

*THE DEFINITION  
OF BEING  
HUMAN*

2021-2022

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*Western Colorado University | COM 300*

Kaeyla Noble  
 Professor Jones  
 2 May 2022  
 Final Project

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Kaeyla Noble  
Professor Jones  
2 May 2022  
Introduction

### **Humanity**

My money doesn't make me more human, nor does my ability to play soccer. The car I drive, the accounts I post on, and friends I have do not make me more human. However, I have made mistakes and said mean things. I've even said mean things on purpose and failed to apologize for them later. Believing in God used to be a lifestyle before a wave of questions drowned me my sophomore year of college. A version of me died the summer after I graduated from high school, and more experiences were had – *both good and bad*.

Our experiences, actions, words, knowledge don't make up our humanity. Our existence is what gives us humanity because with our existence comes with everything that we are in its rawest form. Our emotions, our anatomy, our appearance, our thoughts, our knowledge, and *so much more*. All of those things, in their rawest form, are what make up us as human beings and help us create the human experience. With that being said, there is something to be said about each of the stories I have chosen that fall underneath this theme of *Humanity*.

Out of the six stories I have written this semester I choose three that show both the presence of humanity and the absences of it. *Twin Flames* was the first story I wrote this semester at the beginning of January. I started the semester by jumping into a whole new world without soccer that became rather loneliness very quickly. Loneliness and isolation are a part of the human experience, and I am realizing it is a larger part of it than I care to admit. *Charlottesville Hospital* expresses grief with a consequence. Hospitals can be places of great discovery, triumph, and love and at the same time can be so dark and empty. Humanity is presence through the nurses who are alive grieving while also absent through the eerie presence of the nurse who passed. *How to be Right*

*and Wrong at the Same Time* – the last story I critique – is an inner monologue expressing the chaos of thought in its most honest form.

Kaeyla Noble  
Professor Jones  
ENG 300  
20 January 2022  
Story 01 (5-7pg)

**Original: Twin Flames**

*Nothing* has been comforting to me lately.

Comfort used to be walking through my front door and being greeted by my cheerful Siberian Husky who had no clue in the world he'd only live until 4 years old. Comforting looked like rain chaotically falling onto the pavement outside my window while I sat inside safe from the chaos as usual. I even found comfort in not challenging myself while going to university because I never thought I'd never finish my degree.

I finished school with four A's and one B. I didn't go to the last two weeks of class, so my professor gave me a B even though according to her I turned in A+ level work all semester long. In the grand scheme of things, it didn't matter. None of it mattered. My university records are about 5,000 paces east from here and are a pile of ash along with my degree I was promised if I finished. I used to hold a grudge against people who preached about university being a waste of time. Commitment and loyalty are two characteristic the general population was lacking before everything happened. People were leaving jobs after only working a couple months which, in my opinion, is just a waste of time. However, what is effective is committing four years of your *life* to the same institution that asks you study a couple different things at a time.

I understand the other side of the argument is equally reasonable. There are some things you do not "need" to go to university for. However, I'd argue you the main things university teaches you aren't even in the lectures and textbooks you pay for.

*501...502...503...504...*

I also think things like her body her choice, everyone should know how to change a tire, restaurant jobs are some of the worst jobs, and money is the ultimate of most people. Due to the isolations, I've experienced for the 5,632 days I'm starting think opinions, arguments, and even accomplishments are transient in comparison to family and relationships. My brothers' names were Teddy and Alexander. Teddy was only four years old and had just fallen in love with superheroes. I'd like to take credit for that, but my dad would have something to say about it. Alexander was 16 years old and *hated* that I used his full name. Most of his friends call him Alex as most people would for someone named *Alex-and-er*, but I prefer his full name because it reminds of a noble warrior heading into battle. It also just *sounds* better than ALEX. Of course, he never got to know that. Neither of them got a lot of things. Teddy will never know what it's like to get his heart broken, and Alexander will never know how amazing university is. Neither of them will go through their 20s questioning every little thing that's in front of them, and neither of them will truly know how much they helped me not take things so seriously. The last thing I told Teddy was that I'd take him to playground when I got back from winter break, and here I am in Portland Oregon in the middle of December with not a single snowflake in sight.

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I could go back to my house, and sleep in my own bed for the night. I'd probably cry myself to sleep knowing I won't wake up to homemade waffles and my mom's military-like routine. My mom and my dad both served in the military which is also how they met and fell in love. My dream was to join the United States Airforce just like my mom, but she always had something to say about it. I was going to go after I graduated, but every Airforce program on the planet is gone.

I've been staying at this house a couple doors down because the couch in the living room is comfortable. All the pictures of the wall suggest an older couple used to live here. Victorian décor,

family photos on every inch of the wall, and the smell of rosemary and decade old loafers. They look like the type of grandparents that would be your best friend without asking. Always carrying small candies with them, and playfully arguing with each other randomly to fill the room with love and laughter. It's the type of grandparents I wish I had growing up so my parents could have time to go out on a date occasionally. I wonder what this couple was actually like...I wish I could ask them.

