn't have a big sister to guide her and she came from a broken home. Once Hunter was working he wasn't home enough to instill the proper values in her." Helen said.

"I've seen enough of this. I don't care where we go but take me somewhere else." I said.

"As you wish." Helen said. We appeared somewhere else.

"Where are we?" I asked.

"Watch and see."

I watched as Josh walked into the room. I guessed we were at his apartment. I watched as he went to his fridge and pulled out a six pack. He plopped on the sofa and started drinking it.

"Since when is Josh a heavy drinker?" I asked.

"Since you died. He dropped out of school and is working at Storm Chargers. He is very unhappy and that's how he drowns it."

"But doesn't he have a girlfriend or something?"

"After he lost you he could never bring himself to love another person."

"Oh god...I don't want to see this."

"Ok let's go see what Melody and Tony are up to."

We appeared in a house.

"Harley!" Mel called.

"Yes Mommy?" a 3 year old girl said.

"Dinner is ready."

“Where’s Daddy?”

“He’ll be here in a bit.”

“They look happy. She even named her daughter after me.” I said.

“Look in her eyes.” Helen said.

“What am I looking for?”

“Emptiness. Even though she has everything a part of her is missing. You’re missing. You’re a part of her.”

“But she’ll still be fine without me. Who else are you gonna show me?”

“Well let’s take a look at Savannah.”

“Yes, let’s. I know she’ll be happier without me.”

“You think so?”

We appeared in a small dark room. I saw Savannah sitting in a corner.

“Where are we?” I asked.

“Reefside General Mental Wing.” Helen said.

“A mental hospital? Why is Savannah here?”

“She blamed herself for your death so much that she eventually drove herself insane.”

“No...ok fine. Where’s my other dad?”

“Glad you asked.” Helen said.

We appeared at a dojo.

“Where are we now?” I asked

“Rocky’s dojo.”

“Why?”

“Look in the office.”

“He’s working.”

“Exactly...”

“So?”

“Look at the clock.”

“10:30 pm? Why is he working so late?”

“He works all hours of the night. This dojo is all he has. After your death he was so distraught he never could get remarried and never had any other kids.”

“So he just works and sleeps?”

“Pretty much.”

“Oh god...Daddy...that’s no life. I want to see someone else.”

“How about we pop in on those crazy McKnights?”

“Ok.”

We appeared at a house. I looked around.

“Kira and Conner look happy.”

“Except that isn’t Conner.”

“What?”

“That’s Kira and Eric McKnight. Conner spent so much time with Savannah trying to comfort her after your death that Kira turned to Eric. They eventually married. Anna, DJ, and Beth never forgave their parents and haven’t been to Reefside in 8 years.”

"That's horrible. What happened to Tally and Conner?"

"Conner was devastated when Kira married his brother so he turned to Tally. They married but soon after divorced because they weren't happy as a couple."

"What about now?"

"Conner is coaching for the US Men's soccer team and Tally is working as a therapist for the US Women's soccer team."

"That sounds good."

"Except for loneliness I guess it would be pretty great."

"What about DJ, what happened to him?"

"He ended up marrying Julia. They were there for each other after your death."

"Ok I've seen enough."

"Don't you even wanna know what happened to your Wildcats with the end of the school?"

"Ok fine. But tell me, don't show me."

"Well they defeated Arissa in your honor but then were forced back to their former lives. Destiny eventually did come out of her depression after a couple more suicide attempts. Tiffany was forced to accept her parent's lifestyle and she would go on to follow in their footsteps as a successful businesswoman just like they always wanted. Derek never could find the guts to actually take action against his mom so he took off after high school and never looked back. He ended up opening a school similar to Starlight. Jesse always had abandonment issues and stayed to himself for the rest of his life. April eventually became a drug councilor."

"And Chris?"

"Chris was killed in a gang fight shortly after his return home."

"No!"

"I'm sorry."

"And where was my mother when all this was happening? She is the root of all of this!"

"I thought you'd never ask."

We appeared in a library.

"Why are we here?"

"Look up your mother's name in the new index."

"Ok." I did as I was told.

"Ok read the last new story out loud."

"OK. 'Starlet Commits Suicide- Last night 52 year old superstar Michelle Morris-Bradley killed herself through large dose of sleeping pills. At press time it was believed that the reason behind the suicide was the recent death of her daughter, Harlyn Bradley, and the pending divorce from husband Hunter Bradley...' I'm not reading anymore." I said crying.

"It's time Harley. You have to make a choice." Helen said.

"I don't want everyone to suffer because of me! I wanna live! Let me go back!" I screamed.

"I knew you'd make the right choice. Just so you know I love you very much...tell your father, sister, uncle, cousin, aunt, and mother the same. I know Michelle causes trouble but she's good for Hunter and I'm very happy that Blake has Tori."

"I'll tell them all."

"Thank you. Goodbye."

“Goodbye.” I said hugging my grandmother.

Hunter

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After talking to Blake I went back inside.

“Mich, we need to talk.” I said.

“I think you’ve said everything there is to say. Have your lawyer call mine.” She said through her tears.

“Michelle...”

“Just leave her alone Hunter.” Dustin said holding her protectively.

