

Narrative Essay Example#1

He Left So I Could Learn

In this first essay example, we explore a lesson on dying:

It was my second day on the job. I was sitting in my seemingly gilded cubicle, overlooking Manhattan, and pinching my right arm to make sure it was real. I landed an internship at Condé Nast Traveler. Every aspiring writer I've ever known secretly dreamt of an Anthony Bourdain lifestyle. Travel the world and write about its most colorful pockets.

When my phone rang, and it was Mom telling me Dad had a heart attack. He didn't make it. I felt as though the perfectly carpeted floors had dropped out from under me. Now that I've come out the other side, I realize Dad left me with a hefty stack of teachings. Here are three ideals I know he would've liked for me to embrace.

First, you have to stand on your own two feet. As much as our parents love and support us, they can't go to our school and confess to the principal that we stole a candy bar from Sara. We have to do that. Neither can they walk into the Condé Nast office and nail a job interview for us. At some point, we have to put on our "big girl pants" and be brave, even if we're not.

Also, there's a difference between love and co-dependence. Being grateful to have someone to turn to for love and support is not the same as needing someone to turn to for love and support. With the loss of my father, I've also lost my sounding board. All I can glean from that is it's time to look within myself and make proper assessments. If I can't make sound decisions with the tools already in my kit, then I risk falling for anything.

Finally, memories are, perhaps, the only item that cannot be taken away from us. Will I miss my father? Every single day. What can I do in those times? I can open up our suitcase of memories, pick out my favorite one, and dream about it, talk about it, or write about it. Maybe I can't pick up the phone and call him anymore, but that doesn't mean he's gone.

Next week, I'm off to Istanbul to explore their art scene. As soon as I read the email from my editor, I picked up my phone to call Dad. Then, I realized he'll never answer my calls again. I fought back the tears, got up to make a cup of peppermint tea, and added a new note to my iPhone titled, "Istanbul Packing List."

In the end, life goes on. I'm not sure why he had to leave during the single most poignant chapter in my life. So, I won't dwell on that. Instead, I'll hold tightly to these three ideals and write about Karaköy in Istanbul's Beyoğlu district. Dad will be with me every step of the way.

Narrative Essay Example#2

A Teeny, Tiny Treasure Box

The next short narrative essay takes a different approach. Instead of living in a comfortably loving home, the writer had to deal with the uncertainty of the foster system. Here's a short lesson on hope:

She took me by the hand and walked me into the lobby like a five-year old child. Didn't she know I was pushing 15? This was the third home Nancy was placing me in - in a span of eight months. I guess she felt a little sorry for me. The bright fluorescent lights threatened to burn my skin as I walked towards a bouncy-looking lady with curly hair and a sweetly-smiling man. They called themselves Allie and Alex. Cute, I thought.

After they exchanged the usual reams of paperwork, it was off in their Chevy Suburban to get situated into another new home. This time, there were no other foster children and no other biological children. Anything could happen.

Over the next few weeks, Allie, Alex, and I fell into quite a nice routine. She'd make pancakes for breakfast, or he'd fry up some sausage and eggs. They sang a lot, even danced as they cooked. They must have just bought the house because, most weekends, we were painting a living room butter yellow or staining a coffee table mocha brown.

I kept waiting for the other shoe to drop. When would they start threatening a loss of pancakes if I didn't mow the lawn? When would the sausage and eggs be replaced with unidentifiable slosh because he didn't feel like cooking in the morning? But, it never happened. They kept cooking, singing, and dancing like a couple of happy fools.

It was a Saturday afternoon when Allie decided it was time to paint the brick fireplace white. As we crawled closer to the dirty old firepit, we pulled out the petrified wood and noticed a teeny, tiny treasure box. We looked at each other in wonder and excitement. She actually said, "I wonder if the leprechauns left it!" While judging her for being such a silly woman, I couldn't help but laugh and lean into her a little.

Together, we reached for the box and pulled it out. Inside was a shimmering solitaire ring. Folded underneath was a short piece of paper that read:

"My darling, my heart. Only 80 days have passed since I first held your hand. I simply cannot imagine my next 80 years without you in them. Will you take this ring, take my heart, and build a life with me? This tiny little solitaire is my offering to you. Will you be my bride?"

As I stared up at Allie, she asked me a question. "Do you know what today is?" I shook my head. "It's May 20th. That's 80 days since Nancy passed your hand into mine and we took you home."

It turns out, love comes in all shapes and sizes, even a teeny, tiny treasure box from a wonderfully silly lady who believes in leprechauns.