*BOOM!*

500 paces away. It's the closest I've ever been to the explosions, and they keep getting closer. The last one was 1002 paces away from the last, but in an entirely different direction. I've been trying to figure out what they are, where they come from, and who is behind them but every time I try to predict the location of one, I'm hundreds of thousands of paces off. The only pattern I've been able to successfully confirm is that they happen on the hour, but that is the least useful pattern I could've figured it out to do anything about literally *anything*. My dad would be able to figure it out if he were here. He could solve any riddle, puzzle, or treasure hunt. His only price was a 30 rack of PBR, and quality time. He'd always tell my siblings and I that the best thing we could do for ourselves is build something no one else has. That way when someone tries to shoot us down, we'll have enough pride and confidence in our system that it'll feel like nothing hit us at all.

"Dad what the hell am I supposed to do?"

*BOOM!*

This couch is a velvet green color. A color my ma would've hated in the house, but one that I grew to appreciate. I took one seat, and my entire body sank into it. I pulled a blanket off the floor, and through it over myself tucking each side of its softness underneath me as if my Ma had been tucking me in for bed. The ceiling white and stained with water marks from the second-floor bathroom. Judging by the looks of the stain I'd give the bathtub about two weeks before it comes

crashing through the floor. I guess I have the choice on whether I want to be on the couch when it comes through the floor, but it's hard to choose between death and spending your entire life alone. My eyes are getting heavier, and my body exhausted from the amount of traveling I've done today.

*BOOM! BOOM!*

"I get it! You're there! I hear you!"

*BOOM!*

I sat straight up, and my voice got quieter. "Since when can you hear me?" I look around the house scanning for anything out of place. *Nothing*. I through my hand in the air and smash my back into the couch forcing it to comfort me like it did the first time.

"Just another dead end..."

*BOOM! BOOM!*

I sit back up quickly. "What the fuck is your problem?"

*BOOM! BOOM!*

My hands met my tired eyes. I'm over trying to figure this out. There probably isn't even anything to figure out at the point. "It's been two years! What do you want from me?!"

*BOOM! BOOM!*

50 paces west. Is it following me? *BOOM!*

I rush to the front windows to see a house in another neighbor blown to pieces. It's making its way down the street towards the house. I need to get out of here. I rush towards the front door and start running down the street. Forcing my legs to run has never felt harder. I'm practically pulling two 50-pound piece of iron down the street I used to play hide and seek on. How ridiculous is that?

*BOOM! BOOM!*



I turn to find the fire consuming my childhood home. The yard is now orange and yellow rather than bright green, cut perfectly to my dad liking. The kitchen is a disaster which my mom would've hated, and my brother's bedroom are now more of mess than usual. I feel like I'm swallowing knives. I'm now carrying a 100 plate on my back, and my head is officially spinning. I start crying. I can't keep running like this. I can't keep living like this. My dad did not teach me to run he taught me build whatever I needed to that no one else had. Everyone ran because they were afraid. If I'm going to die, I am not going to die in fear. I am going to die with my pride and confidence at its peak.

I turn to face the fire as it's about to consumer me. It stops. Inches in front of me it stops. My eyes are closed ready to accept death when I feel a comforting warmth set over me. One I haven't felt in a while. It's the warmth I'd feel when hugging my dad. I open my eyes slowly to see a wall of fire inches from my face. I tilt my head to see it standing as tall as the tallest skyscraper in the nearest city. I stare to straight ahead to what appears to be a body walking towards. A body within the fire, but not burning to death.

I reach out my head to touch it when the fire retracks as if allergic to me. Suddenly, another hand reaches out, but completely engulfed in flames.

Kaeyla Noble  
 Professor Jones  
 ENG 300  
 20 January 2022  
 Story 01 (5-7pg)

### **Revised: Twin Flames**

~~Nothing has been comforting to me lately.~~

Comfort used to be walking through my **rusty** front door ~~and being greeted by~~ **to** my cheerful ~~Siberian Husky~~ **puppy** who had no clue ~~in the world~~ he'd only live until 4 years old. ~~Comforting~~ looked like rain chaotically falling onto the pavement outside my window. **Each drop telling me I'll be okay. while Sometimes I stay inside – safe from the chaos. Other times I want to feel the rain gently hit my cheeks because the message gets louder. Challenging myself became less and less comforting the more I tried to do it. I used to want to be the top student with all A's and now I simply just want to make through each semester with my sanity in tacked. I even found comfort in not challenging myself while going to university because I never thought I'd never finish my degree.**

**Regardless**, I finished school with four A's and one B. I didn't go to the last two weeks of class, so my professor gave me a B even though according to her I turned in A+ ~~level~~ work all semester ~~long~~. In the grand scheme of things, it didn't matter. None of it mattered. My university records are about 5,000 paces east from ~~here~~ **where I am now and are most likely** a pile of ash along with my degree I was promised if I finished. I used to hold a grudge against people who preached about university being a waste of time **because who gave them the right if time could be wasted or not? Time is time regardless of how you spend it. The hit me especially hard after I realized none of us will ever know what'll going to happen next. Commitment and loyalty are two characteristic the general population was lacking before everything happened. People were leaving jobs after only working a couple months which, in my opinion, is just a waste of time. However,**

what is effective is committing four years of your *life* to the same institution that asks you study a couple different things at a time.

I understand the other side of the argument is equally reasonable. There are some things you do not “need” to go to university for. However, I’d argue you the main things university teaches you aren’t even in the lectures and textbooks you pay for.

