

Okay, so a rundown of my life the past few months, and even the past year.

CW: Loss of life, Abandonment, Heart health, Medical Terms, Medical Malpractice, Dementia, shooting.

Everything began in August of 2024. My mother had gone in for a procedure overnight for her AFIB. She was doing okay overall, things seemed alright. We got her car home, then a few days later I got her an Uber Comfort home, and she said it was the most comfortable car ride of her life. (Our car at the time was quite literally a junkpile, no working AC, no functioning car horn, essentially a d*ath trap)

She had gotten back by her birthday in September, and I got to give her all the gifts and cards from my coworkers at the time who wanted her to know how loved she was. Literally, all of my coworkers and friends adored her. It was difficult to find someone who DIDN'T like her, tbqh.

She wasn't doing very well one day, so we went back to the hospital together, and found she needed to stay again due to water being contained in her body. She was essentially drowning, according to her doctor. So I went home, we treated it as normal, and I tried to take care of things at home while she went through these. She was the type who would call daily to keep me updated. Not my choice, but that's how she was as a mom. I guess that's why I do the same thing to my friends now.

But she didn't call Saturday night.

I got worried, of course. I was so used to the daily calls and check-ins and her making sure I was keeping up with work and the cats, that it seemed...off. I kept my head up, or tried to.

Sunday night, I'm streaming and raiding in FFXIV, and I get a phone call, so I mute. "Your mother went critical over the weekend, and she's now been intubated." Everything in my head was blaring at a hundred thousand decibels or higher. I told my team I had to go, and cut everything off and RAN to my neighbor's house (she was essentially a 2nd mother for me), pounding on her door, bawling my eyes out, and when she heard what happened, she joined me in the tears and panic, as she tried to ease me down.

I visited her that following Wednesday, and she was hooked up to so many tubes, it was unbearable to look at. I started to break down, until I looked up and saw she had woken up and was tightening her grip on my hand. She wanted, even in this moment, to be strong for me.

But later in the week, I received a phone call. "Hi, Benjii, your mom has expressed interest in coming home under hospice care. She's said, and I quote, 'I want to go home to d*e.'"

Everything under the sun was trying to stress me out. I left work early, and on the way home I called my neighbor to go into my room and break down all of my cube-shelves so we could make room for mom's current bed to be moved into my room. We had to clear the room out so that the hospice bed could be placed in the room.

She arrived that night, and for the first 24 hours, had no care. No nurses, no way for her to be taken to the bathroom, etc. I was not, and still am not, physically capable of picking someone up and bringing them somewhere without hurting them in some way.

We were on the phone with the hospice service until they FINALLY came over to see how incapable she had become. she couldn't stand on her own, the idea of going to the bathroom on her own was an impossibility, and I was not able to be trained to take care of her in that regard, much as the money could've helped for doing so. So they finally sent nurses, and after only 3 days, the nurse team said our home was unfit to house her. So it was arranged for her to be taken to an actual hospice location nearby....where she still only spent a week, as the hospice company only rented from that area. By this time, mom's sister, my aunt, had come down from out of state to check in on her and, possibly, say her goodbyes while helping me clean out the house.

But...she wasn't passing. She was...improving? Which, ironically, presented a whole new problem. Hospice care was meant for end-of-life circumstances, and she was showing signs of improving. She wasn't walking, but she was talking actively, and was very aware and sharp-witted. We had to find her a nursing home. I was misled and was told that the case worker was going to help get me options, which....didn't end up happening. Couple that with my landlord at the time basically banging down my door trying to get backrent that I could not pay due to everything, and me having to keep everyone at all corners of the earth updated on what was going on. I was not doing well, in the slightest.

Come November 2nd, my birthday, in 2024. I felt...forgotten. Everything going on, I'd just quit my job about 4 days prior so that I could try to get access to my early retirement fund, which would act as a huge boon to allow me the grace to find new work, new living arrangements, and attempt to catch up on so many things. I was then being verbally assaulted, being told I made the wrong move, I shouldn't have quit, that people "would've been willing to work with me" (this was specifically told to me by the landlady who wanted only to get her money, and not offer any form[s] of help). The day after my birthday, my now-roommate moved from their ex's home down to Florida with me, to offer me moral support, as I was feeling beyond alone in this life. We worked together to try to find jobs, to find some sort of way to pick ourselves up and continue living. By the end of the month, we'd come up dry, and the only potential place we could have moved would not allow us simply because I'd not had any credit built up, and they didn't believe we'd be able to keep up with rent and bills (we'd run the numbers, we were <mostly> confident).

