

## 6 hours spent

That day, I just could not take it. I needed to speak my truth. Looking back, it feels like a horrible mistake, but my heart tells me otherwise. I know otherwise. Because if I never went for help that morning, I would not be here. But I do not dwell on such things. Only at night. Alone. With my thoughts. Just that. With my layers of blankets that cover my skin I so wish to ruin. Staring at the dull ceiling, insomnia is doing its job. Gee, it is bad enough depression got me all blue. And eating. But it was getting better. Just snacking and not starving. Right? Yes.

I had planned the night before to get help, just like my therapist always said. I would always roll my eyes and think "it's not that easy." Turns out, it is if you are with the right people. It is funny, it was quite a day. Walked into the front office. I am an office aid in my fourth hour. I know the lady, she is like a teacher to me, so I trust her. I request to see my therapist. Not there and I panicked. But I always confide in her. She needs to be here. Please. I go blank as she says I can go with my school counselor and I do not remember moving but I did. My legs walked on their own. Any longer and I would have cried on the spot like a crybaby. I am sensitive that way, always have been. I get triggered easily and for what? What has that gotten me? Certainly more yelling.

As I hurried to the second of three offices I have visited, I requested the counselor. It takes a few moments and she is not there. What now? What now? Please someone tell me this gets better. PLEASE. Oh. I am told I can go to the other counselor. Great, more walking, my legs feel like they are about to stop working if I do this any longer. So I left and did another lap of walking and there was a lady. Blonde hair, chubby, a smile that made my shoulders sag with relief. This would be okay. It had to be because if it did not, I would never forgive myself. The talk was a lot. I felt like this is not me, I should not be here talking about...stuff and wanting the world to end. Me.

Going to sleep forever, that is all. Not a plan, not a tool. Just a wish. A wish I knew was not healthy or worth granting. The lady helped, she really did. Let me stay in her office until she gets my counselor and therapist in touch. It was nice to color flowers. Flowers are so free and beautiful. Is that me? Maybe. Maybe not. Oh yes, my counselor is here. She is pretty, young, like she knows what to do and that gives me so much hope because I do not know what to do. We go through the process of my thoughts, why I had them, if I have hurt myself. No, I used my crisis plan. I always did because I knew if I had done what I always was thinking of, there would be yelling. Trying to understand. No one understands. My own mother was the reason. I was mad but I loved her. No, *love* her. She is my everything and I am hers, mother and...child. Not daughter, child. She would never accept her own daughter was genderless, pronouns the other way around.

As things were finally settling in, I ate lunch. Spend the rest of school in the counselors office. They had to call my mom to let her know. She is on speaker and she sounds frantic. I feel conflicted. They call my father, the caregiver that put me in therapy without my acknowledgement. He is on his way, and I feel the need to bawl. I have already disappointed him; I do not need him to know his child has these thoughts. His youngest which does not make things better. So I wait. And dread. And feel everything at once. I am sent back to my therapist when my father arrives. We are in a room of three civilians and two assistant principals, one of them being my translator. It lasts an hour. I could not look at my father, and neither could he. He discusses my problems at home and his concerns. "Take the phone, always argues with others, always serious, always in the phone." So at the very end, I am asked a question. I do not want to answer but I do.

"If I let you leave today, do you guarantee you will not hurt yourself?"

I say no. And I regret it. I should have lied. And just resist. But where would that give me, what would I gain? I ask myself every single day for every single thing I do, every single mistake I have done.

So I will go. I must. I have no say in this. My father and I drove to the clinic. I feel like I am sobbing. He is wasting his time driving me to and forth. As we got there, I do not remember much. The first hour was fine. They had a TV nook for children, Disney Channel streaming. I wish to be a child again. They also have a chalk wall. I distract myself with that as my father writes papers, fills in boxes, writes, on and on. The next hour is not as bad. I am watching a movie. My father curses under his breath, since he still has more to write. I still remember a note he had to sign... "you are obligated to allow us to put our hands on the outpatient if they were to get physical with the other patients." What? I would not get physical. No...

My name is called. After what, four hours? Less? More? I do not know. We go through a process. Ask questions, concerns. We waited another two hours. I feel nothing. I sleep next to my father as he hugs me. Another time to get up and get asked more questions. Finally, they informed me I do not fit the criteria of being a patient. This is it, I must cry now. Six hours spent. SIX HOURS WERE WASTED and for what? I am told I must continue seeing my therapist and counselor. Great. More help. So as we drive home, my dad talks to *me*. I accept defeat. It is not a lecture, just a talk. And I know he means well. He wants me to have the life he never had, the parents he could *never* have. He grew up without them, abandoned. I want to hug my dad and tell him I will be better. Be the perfect...daughter. But I do not. Because even I know my life is valid, my identity. We park in the driveway as I dread. My mother. God, how will this turn out? My poor mother. I open the door and she is waiting at the dinner table. And as I approach her, she gives me an instant hug, I hug back. She cries on my shoulder and I think to myself, why must I scare my poor

mother? Just why? She says she is sorry for not being there more for me, for failing me, for everything. And I know she means it. I want to fight back, argue even. But for once I do not as I hug my mom. My dad gave me a side hug. I sigh and ask for food and my mom serves me. She gives me a motherly kiss, and I am grateful for her, I know that. I just need to be more better. I smile for the first time today. I skipped all of school and spent six hours in a clinic. Today was something, was it not?