I’ve been walking for so long I can smell myself. I can’t remember the last time I took a shower...or even had access to one. My dad used to tell me I couldn’t take a shower for “X” number of days, so I knew what it felt like to...well...be in this exact situation. He also taught me how to keep track of how far I’ve been walking for.

501...502...503...504...

I also think things like her body her choice, everyone should know how to change a tire, restaurant jobs are some of the worst jobs, and money is the ultimate of most people. Due to the isolations, I’ve experienced for the 5,632 days of isolation I’m starting think opinions, arguments, and even accomplishments are most things I cared about were transient. in comparison to family and relationships. Grades, money, my success – all of it did not mean as much as family and now...all of its gone. My brothers’ names were Teddy and Alexander. Teddy was only four years old and had just fallen in love with superheroes. I’d like to take credit for that, but my dad would have something to say about it. Alexander was 16 years old and hated that when I’d use his full name. Most of his friends call him Alex as most people would for someone named *Alex-and-er*, but I prefer his full name. because It reminds of a noble warrior heading into battle. It also just sounds better than ALEX.

Of course, he never got to know that. Neither of them got a lot of things. Teddy will never know what it’s like to get his heart broken, and Alexander will never know how amazing university is. Neither of them will go through their 20s questioning every little thing that’s in front

of them, and neither of them will truly know how much they helped me not take things so seriously. The last thing I told Teddy was that I'd take him to a playground when I got back from winter break, and here I am in Portland Oregon. At least it's the middle of summer. Everything is so green and bright. ~~in the middle of December with not a single snowflake in sight.~~

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I could go back to my house, and sleep in my own bed for the night. I'd probably cry myself to sleep knowing I won't wake up to homemade waffles and my mom's military-like routine. My mom and my dad both served in the military which is also how they met and fell in love. My dream was to join the United States Airforce just like my mom, but she always had something to say about it. I was going to go after I graduated, but every Airforce program on the planet is gone now.

I've been staying at this house a couple doors down because the couch in the living room is comfortable. All the pictures on the wall suggest an older couple used to live here. Victorian décor, family photos on every inch of the wall, and the smell of rosemary and decade old loafers. They look like the type of grandparents that would be your best friend without asking. Always carrying small candies with them, and playfully arguing with each other randomly to fill the room with love and laughter.

It's the type of grandparents I wish I had growing up so my parents could have time to go out on a date occasionally. I wonder what this couple was actually like...I wish I could ask them.

*BOOM!*

500 paces away. It's the closest I've ever been to the explosions, and they keep getting closer. The last one was 1002 paces away from the last, but in an entirely different direction. I've been trying to figure out what they are, where they come from, and who is behind them – if anyone – but every time I try to predict the location of one, I'm hundreds of thousands of paces off.

The only pattern I've been able to successfully confirm is that they happen on the hour, but that is the least useful pattern I could've figured # out to do anything about literally *anything*. My dad would be able to figure it out if he were here. He could solve any riddle, puzzle, or treasure hunt. His only price was a 30 rack of PBR, and quality time. He'd always tell my siblings and I that the best thing we could do for ourselves is build something no one else has. That way when someone tries to shoot us down, we'll have enough pride and confidence in our system that it'll feel like nothing hit us at all.

"Dad what the hell am I supposed to do?" *I say to empty home.*

*BOOM!*

This couch is a velvet green color. A color my ma would've hated in the house, but one that I grew to appreciate. I took one seat, and my entire body sank into it. I pulled a blanket off the floor, and through it over myself tucking each side of its softness underneath me as if my Ma had been tucking me in for bed. The ceiling white and stanned with water marks from the second-floor bathroom. Judging by the looks of the stain I'd give the bathtub about two weeks before it comes crashing through the floor.

I guess I have the choice on whether I want to be on the couch when it comes through the floor, **but it's hard to choose between death and spending your entire life alone.** My eyes are getting heavier, and my body exhausted from the amount of walking I've done today. *Have a mentioned that I have no idea where I'm going?*

*BOOM! BOOM!*

"I get it! You're there! I hear you!"

*BOOM!*

I sat straight up, and my voice got quieter. “Since when can you hear me?” I look around the house scanning for anything out of place. *Nothing*. I through my hand in the air and smash my back into the couch forcing it to comfort me like it did the first time.

“Just another dead end...”

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I sit back up quickly. “What the fuck is your problem?”

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My hands met my tired eyes. I’m over trying to figure this out. There probably isn’t even anything to figure out at the point. “It’s been two years! What do you want from me?!”

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50 paces west. Is it following me? *BOOM!*

I rush to the front windows to see a house in another neighbor blown to pieces. It’s making its way down the street towards the house. I need to get out of here. I rush towards the front door and start running down the street. Forcing my legs to run has never felt harder. I’m practically pulling two 50-pound pieces of iron down the street I used to play hide and seek on. How ridiculous is that?

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I turn to find the fire consuming my childhood home. The yard is now orange and yellow rather than bright green, cut perfectly to my dad liking. The kitchen is a disaster which my mom would’ve hated, ~~and~~ My brother’s bedroom are now more of mess than usual. I feel like I’m swallowing knives. I’m now carrying a 100 plate on my back, and my head is officially spinning. I start crying. I can’t keep running like this. I can’t keep living like this. My dad did not teach me to run he taught me **how to build whatever I needed to so I could survive and live how I want to live.**

~~that no one else had~~. Everyone ran because they were afraid. If I'm going to die, I am not going to die in fear. I am going to die with my pride and confidence at its peak.