December 3rd rolls around. This day broke me completely. Our other friend, Evchoria, had come into an agreement with their family that we could move up with them and simply be tenants in their home. The rent and billing would be much less than most places. It was a last-ditch opportunity, and I am glad we took it. We'd received a letter from the landlord. "Pay backrent <OR> leave by December 5th."(the OR is key here) However, on that day, first-friend stayed behind at the FL apartment to meet the movers so they could pack our U-haul, and I went to visit mom one more time. For those unaware, I'd always been an overprotected child, a sheltered child. So when I went to visit, and spoke to my mother, she'd told me to do something

that broke me down completely, because it was the first time in my, at the time, 32 years of life, that I'd heard her say it.

"Live your life. As long as you're happy, I'm happy with you living a life worth living."

In complete tears, I left, and when I returned home, my roommate and I packed the last few things, and unfortunately, in their rushedness, we left the apartment in not the greatest condition. I'd received texts from the landlord after we left. "Did you really think you could up and leave without paying me?" "You need to pay me." "You owe me money, and I will find a way to get it." I'd taken photos of the paper she'd sent me. In her "legally binding" paper, the "OR" had nullified her trying to force money out of me. Logically, I knew this. My aunt and neighbor had both assured me of this. But anxiety had me riding up every possible wall, and my cats could feel it, too. We were travelling from Florida to one of the northern states; the furthest I'd ever gone.

Every chance I got, I called my mother to give her updates. She kept a strong face. Even assured me, "the hardest part of this trip will be getting out of Florida. After that, it'll be so much easier." In my case, the 2nd hardest part was not being smart enough to find a hotel that could house animals.

Fast forward to Dec 5th, we arrive at our new home. I was told by Evchoria's father, "welcome home, you're safe here." and I fell to my knees, crying my eyes out. The first few weeks here, we spent mostly...trying to adjust. I was gently trying to get my cats to come out more, to eat, to not be scared of everything. It was rough. I was also dealing with the landlady still, threatening some form of legal action for things I wasn't liable for. Just to have her be quiet and leave me alone for good, I sent her an amount from my early retirement funding that I had. It was significantly less than what she asked for (less than half), but she'd been worn down to the point that she was satisfied at least with that.

End of December rolls around. Christmas. My first Christmas away from my mother. Away from my family. Evchoria's family did everything possible in their power to make sure I didn't feel alone. Didn't feel unloved. I couldn't make it through the day without crying. It was a tough time. other roomie and I had also gotten hired at Gamestop, through sheer stroke of luck. It was interesting, thinking about it. I'd applied there so many times when I was younger, but never got considered.

Moving into the New Year, my mother was officially moved into a nursing home. One in Delray Beach, FL. On her first day, I got the most panicked phone call from her, begging me to help her. She'd been there for 24 hours, and wasn't fed. Wasn't being taken care of. I immediately called the facility itself, and demanded nurses to check in on her, asking why she hasn't been fed. It takes them getting the supervisor on the phone, because her in-house line was not functioning. Just her cell phone, and the most shaky I'd ever heard her sounding in so long.

I wanted her out of there.

The next couple of months, besides getting myself health insurance, income taxes, and dealing with the penalties of early retirement, were spent looking into facilities for my mother up where we're currently at. We found a perfect one, but it required so many hoops to be jumped through on her insurances, and she'd essentially have to be capable of getting up and into a wheelchair, which she wasn't. After some careful thought about it, we also determined that she most likely wouldn't survive the trip from FL to here. Complication after complication. I was getting tired of this. To the point that stress piled up and got me sick with a stronger version of a cold for almost a month.

As the months roll by, I'm trying to learn more and more of the procedures at work, while also receiving updates via the nursing home. I've got no choice but to leave her there, so I've made sure at this point that every staff member there knows I am <constantly> checking in. Mom has gotten used to the place finally, now that she's gotten accustomed to and friendly with her usual nurses. The place is still gods awful at communication. Voicemails left, many "I'll call you back after x and y"'s that result in days going by without a callback. Getting basic information about my mother's well-being should not feel like pulling teeth.

May, I plan a surprise trip to FL to see my mother for the week of Mother's Day. I'd not seen her so happy in so long. We stopped by 4 out of the 7 days I was there. I wish I could relive those days. We shit-talked each other so much and just had a generally good time. It felt like we were back at home again, with me relaxing on the bed while she watched her tv shows. It felt...normal.