“You stay out of this, you’ve done enough. Mich, please.”

She sighed, “It’s ok Dusty, I’ll go talk to him. I’ll be right back.”

We stepped off to the side.

“What?” she asked.

“I’m sorry if I over reacted. I just don’t want anything to happen to my daughters. I shouldn’t have entirely blamed this on you. We also have to consider that Harley was emotional and so was Savannah...and that driver...we need to find out who was driving the car who hit her.”

“Does this mean you’re not leaving me?”

“I didn’t say that. I don’t know yet but I think I may have rushed my decision.”

“So how do we find that driver?”

“We ask the only other witness.” I said leading Michelle over to where Savannah sat. “Savannah, I know this is a lot to ask but do you remember what the car that hit Harley looked like?”

“It happened to fast. I’m sorry, I don’t.”

“Savannah, the Café has security cameras doesn’t it?” Jason asked walking over.

“Yes sir.” Savannah said.

“Is it possible one of them caught the accident?” Jason asked.

“Maybe.” Savannah said.

“Ok, I need to see those tapes.” Jason said.

“Thanks Jase.” Michelle said.

“You’re still my sister no matter what...Tommy feels the same you know, he’s just very angry and disappointed.” Jason said.

“I know. He hasn’t spoken to me in hours.” Michelle said.

“He’ll come around. Now if you’ll excuse me I have a hit and run case to solve.”

Jason said walking away.

Michelle let out a half giggle, “Once a detective always a detective.” Then her giggle turned to tears. “I’m so sorry all this happened when we were finally happy” I paused. My first instinct was to pull her into my arms, but part of me was still furious. I pushed that part back and held her close. “I know sweetie.” I said kissing her head and brushing her hair with my fingers. Despite every mistake she ever made and every screw up she caused I still loved her more than I had ever loved anyone else on Earth, the only exception being my children. I silently prayed that Harley would make it.

Tony

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We talked to the Wildcats awhile before Josh sent them to bed. We decided to go to our own dorm.

"Have you guys considered what we do if Harley doesn't make it?" Cali asked.

"What do you mean? Of course she'll make it." I said.

"I know...but if she doesn't. How will we go on? We won't be a full unit anymore." Cali said.

"She has to make it Cal. She knows we need her. Harley wouldn't leave us." Mel said crying. I moved to Mel's bed and put my arms around her.

"Of course she'll make it sweetie." I said.

"I can't believe Ally and Logan aren't here." Lindsey said.

"And Jay...that rat owes it to her to be here." Nick said.

"He might be afraid to show his face after the crap he pulled with her." Mel said angrily.

"He has a right to be. Next time I see that traitor he's toast." Alex said.

"I'm with you." Nick said.

"And what if Harley does make it and can't walk...or needs some sort of help... maybe one of us should stay here so she isn't so alone..." Lindsey said.

"But who?" I asked.

"I will be here for awhile. I'll do anything I can for her." Aaron said.

"You've been awfully quiet through all of this. Are you ok Aaron?" Mel asked.

"I'm furious." Aaron said.

"At who?" Mel asked.

"Jay for hurting her after he promised he wouldn't, at whoever was driving that car, at Michelle for hiding something else from Har, at Savannah for not being more careful, and at Harley for snooping around in the first place." Aaron said.

"Understandable." Mel said.

"It is...but being angry isn't gonna help anything. There's enough anger going around." I said.

"Yeah...I'm gonna get some sleep. Goodnight." Aaron said.

April

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Truth be told, I was more than a little worried. Harley had become like a sister to me, even if I'd never admit that to anyone. When we were finally sent to bed I couldn't sleep. A few minutes after we got in bed I heard my name.

"April?" Tiffany asked.

"What is it Princess?" I asked.

"You think Harley will be ok?" she asked.

"Do I look psychic to you? I don't know." I said.

"I'm sorry. I'm just worried."

I sighed, "So am I."

"Destiny doesn't seem to be."

"Destiny doesn't know Harley that well."

"I'm more worried than you think so stop pretending to know me Princess."

Destiny said.

“I didn’t know you were awake.” Tiffany said.

“Obviously.”

I sighed and wondered how the guys were handling things.

Derek

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“I wish I could get my hands on the person driving that car. I’d kill ‘em” Chris said.

“Yeah...they deserve to suffer the way this is making all of us suffer.” I said.

“But Harley will come out of this right? I mean she’s been through worse according to the others.” Jesse said.

“She better come out of this. We need her. If anything happens to her who knows what will happen to the school. I can’t go home.” I said.

“I can’t either.” Jesse said softly.

“There ya go, Harley has to make it. We all need her and she wouldn’t just leave us. Besides we still have to take Arissa down.”

Josh

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I sat in my room alone thinking of Harley. I had already told my family I wanted to be alone and they were respecting that. I looked at a picture of Har and I. God I was stupid. I had never told her how I felt. I held back and now I might never get the chance. I made a promise right then, if she ever woke up, DJ or no, I would tell her exactly how much I loved her.

Michelle

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I was sitting curled up in Hunter’s arms when a doctor came out and said those glorious words.

“Mr. and Mrs. Bradley?Harlyn is awake.”