I turn to face the fire as it's about to consume me. It stops. Inches in front of me it stops. My eyes are closed ready to accept death when I feel a comforting warmth set over me. One I haven't felt in a while. It's the warmth I'd feel when hugging my dad. I open my eyes slowly to see a wall of fire inches from my face. I tilt my head to see it standing as tall as the tallest skyscraper in the nearest city. I stare ~~to~~ straight ahead at what appears to be a body walking towards. A body within the fire, but not burning to death.

I reach out my **hand** to touch it when the fire retracks as if allergic to me. Suddenly, another hand reaches out – **completely** engulfed in flames.

### Final: Twin Flames

Comfort used to be walking through my rusty front door to my cheerful puppy who had no clue he'd only live until 4 years old. Comforting looked like rain chaotically falling onto the pavement outside my window. Each drop telling me I'll be okay. Sometimes I stay inside – safe from the chaos. Other times I want to feel the rain gently hit my cheeks because the message gets louder. Challenging myself became less and less comforting the more I tried to do it. I used to want to be the top student with all A's and now I simply just want to make through each semester with my sanity in tacked.

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Of course, he never got to know that. Neither of them got a lot of things. Teddy will never know what it's like to get his heart broken, and Alexander will never know how amazing university is. Neither of them will go through their 20s questioning every little thing that's in front of them, and neither of them will truly know how much they helped me not take things so seriously. The last thing I told Teddy was that I'd take him to a playground when I got back from winter break, and here I am in Portland Oregon. At least it's the middle of summer. Everything is so green and bright.

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getting heavier, and my body exhausted from the amount of walking I've done today. Have a mentioned that I have no idea where I'm going?

*BOOM! BOOM!*

"I get it! You're there! I hear you!"

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I sat straight up, and my voice got quieter. "Since when can you hear me?" I look around the house scanning for anything out of place. *Nothing*. I through my hand in the air and smash my back into the couch forcing it to comfort me like it did the first time.

"Just another dead end..."

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I sit back up quickly. "What the fuck is your problem?"

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would've hated, ~~and~~ My brother's bedroom are now more of mess than usual. I feel like I'm swallowing knives. I'm now carrying a 100 plate on my back, and my head is officially spinning. I start crying. I can't keep running like this. I can't keep living like this. My dad did not teach me to run he taught me how to build whatever I needed to so I could survive and live how *I want to live*. ~~that no one else had~~. Everyone ran because they were afraid. If I'm going to die, I am not going to die in fear. I am going to die with my pride and confidence at its peak.

I turn to face the fire as it's about to consume me. It stops. Inches in front of me it stops. My eyes are closed ready to accept death when I feel a comforting warmth set over me. One I haven't felt in a while. It's the warmth I'd feel when hugging my dad. I open my eyes slowly to see a wall of fire inches from my face. I tilt my head to see it standing as tall as the tallest skyscraper in the nearest city. I stare ~~to~~ straight ahead at what appears to be a body walking towards. A body within the fire, but not burning to death.

I reach out my hand to touch it when the fire retracks as if allergic to me. Suddenly, another hand reaches out – completely engulfed in flames.

## Revisions

Something that was consistent feedback was confusion surrounding the numbers. I attempted to set up the numbers and the counting better by providing more back story beforehand. With that being said, I of course edited grammar and spelling errors as some people had mentioned as well. Melissa Duetsch mentioned she was confused about whether or not the character was running from their childhood home or from another home.

I found myself struggling to make it clearer that the character *wanted* to go to the childhood home, but found it was too hard to, so they stayed at a house a couple doors down from it. I didn't change much of the scene, nor did I find it a very important note to change. I did however take note of her feedback regarding the pace of the story. She told me the "BOOMS" in this story were introduced quickly. I attempted to push them back by adding more information to the front of the story rather than physically moving them in the story line. I personally appreciate where they are introduced given the page limit is 5 to 7.

Lastly, I changed a lot of the beginning to attribute to the theme more. I used more descriptive words and added short sentences to hopefully provide a more human-like feel to the story. I am pleased with how this story turned out, and could see this idea becoming bigger and better later on.

Kaeyla Noble  
Professor Jones  
24 February 2022  
Story #3

**Original:**  
**Charlottesville Hospital**

Each note the pianist played hit my chest like a sludge hammer. Maria had white tulips placed perfectly around the wooden casket because they were her favorite. She would always buy them for the front desk, so the hospital felt more comforting. I regret giving her shit about it now.

Most of Veronica's family didn't return any of Maria's calls since she told them her daughter passed. Everyone except her grandfather. Veronica died of internal bleeding in her torso so I understand why they wouldn't want to see how that affected her appearance, but that's why Maria asked for a closed casket funeral. The casket's gold detailing caught the afternoon light beautifully as Maria slowly walked towards the podium to speak. Although her hair was perfectly glued together by hairspray and her dress – perfectly ironed – fell in straight lines next to her pale white thighs her hands were noticeably shaky.

She cleared her throat while her eyes locked with the paper she placed on the podium. "Thank you all for coming today. Everyone in this room knew Veronica in some way or another, and I honestly think she would be comforted by how many people are here to show they care...or cared...I guess." She cleared her throat through the awkwardness.

