

3am Realizations

By Hennessy Morales

To whom it may concern,

I am not a writer.

I say this in hopes that you will understand that family will have endless meanings, misconceptions, values, limitations, heartache, memories, arguments, and most importantly, love.

Before moving further,

I hope you do not confuse love with the box of chocolates you did or did not receive on February 14th in 7th grade. Nor the countless "I love you"s, that you heard from that ex after they decided to wrong you repeatedly.

You can not mistake the postcard from that relative who never showed up, or the "thank you" that celebrity gave after purchasing their merchandise, the *violation*, of another human being's body when they were too unstable to think and dare to call it love.

Take some time away from grasping for answers in your mind and you will find that this idea of family was built on a foundation of love.

That is why love is so crucial when addressing family, for it is what manifests at the depths of its core.

Now pause,

there is no longer time for cliches, I don't mean to come off like those basic Instagram quotes telling you to "love yourself"

I believe we are no stranger to the welcoming arms of false hope that dragged us to rock bottom, there next to the bed, we set up in our last visit. I realize how one can mistake it for home.

A Family has no power to bring us back

It is the responsibility of that person to find the exit

but real families are there to send the resources to aid our distress.

There are 7 billion people on this planet who don't fully comprehend this, maybe because even our dictionaries are faulty.

Family. Noun.

"a group consisting of parents and children living together in a household."

Family. "all the descendants of a common ancestor."

We look at our DNA and use it to write out our identity.

We cannot help these habits, we tell ourselves.

Don't forget

"blood is thicker than water"

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However.

The human body is made up of 50-70 percent water, and only 7 percent blood. Researchers conclude that as little as 1% dehydration will lead to a negative impact on mood, energy, and focus. More severe cases can become medically life-threatening causing damage to your kidney, heart, and brain with possible hallucinations. 2 million people die of dehydration a year not to mention creatures outside the human species.

Water is quintessential to all life on earth, *so please tell me again how blood is thicker than water.*

There was a time where we considered our mothers womb our home, we asked her to give us everything and yet, in the end, some of us were left with nothing at all.

It is no secret that a relative's blood is not always the correct match in transfusions. We as humans typically need water more often than blood.

This is not to say biology can't be part of this perfect picture.

I just want you to know that in reality, some people become mothers, brothers, and even those grandparents that have damaged each other's relationship beyond comprehension. From petty grudges to justified anger toward the other because of true cruel abuse.

They are forever chained to each other in the handle of DNA and that alone will drive them mad, so you have no right to make judgments for being unable to connect because you have no say and neither do I.

In short, a family tree may include some unexpected vines, flowers, and bushes. It may break branches off to create completely new trees.

As for me, my family is made up of a mother and father too self-destructive to stay together but too financially unstable to become strangers. Maybe it affected us when we were younger but transportation between 2 homes is not uncommon. Its become a gateway to different lives, opportunities, and issues.

Mainly, we are made up of 7 little monsters and one mother. Though we call her Mama or Ma. I was 9 years old when I found out only my two twin sisters had the same mom and dad, they are the youngest girls. The world would call the rest of us *half-siblings* what we would say is "no". There is nothing else to it, and no one can argue against it because it is impossible to only have half a brother, half a sister, half *loved*. She was always working so my three oldest sisters raised us and we all had a role. I maintained the peace, I was not given as much responsibility but I was never quite pampered. My three younger siblings had it the easiest. What a surprise to know I am the middle child. My mother always wanted a boy and finally stopped having kids when she got one.

This is home base.

My dad lives not too far from this life. Though we call him papa and pa, *or at least my younger sisters do*. We see him at the end of every week but the world may argue that he isn't part of the picture because he didn't get married to my mother before having kids or we aren't living all under one roof.

Who are we as humans to point out flaws brought on by human nature.

My parents may carry a stench of hurt that makes me dizzy at times and my siblings may not share similar opinions but they are my family. Dysfunctional and resilient. I am tired of the need to defend this fact to the more privileged gems who feel need to maintain a specific image with their family.

Family holds no solid definition but for me, it means special birthday meals because we are low on money. It means late night tv all huddled in mom's room as she works late. It means fighting for stupid reasons but still defending each other against the caus that is the world. Family is what you find and become to others.

With all the loss
the setbacks
the *pain*.

My family became a mural.
painted on a crumbling wall, signs of graffiti extending to taint its colors, a rundown tunnel, and still, it holds together beautifully.

I realize my fortune to have been part of this bundle. I often question whether I deserve this family, or why they put up with me, but I try to believe that you know you are worthy when you actively try. My family consists of close relatives, the art teacher that never gave up on me, the stepsister that may have grown apart a bit, the animals we've sheltered, and the friends that came along the way. You give me 2500 words to express a feeling that I can only describe as my life support. This may come as a shock but I am not one to wear my heart on my sleeve I don't believe others should have an easy target. Still, I commonly hear the phrase "id die for you" thrown around like a rag doll to express undying love. Ironic, really. The expression may have lost its meaning over the years as it seems everyone is desperate for that alarming escape.

Instead, I settle with "*I'd live for you*".

Maybe fate had mercy when I was being conceived. She saw through the hard shell of dark humour, dry hope, and confidence to find a scared individual who didn't want to be here and said "*Here is a reason to stay*"

The response interrupted my thoughts and left my mind stunned.

Like the end of a long drought. This truth quenched my thirst and though it comes and goes at times and I become forgetful, I am sustained for just long enough to make it to the next source.

Who am I to say what family is if not the perfect example. As are you, you're next-door-neighbor and anyone with common sense and compassion. If you will not take it from me then take it from a real author,

"I don't care about whose DNA has recombined with whose. When everything goes to hell, the people who stand by you without flinching--they are your family." -Jim Butcher

That may not be what you expected or wanted. Perhaps that is my conclusion. To express quite bluntly that a family is a bond so incredibly valuable, one could not find happiness without it. I could only hope for you to have that bond. It may make madness appear magnificent.

Maybe, but what do I know, as I've said before.

I am not a writer.