What should I do with her, recluse?

Okay lady, where do we start?

Don't know about you, Bruiser...

Not the head creep, but not too bad for a night's work.

Unnh!

That hurt more than it should have!

Way more!

That I leave up to you, Bruiser. It's past time I made my escape!
The next day...

Mom! Get up here!

Not today, my little flame.

But you always climb trees with me.

For as far back as I can recall.

Amber—maybe we should go, sweetie.

What's wrong?

I'm sorry sweetie.

I think, I need to see the doctor.

Can you help me with this blanket?
"I'm sorry we couldn't do more..."

"Why didn't you save her? This can't be happening!"

"Ashes to ashes..."

"...dust to dust."

"Lovely eulogy, Reverend. Thanks so much."

"I don't know how to go on."

A few months later...

"Remember what she always told you?"

"I know, Dad, but she can't tell me that now can she?"

"There's just nothing that could..."

"It all happened so fast..."

"The poor dear! Losing her mother like that!"

"Yes, and so young too!"

"She must be crushed!"

"Save her daddy!"
They could have saved her.

But they didn’t.

They let her die!

I know it’s hard. Believe me... I hurt too. You know you can always--

I don’t need anybody!

You may not feel like you need anybody, but you need to eat.

You didn’t even touch your dinner, and barely nibbled at your breakfast.

I’m sorry, Daddy. I just... it’s not important.

Are you getting any sleep?

Of course it’s important, and you don’t need to apologize for anything.

I’m just glad you’re so invested in this school play.

How can you think of sleep?

Guess now’s not a good time to tell him I’m quitting.
I'm really proud of you staying in the play. When you got the part of the Mathemagician I saw how happy you were.

You read the book, what? Three times?

Dad, it's a stupid play. I don't think it's for me.

Where's this coming from?

It's fine Dad.

She said, you'll always make her proud.

Hey Amber, you look different. Have you lost weight?

'Sob'=

Oh, are you okay?
I CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS.

AT LEAST WHEN MOM WAS AROUND I HAD SOME HAPPINESS.

NOW, I JUST DON'T SEE A REASON TO GO ON.

I CAN'T STOP FEELING THIS WAY!

SURE. LET'S MEET UP.

WHAT THE....?

OH, GREAT! WHAT DO I DO NOW?

...MY GRAND BABIES' PICTURES ARE IN THERE!
YOU MUST USE THIS TO FIGHT AGAINST... EVIL...

I BELIEVE... IN YOU.

OH MOM. I'LL MAKE YOU PROUD.

WHAT'S THE WORST THAT COULD HAPPEN?

'SIGH'

THOSE ARE THE ONLY COPIES I HAVE!

THAT AIN'T MY PROBLEM! SEE YOU AROUND, "GRANNY"!

USED TISSUES... ICK!

OLD CANDY...

PUBLICATIONS... CARDS...

EVER HEARD OF A SMART PHONE, GRANDMA?

THE CLOUD... MAYBE?

GIVE THAT BACK!

HUH?

OR WHAT? YOU GONNA TELL YOUR MOMMY?
Hey! Put me down, you big jerk!

If I had time, I'd give you a beatin'...

Be glad I'm only doing this!

Coward!

'Urp!

Go home and grab a shower, sweetie! Hahaha!

Great, not only did he get away, I'm stuck in the trash and my phone is gone.

Even worse, I can't get what I really needed...

What happened to you?

I don't want to talk about it...
YOU KNOW IT CAN'T HURT TO TALK TO SOMEONE.
IF YOU WON'T TALK TO ME, WOULD YOU...
DROP IT, DAD. I'M NOT SEEING A THERAPIST.
I'M NOT CRAZY.
OH BABY GIRL, IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
WE'VE EXPERIENCED A MAJOR LOSS.
I THINK ABOUT HOW TOUGH THIS MUST BE FOR YOU. ACCEPTING HELP DOESN'T MAKE YOU CRAZY--
--IT MAKES YOU SMART. TALKING ABOUT WHAT'S BOtherING YOU CAN DO SO MUCH MORE THAN YOU'D EVER IMAGINE.
TALKING TO A PROFESSIONAL ABOUT YOUR TROUBLES CAN'T GUARANTEE NOTHING BAD WILL EVER HAPPEN--
--BUT IT SHOULD HELP YOU FEEL BETTER... AND LEAD TO BETTER OUTCOMES.
...COULD IT STOP BAD THINGS FROM HAPPENING?
WHY ME?
WHY DID THIS HAPPEN TO ME?