"Veronica was the nurse to introduce me to all of you and made sure every *single* patient that came through Charlottesville Hospital felt important and cared for." Her voice tightened at the attempt to hide the tears wanting to flood through. Unfortunately, I couldn't do the same. I

stood up quietly, and gently pushed the doors open before my tears made their way down my cheeks without permission.

“Pull yourself together. Come on!” I whip my tears away aggressively hoping the force of my hand would suddenly make them stop. Instead, they stop at the sight of Veronica’s grandfather standing in the middle of the hallway...alone. His hand raised as if waving to someone in the distance. However, the closest thing to a human is a painting of woman hanging lifelessly on the wall in a Victorian styled dress.

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He tilts his head to the side in confusion. “Oh dear. I must’ve forgotten. I apologize. I do remember now. You were little V’s newbie she was helping get around the hospital recently.” He laughed quietly to himself. When suddenly a burst a sadness washes over his face.

“And..uh..I remember why I’m here as well...” His eyes begin to water at the realization that he’s at his granddaughter’s funeral. “I thought I saw...” his hand raises to point at the still

lifeless painting on the wall behind him. My heart sank at the sight of his sadness, “Why don’t we go back in together?” My throat tightened, but I have to keep it together.

He nods his head, and we slowly walk toward the door. It creaks as I push it open, and offer him the opportunity to walk in first. He accepts and sits down at the closest row to his left. I quickly made my way back to my seat – four rows away from the front. I gently sat next to Maria as Dave was at the podium talking about a time when Veronica helped him save someone’s life in the ER.

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“The only thing I know is that he was diagnosed with dementia a couple months ago.”

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“Yes...yes we do.”

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“How is he doing now?”

“Fine, right now. He calmed down a lot more once he got here and got checked in. He was very adamant that he *needed* to be checked in.” I tilted my head to the side in confusion and chills ran down my back. I turn back to my chair and notice my coat in on the floor. I roll my eyes and put it back on my chair where I originally thought it was. “Stay!”

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A sharp pain grew in my head, while my hand aggressively gripped the paper. I looked down at my hands to find them covered in blood. "Someone please help! I can't stop the bleeding!" I jump up out of my chair in fear. I start searching the front desk frantically while rubbing my hands on my scrubs.

Maria rushes over to me and gently places her hands on my shoulders. "Charlie stop! What happened? What's going on?"

"She was in my hands Mar! Her blood was on my hands. I tried to save her, and I couldn't! I just..." I lost my breathe and I could hear my heartbeat in my head.

"Is this the first time you experience a flash back to..." she hesitated as I made eye contact with her, "*the day...*" I starred at her as a deep sadness filled my chest.

"Yes...yes I uhhh...that's never happened before." I glanced over at the other side of the front desk to see the tulips. Once dead are now fully alive as if just bought from the floweriest.

My eyes widened. “Charlie?” My head snaps back to give Maria my full undivided attention. “I’m sorry I just...I can’t stop thinking about how if I had known 30 minutes early...I could’ve...ya know...Veronica might still be here.”

Her chest dropped, and she pulled me for a hug. I decided to embrace it and reciprocated the same energy back.

Our loving moment was suddenly interrupted by Maria’s computer beeping. Maria quickly let go to check what patient needed our assistance. I watch as she double checks the system to make sure it isn’t a false alarm.

“It’s Veronica’s grandfather.” Chills run down my back. I quickly turn and start running with Maria. As we get towards the end of the hallway Maria takes a sharp right into his room. The door busts open. He is laying on the floor unconscious. Maria rushes to his side to check for his pulse. His entire torso covered in blood.

I look up to see a dozen white tulips sitting on the windowsill, and in that moment I knew who the nurse dressed in red was.

Kaeyla Noble  
 Professor Jones  
 24 February 2022  
 Story #3

### Revised: Charlottesville Hospital

Each note the pianist played hit my chest like a sludge hammer. Maria had white tulips placed perfectly around the wooden casket because they were her favorite. She would always buy them for the front desk, so the hospital felt more comforting. I regret giving her shit about it now.

Most of Veronica's family didn't return any of Maria's calls since she told them her daughter passed. Everyone except her grandfather. Veronica died of internal bleeding in her torso so I understand why they wouldn't want to see how that affected her appearance, ~~but that's why Maria asked for a closed casket funeral.~~ **Maria did make it a closed casket hoping that would make them feel more comfortable.** The casket's gold detailing caught the afternoon light beautifully as Maria slowly walked towards the podium to speak. Although her hair was perfectly glued together by hairspray and her dress ~~—perfectly ironed—~~ fell in straight lines next to her pale white thighs her hands were noticeably shaky. **Veronica always came to work with perfectly ironed scrubs, so it made perfect since why her dress looked so perfect.**

~~She~~ **Maria** cleared her throat while her eyes locked with the paper she placed on the podium. "Thank you all for coming today. Everyone in this room...knew Veronica in some way or another, **and** I honestly think she would be comforted by how many people are here to show they care...or cared...I guess." She cleared her throat through the awkwardness.

"Veronica was the nurse ~~to~~ **who** introduced me to all of you and made sure every *single* patient that came through Charlottesville Hospital felt important and cared for." Her voice tightened at the attempt to hide the tears wanting to flood through. Unfortunately, I couldn't do

the same. I stood up quietly, and gently pushed the doors open before my tears made their way down my cheeks without permission.