June, pride month. This was the first pride month that I legitimately did almost nothing for. No pride streams, no pride makeup, I was exhausted from Switch 2 Launch at gamestop, as well as a myriad of other mental and physical health issues assaulting me through the months. I received a phone call from mom, and it's beyond disturbing. She's asking me about her husband (she's been single for years, and all of her ex-husbands have passed), and her "daughter"(As far as I know, I'm her only child). She tells me not to tell the nurses any of what I've told her, because she doesn't want to be deemed "Crazy", or "mentally unfit". I call my family friend, mentally exhausted, and express that I believe she's going through early onsets of Dementia. I told the friend to keep an eye on her when they speak, and just try to keep her wits about her.

July hits, and I am receiving updates about my mother that concern me. She's showing injuries, or general unwillingness to cooperate in her treatments. She's becoming less willing to talk to people. I'm getting worried, and ask my family friend to go visit her at her earliest convenience. We talk over the phone for a bit, and mom is a bit on the irate side of things. "Why don't you tell Ben you love him?" "...He knows I do." It was a bit jarring, but I know she would've been that way regardless. Especially after the pain she's been going through.

At the beginning of August, I'm still getting updates, and I'm being asked what I'd like to do for her. I tell them that I want them to still do their best to administer treatment, and to keep notes of her mental state due to the potential dementia. They all agree, and we have a game plan.

August 25, 2025. A day that is burnt into my heart forever. I get a phone call at 8am, explaining that my mother has gone critical and is being prepared to be moved into hospice care once again, this time for full end-of-life care, to make it comfortable. I start panicking, and thank them for letting me know. 9:45AM, I get another call, this time from the hospice worker who was sent to pick her up. The nursing home staff waited until she arrived to let her know that my mother had passed at 9AM. I was at a loss for words. I thank her for letting me know, she apologizes deeply for my loss, and we hang up. Thus starts the chain of phone calls. My aunt, my manager, my roommates dealt with me banging down their doors in panic and pain. Evchoria's family supporting me as well. That day has been seared into my heart, and I'd lost someone beyond important to me. She wanted me to live my life, and I wanted so badly to live it, but to this day I still don't know if I'm capable of doing so.

At the same time as all of this, I am barely given any room to breathe, as there is a massive work shift going on due to a sister location closing. I cannot take time off to process how I'm feeling. I can't take any form of time to allow myself to feel things. To the day I am writing this (the 18th of November), I still have not gotten the opportunity to feel grief properly. My emotions simply pile up until they burst forth.

I'm also learning and discovering that I am feeling more and more alone, as my roommates are finding love. Love that I am beyond happy that they're finding, but emotionally I am already falling apart, and the feeling of being left behind took a very, VERY tight hold on me. Which still occasionally shows up today. Not nearly as bad, though. I've since written affirmations and assurances for myself to remind me that I am not being left behind.

September 16th comes around. Mom's birthday. I had invited my manager to celebrate with us because I know they would've gotten along swimmingly. She was unable to go, so I had invited someone I'd been starting to talk to, and was feeling a low light of connection with. He came over, we all enjoyed mom's favorite cake, carrot cake, and had a general good time. I didn't realize at the time this was going to continue my emotional rollercoaster, however. While driving him home, my roommate and I were caught off guard when he had expressed a moment of his past; why he'd gotten expelled from middle school. He had been bullied to the point that he had threatened to shoot up his class. My roommate and I had initially thought "major red flag, not worth pursuing", and had moved on.

A couple weeks later, this friend and I continued to talk. I had expressed that I was sorry, as was the roommate, for being so quick to judge him about what happened in his past. He was fully understanding of it, and went on to say that he was not that type of person anymore. He then proceeded to properly ask me out, and asked me to be his partner. He explained that our first hug during mom's birthday was when the feelings had started for him. I was caught off guard, and after processing, said yes. We'd been happy together and were talking daily to one another, getting to learn bits by bits about each other.

During the month of October, we'd gone to each other's homes a few times, gamed daily together, and were just enjoying one another. Or at least, I thought we were. We celebrated one month of being together on October 30th, and were happy to love one another, even moving fast enough that we said we wanted to spend our lives together.

As an aside during this, I thought I'd mention, in addition to relationship stuff, I was also feeling personally abandoned, though that got resolved. I felt as if I was put on the sidelines, or ignored, by those I called my best friends. While some of it was done unintentionally, it overall was a misunderstanding on all sides' parts.