OH MOM, IT HURTS SO MUCH WITHOUT YOU...

IT'S LIKE I HAVE THIS FEELING INSIDE OF ME... AND I JUST NEED A WAY OUT.

I GUESS I COULD GIVE IT A SHOT...

Huh?
Well, here goes nothing...

Several months later...

Oh! Amber.

I think you left this.

Huh?

Before you go, I just want to say how proud I am of you, Amber.

Wouldn’t want you to forget this.

Thanks.

I know it wasn’t easy for you to come here.
Honestly, I am surprised that I feel as good as I do now.

I feel more in charge of my life...

...even though I know I can't control everything around me.

Keep practicing those new coping skills you like--

And try to use the trick I taught you when those negative, unhelpful thoughts pop up.

See you next time.

You know it! Thank you so much...for everything.

A lot of traffic today.

Seems like there's more all the time.

Mommy, why does the bus take so long?

Just be patient, honey.

Oh no! The driver! He's--

Y'know I've read those silly stories of super heroes, but you just might be one in real life!

No, no. You're the real hero. Talking about difficult feelings takes bravery. This is all you. I will not take credit!
"You gonna tell your mommy?"

"Tell your mommy?"

"... use the trick... when those negative, unhelpful thoughts pop up."

"No!"

"He's slumped over the wheel!"

"Outta control!"

"Somebody grab him!"

"Bus keeps swerving!"

"Can't reach him!"
LOOK OUT!

NEED TO THINK OF SOMETHING, FAST!

TOO MANY PEOPLE CROWDING AROUND THE DRIVER!

Hey! What are you crazy?

ZAP!

Mom... I'll make you proud.

When I said that, wasn't thinking about throwing myself under a bus!

Mommy??!
But, if this works everyone should be okay!

Including little ol' me!

Now, what was that thing Dad told me about?

Right! Emergency brakes!

Zap!

Badump!

Badump!

Oh my!

That was close!

Goodness!

Somebody call 911!

Glad I'm not on there!

Whew!

What in the world?
NOW, SO LONG AS NO ONE SAW ME...

WERE YOU ON BOARD THAT BUS?

UM...

YES OFFICER! I WAS.

IT WAS SOME RIDE!

ER--EXCUSE ME... MISS?

BUT I THINK WE'RE OKAY NOW.

HEY ANDERSON! HELP US WITH THE DRIVER!

SOME OF THESE FOLKS ARE PRETTY SHOOK UP.

LOOKS LIKE A FEW MINOR INJURIES.

AMBULANCE ON THE SCENE.

CAN SOMEBODY MOVE THE CROWD BACK?
THE SCENE PLAYED OUT DURING RUSH HOUR TRAFFIC, ENDING IN A NEAR COLLISION IN THE DOWNTOWN SHOPPING DISTRICT!

WOAH! THAT WAS AMAZING!

DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU WERE NEAR THAT AREA TODAY?

COULD HAVE BEEN YOU ON THAT BUS!

I'M SO GLAD YOU WERE IN A SAFE PLACE.

YOU KNOW WHAT DAD?
I WAS IN A SAFE PLACE.

I'M SO GLAD YOU HELPED TALK ME INTO TRYING THERAPY.

I APPRECIATE YOU.

AND I'M PROUD OF YOU, SWEETIE!

WAIT-- WHAT'S THIS?

BREAKING NEWS, CELL PHONE CAMERA SHOWS THE MOMENTS BEFORE THE NEAR BUS CRASH... A YOUNG GIRL LEAPT INTO ACTION AND MANAGED TO SAVE THE DAY. AUTHORITIES AREN'T SURE WHO SHE IS, BUT THIS FAMILY WOULD NOT BE HERE IF NOT FOR HER HEROICS!

I WAS SO SCARED!

THEN THERE WAS THIS THING THAT HAPPENED...

IT WAS LIKE, LIKE A SPARK FLEW IN!

WAIT A MINUTE...

SPARK?
HMM, I KIND OF LIKE THAT.