“Pull yourself together Rachel Come on!” I whip my tears away aggressively hoping the force of my hand would suddenly make them stop. Instead, they stop at the sight of Veronica’s grandfather standing in the middle of the hallway...alone.

His hand raised as if waving to someone in the distance. However, the closest thing to a human is a painting of woman hanging lifelessly on the wall in a Victorian styled dress.

“Mr. Emerson?” I hesitantly took one step forward while chills rolled down my back. “Is everything okay?”

His hand continues to wave back and forth – two inches to the left, two inches to right. I continue to walk towards him. I reach out my hand to tap his shoulder gently in hopes to snap him out this daze he’s in. His hand stops. My eyes widen with panic.

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“Oh! Hello young lady! What is your name?” He smiled genuinely with warmth in his eyes. ~~I’ve told him my name before.~~ “We met a couple months ago at...” the words wouldn’t come out, “Veronica’s 31<sup>st</sup> birthday...” I clear my throat quickly, “My name is ~~Charlie~~ Rachel...”

He tilts his head to the side in confusion. “Oh dear. I must’ve forgotten. I apologize. I do remember now. You were little V’s newbie she was helping get around the hospital recently.” He laughed quietly to himself. When suddenly a burst a sadness washes over his face.

“And..uh..I remember why I’m here as well...” His eyes begin to water at the realization that he’s at his granddaughter’s funeral. “I thought I saw he– ...” his hand raises to point at the still lifeless painting on the wall behind him. My heart sank at the sight of his sadness, “Why

don't we go back in together?" My throat tightened, but I have to keep it together – especially now.

He nods his head, and we slowly walk toward the door. It creaks as I push it open, and I offer him the opportunity to walk in first. He accepts and sits down at the closest row to his left. I quickly made my way back to my seat – four rows away from the front. I gently sat next to Maria as Dave was at the podium talking about a time when Veronica helped him save someone's life in the ER.

The sight of Veronica's grandfather in the hallway has my mind turning. I lean over to Maria, and whisper softly, "Do you know anything about Veronica's grandfather?" She nods reluctantly without taking her eyes off Dave.

"The only thing I know is that he was diagnosed with dementia a couple months ago."

My chest settles in relief, "Ohhh, I see..."

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*BEEP-BEEP-BEEP!*

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After making myself two cups of coffee, putting my hair in a tight low ponytail, and putting on my green scrubs on I get in my car to drive to the hospital.

“Good morning, Maria!” I say as she sits at the front desk filling out medical paperwork for a newly admitted dementia patient. “Good morning, Charlie!”

I look up at the front desk to see a dozen tulips – *dead* – in a vase Veronica had brought. I stopped in my tracks and my chest grew heavy. Maria looked up from her paperwork, “I know...” She took a deep breathe, “We need to through them away.”

“Yes...yes we do.”

I walk around the front desk to see an unusually large pile of paperwork by Maria’s computer.

“Paperwork? This early in the morning?”

“Yaaa...and you will not believe who the hell it is either...” I through my coat over the rollie chair next to her. “Veronica’s grandfather.”

My heart sank into my stomach and my feet went cold. “What?!”

“He wondered in here this morning saying a nurse in red told him to come to this specific hospital and check in.” My jaw dropped in shock. She quickly glanced at me and nodded in disbelief **for a split second before continuing to fill out her paperwork.**

“How is he doing now?”

“Fine, ~~right now~~ **I guess.** He calmed down a lot more once he got here and got checked in. He was very adamant that he *needed* to be checked in.” I tilted my head to the side in confusion and chills ran down my back.

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Most of the **patients** I work with have Alzheimer, dementia, or both. It's something I have spent an ample amount of time researching because – quite frankly – both of my parents had it. Every day I would have to remind my mom who I was, and every day I'd place my bets on whether or not she would remember me or scream at me to get out of her room. It's one of the most heartbreaking things to experience. ~~and is ultimately~~ **It's** one of the reasons I went to medical school **in the first place.**

While sitting in my rollie chair, I saw Veronica's grandfather's paperwork sitting conveniently next to Maria's computer. Out of curiosity, I **quietly** grabbed it and started reading it quickly. The first things that catches my eye is the notes section of the report.

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A sharp pain grew in my head, while my hand aggressively gripped the paper. I looked down at my hands to find them covered in blood. "Someone please help! I can't stop the bleeding!" I jump up out of my chair in fear. I start searching the front desk frantically while rubbing my hands on my scrubs.

Maria rushes over to me and gently places her hands on my shoulders. "Charlie stop! What happened? What's going on?"

"She was in my hands Mar! Her blood was on my hands. I tried to save her, and I couldn't! I just..." I lost my breathe and I could hear my heartbeat in my head **before realizing I was going through another episode.**

"Is this the first time you experience a flash back to..." she hesitated as I made eye contact with her, "*the day...*" I starred at her as a deep sadness filled my chest.

"No... I uhhh...that's happened before...**I guess.**" I glanced over at the other side of the front desk to see the tulips. Once dead are now fully alive as if just bought from the floweriest.