November 1st, I am left to put my bed together by myself, as I did a switcheroo with my roommate while they upgraded to a bigger bed, so I took theirs for the mattress. I had been upset about it, as I was informed that I would not have to put it together, but my mind was in an angry state at the time, tied mostly to the previous paragraph's ignoring/sidelines commentary. That late night, we'd all spoken about it in depth. Apologized for our own individual errors, and promised to be better about communicating with one another.

November 2nd. (See this trend about my birthday?) He has a big apartment inspection coming up, so he's already expressed stress. He sees a sad discord status on my side, and instead of asking about it, assumes it is about him. I try to tell him that it's not, and that I still love him, etc. He says he needs some time to himself. Alright then, I can understand that. I leave him alone. Hours later, I sent him a text message, letting him know we just cut the cake, wished he was there, loved him, etc. "Your message failed to be sent." I pause. Everything in me pauses. Processing everything that just happened. My phone hit the floor and snapped me back to reality...somewhat. I picked my phone up and, in nothing but pajamas, I ran out of the house. In cold weather. I could not bear anything. I wanted the cold to numb my pain. He hadn't even offered a goodbye, or a "this isn't working out". He blocked me through Discord, through Facebook, through all platforms and games we'd had each other on. His moms had both blocked me as well. He even blocked and removed my roommates from his servers, his chats, his stream channel. He was thorough. My roommate had called as I was halfway down the street, frantically trying to get me to stop. Their partner, my other friend, had caught up to me as I fell to my knees, and they wrapped me up in a blanket and just held me. Kept me there to listen to me, until I was brought back inside, and we spoke. Over the next week, I'd been trying to piece things together, but at first it didn't make sense.

Until one of his now-ex-friends got in contact with me.

We spoke very briefly but in enough detail to know that, although we believed it to be a manic episode, it was more than that. He had informed me that my now-ex had tried to get his ex-friend to scold me or yell at me. Claimed that I was too pushy, too controlling, had to have everything about me. He even tried to say that he told me that my birthday was the same day as the anniversary of a family member passing, when he didn't. That aside, I don't think it's a terrible thing to want to spend your birthday with someone you love. Honestly? The only thing "about me" that I wanted was to be able to physically love my boyfriend. The fact I had to

consistently fight for a kiss was...tedious, at best. He only wanted to kiss when we were "in the mood", and that wasn't enough for me, personally. But, for me to find out he believed I was controlling, when everything I did, I did for him. I was willing to cover the cost for him to get a console upgrade (when I very much was NOT able to afford that feasibly). I was willing to look into getting a bigger bed at my own home so that we could both be comfortable laying together, so that his back didn't hurt nearly as much. I did everything that I did so he could be comfortable. All that I did, I did so he could be happy, and we could be happy together. What I received in turn was: being made to shush so that he could think, and then getting scolded/chided if I still spoke up. Being forced out of kitchens if he was cooking because he refused to share the space with anyone, even if he was just making simple coffee. Being told to pick this, this, and this in a game instead of being properly explained why they were good options and allowing me to make my own choices. On a more minor note, in games I had more experience in than him, I still was treated like I was the rookie between us.

Speaking to this ex-friend did give me a form of closure on the relationship that I so desperately needed. Is it the closure I wanted? Far from it, but it's extremely rare that we get that kind of closure. I don't know what I plan to do from here. Do I still want to find someone special to call my own? Yes. I want that very much. But I'd also like to take time to look within. I have a doctor's appointment coming up, during which I will be requesting a referral for a therapist, so that I can begin properly sorting through my feelings, my trauma, my experiences, and understand why I am the way that I am. Those who say they don't need therapy are usually the ones who need it most, and I was definitely one of those individuals. (Though moreso it was me saying I didn't <deserve> therapy... anyways).

I aim to work on myself, and work on the things I've created over the years. I plan to return to streaming regularly soon, as well as trying to pick myself back up on content creation in general. I plan to return to raiding in FFXIV as well, whether I make my own new group or find one for myself, my roommate, and our other friend to join as well. I aim to look into new work, as well. I want to find work that I can feel fulfilled in, both emotionally and financially. Being so far in the red is exhausting, and makes the stress and anxiety pile up even more.

I will close this out with an assurance and a repetition of my mother's greatest words.

"Live your life. If you can live happily, without hurting anyone, I'll be proud of you."