My eyes widened. “Rachel?” My head snaps back to give Maria my full undivided attention. “I’m sorry I just...I can’t stop thinking about how if I had known 30 minutes early...I could’ve...ya know...Veronica might still be here.”

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“It’s Veronica’s grandfather.” Chills run down my back. I quickly turn and start running with Maria. As we get towards the end of the hallway Maria takes a sharp right into his room.

The door busts open. He is laying on the floor unconscious. Maria rushes to his side to check for his pulse. His entire torso covered in blood. My head flashing back to the day Veronica died.

I look up to see a dozen white tulips sitting on the windowsill. and in that moment Maria is yelling at me to go get Dave to take him to ER, but my feet won’t move.

“I knew know who the nurse dressed in red is...”

Kaeyla Noble  
Professor Jones  
24 February 2022  
Story #3

### **Final: Charlottesville Hospital**

Each note the pianist played hit my chest like a sludge hammer. Maria had white tulips placed perfectly around the wooden casket because they were her favorite. She would always buy them for the front desk, so the hospital felt more comforting. I regret giving her shit about it now.

Most of Veronica's family didn't return any of Maria's calls since she told them her daughter passed. Everyone except her grandfather. Veronica died of internal bleeding in her torso so I understand why they wouldn't want to see how that affected her appearance. Maria did make it a closed casket hoping that would make them feel more comfortable. The casket's gold detailing caught the afternoon light beautifully as Maria slowly walked towards the podium to speak. Although her hair was perfectly glued together by hairspray and her dress fell in straight lines next to her pale white thighs her hands were noticeably shaky. Veronica always came to work with perfectly ironed scrubs, so it made perfect sense why her dress looked so perfect.

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“I know who the nurse dressed in red is...”

### Reflection

Most important edit is the main characters name changing from Charlie to Rachel and being introduced earlier than it originally was in the story. An overall consensus when this story was workshopped is that it needs a major re-read to fix grammar and spelling errors. These errors made it hard to read and ultimately held the story back from being the best it could be.

After going through and fixing the grammar, I took into consideration some things Matt Holsopple said about this story specifically. He really loved the symbolism in my story – more specifically the tulips – and loved how the story had multiple avenues it could've gone. With that being said, he also made a comment about the pacing of the story. I did my best to make sure the grammatical errors were fixed before changing the pacing.

The story once again reached its limit of 5 to 7 pages, but I honestly didn't want to change too much about this story because I quite like how it is formatted. However, I will say I did change some of the dialog in hopes it would slow the story down a little bit.



Kaeyla Noble  
 Professor Jones  
 10 April 2022  
 Flash Fiction – Story 5

### How to be right and wrong at the same time

There is nothing worse than disappointing someone, so to successfully-avoid disappointing someone you must always be right. If you're always right than you're never wrong, and if you're never wrong than you'll never be disappointing anyone. Never disappointing anyone means being the example you were taught to be as the oldest child. Every mistake you make is a mistake to not be made, so you must never make a mistake. If you're always right than you never make a mistake, and if you never make a mistake than you're being the example. If you're the example, then you're being the best oldest child you could possibly be. That's good. That's great even. No matter what you do, you just can't disappoint anyone. Disappointing someone means you made a mistake. It means you hurt them. *Oh, for the love of God*, don't hurt anyone – especially the way others have hurt you. Go to therapy to learn about your pain so you don't repeat it, so you *never* hurt anyone ever. Never hurt anyone. If you hurt someone, it means you *did* something wrong. Don't do anything wrong. If you don't do anyone wrong, you are always right. You are always *doing* something right, and if you're always doing something right than not a single person could ever tell you that you were doing something wrong. Right?

They decided to leave me, they were the problem, it wasn't me. I don't do anything wrong. I am doing everything right because I never make mistakes. They needed to grow, they needed to work on their communicating, they weren't in tune with their emotions enough – I'm always in tune with my emotions. Why else would everyone call me emotional and sensitive growing up? I've worked on accepting my emotions. I go to therapy which means I'm working on it, which means I'm doing something right. I can't be wrong for going to therapy. *Who is going to tell I'm wrong for going to therapy?* I'm not wrong. *I'm not wrong*. He left me because he didn't know how to communicate his emotions, not because I wasn't listening to him or because I yell at him whenever he comes to me with a problem. Sure, I may make him feel like the problem, and tell him multiple times that my work is more important than he is, but he didn't put our date in the calendar so how should I know that it's date night. He's just bad at communicating; he's bad at planning; He's never been a planner; he's always been a more spontaneous person which is why I'm right and he's wrong. Right?

I care about him, and he's gone? Did I just lose him? Is he really gone? How did this happen? I love him so much. Why did he leave? I didn't make a mistake. I listened to him. I changed my behavior accordingly. I was there for him...I guess. I'm the type of girlfriend to plan cute dates – dates that deserve to be posted on Pinterest as the example. I am the example. The *good* example. The one my brother and sister look up to and ask advice from. Like I said I'm the example. I may have rescheduled our dates night over and over and yelled at him when he was upset about it...but I'm not wrong – I'm never wrong. Right?

No. I was wrong and right at the same time. But mostly wrong for a long time.

Kaeyla Noble  
 Professor Jones  
 10 April 2022  
 Flash Fiction – Story 5

**Revised: How to be right and wrong at the same time**

There is nothing worse than disappointing someone, so to successfully-avoid disappointing someone you must always be right. If you're always right than you're never wrong, and if you're never wrong than you'll never be disappointing anyone. Never disappointing anyone means being the example you were taught to be as the oldest child. Every mistake you make is a mistake to not be made, so you must never make a mistake. If you're always right than you never make a mistake, and if you never make a mistake than you're being the example. If you're the example, then you're being the best oldest child you could possibly be. That's good. That's great even. No matter what you do, you just can't disappoint anyone. Disappointing someone means you made a mistake. It means you hurt them. *Oh, for the love of God*, don't hurt anyone – especially the way others have hurt you. Go to therapy to learn about your pain so you don't repeat it, so you *never* hurt anyone ever. Never hurt anyone. If you hurt someone, it means you *did* something wrong. Don't do anything wrong. If you don't do anyone wrong, you are always right. You are always *doing* something right, and if you're always doing something right than not a single person could ever tell you that you were doing something wrong. Right?

They decided to leave me, they were the problem, it wasn't me. I don't do anything wrong. I am doing everything right because I never make mistakes. They needed to grow, they needed to work on their communicating, they weren't in tune with their emotions enough – I'm always in tune with my emotions. Why else would everyone call me emotional and sensitive growing up? I've worked on accepting my emotions. I go to therapy which means I'm working on it, which means I'm doing something right. I can't be wrong for going to therapy. *Who is going to tell I'm wrong for going to therapy?* I'm not wrong. *I'm not wrong*. He left me because he didn't know how to communicate his emotions, not because I wasn't listening to him or because I yell at him whenever he comes to me with a problem. Sure, I may make him feel like the problem, and tell him multiple times that my work is more important than he is, but he didn't put our date in the calendar so how should I know that it's date night. He's just bad at communicating; he's bad at planning; He's never been a planner; he's always been a more spontaneous person which is why I'm right and he's wrong. Right?

Oh my god. OH MY GOD. I yelled at him for coming to my with a problem?! I got mad after I asked him to put things on the calender, and he *did it?* I told him he was the problem?! It's been 1 week. 1 week since he left me, and I've realized...I care about him, and he's gone. Did I just lose him? Is he really gone? How did this happen? I love him so much. Why did he leave? I didn't make a mistake. I listened to him. I changed my behavior accordingly. I was there for him...I guess. I guess I'm the type of girlfriend to plan cute dates – dates that deserve to be posted on Pinterest as the example. I am the example. The *good* example. Or I guess I'm the examples. The good example...I guess. The one my brother and sister look up to and ask advice

from. ~~Like I said I'm the example.~~ I may have rescheduled our dates night over and over and yelled at him when he was upset about it...but I'm not wrong – I'm never wrong. Right?

No. I was wrong and right at the same time. But mostly wrong for a long time.

Kaeyla Noble  
 Professor Jones  
 10 April 2022  
 Flash Fiction – Story 5

### **Final: How to be right and wrong at the same time**

There is nothing worse than disappointing someone, so to successfully-avoid disappointing someone you must always be right. If you're always right than you're never wrong, and if you're never wrong than you'll never be disappointing anyone. Never disappointing anyone means being the example you were taught to be as the oldest child. Every mistake you make is a mistake to not be made, so you must never make a mistake. If you're always right than you never make a mistake, and if you never make a mistake than you're being the example. If you're the example, then you're being the best oldest child you could possibly be. That's good. That's great even. No matter what you do, you just can't disappoint anyone. Disappointing someone means you made a mistake. It means you hurt them. *Oh, for the love of God*, don't hurt anyone – especially the way others have hurt you. Go to therapy to learn about your pain so you don't repeat it, so you *never* hurt anyone ever. Never hurt anyone. If you hurt someone, it means you *did* something wrong. Don't do anything wrong. If you don't do anyone wrong, you are always right. You are always *doing* something right, and if you're always doing something right than not a single person could ever tell you that you were doing something wrong. Right?

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### Reflection

The biggest thing about this story was the confusion surrounding the character change in heart. I found myself wanting to express a lot of inner thoughts that were happening at a very rapid pace. At such a pace, I couldn't control how many I would have at once. I'd find myself anxious more times than not, and this story helped me expressed a lot those emotions and thoughts.

With that being said, Coradeanna Ragsdale made a good point. I make it seem like the main characters behavior isn't going to change. I don't make the transition obvious enough to the reader. I made it obvious for me. I decided to add more inner thought that sounds and *is* more of a realization than anything else, so the reader feels as though the character has changed by the end of the flash fiction.

My hope is that now a reader will be able to see both the beginning middle and end of the main character's inner dialog rather than missing the "Ah-awh" moment if you will. This is easily one of my favorite stories.

### Conclusion

Our humanity will change once we are dead. Once we are dead, we no longer exist and therefore our humanity is gone. However, after doing this project and writing all semester long I've concluded that humanity has a legacy.

Our words, actions, being, emotions, they all *mean something*. They mean something to leave a remanence of our humanity sprinkled around the world and even within other humans beings as well. It's why sharing things with others is so valuable. It's why spending time with others is so precious. Our existence touches others in more ways than we will ever know.

The definition of being human is forever changing and has multiple dimensions to it. However, if I were to give being "human" a definition it would be.

**A soul and body with an infinite number of possibility – especially when with another soul and body.**