

Pine Wood Coffin

A pine wood coffin sat in the bed of a truck parked outside of that old, broken house. Two men stood on either side of the truck bed looking at it. A woman – a daughter – stood at the end of the truck, looking at that pine wood coffin. I only saw it for a split second driving by, but I thought of what could be going through their head. *Where was I? How could I have helped? Why didn't I spend more time with her?*

I had heard what happened. I knew why they needed that pine wood coffin. My sister was there when it all went down.

An elderly woman living with her daughter needed to be cared for every hour of every day. The daughter, Devin was her name, had to go out of town for an entire weekend, leaving her mother to be looked after by some woman from the next town over and my sister, Florence. The exact details are fuzzy, but Florence told me they went to check on her and she was gone. Knowing my sister, I doubted some of what she said. But all anyone knew now was that Devin's mom was buried in a pine wood coffin.

The coffin has a funny story behind it. The community is small, way too small to have the proper people for the proper jobs, so most of the time, people ban together to make sure the town is alright. Well the high school shop teacher's son is his father's class this year and he had him make a pine wood coffin for Devin's mom.

A few days after Devin's mom died, the other woman who was there accused Florence of stealing morphine from the dead woman's collection of drugs. Florence said she took it and flushed it like they did with all her other medications, but deep down I kind of knew. She was always in and out of drugs. That all started when we sent her to Reno for work and she came back with a pocket full of

Vicodin when it was actually still being manufactured. I wondered what kind of coffin we would bury her in.

A lot of time went by after Devin's mom died. The town kind of forgot about it. There was always something new to talk about. It was like the gossip went as low as to judge someone when they didn't mow their lawn, and sometimes it did. But I still think about Devin's mom every now and then. Wishing I could get the memory of seeing that pine wood coffin in the bed of that truck out of my head. Maybe I played it back to see if there was something that I could have changed or done to make it easier for everyone now. How were we supposed to know what would happen?

We buried Florence last Tuesday. My mom found her the Tuesday before that dead on the couch in her living room. I constantly think about what happened. What could I have done to stop her? Why wasn't I there for her? Scenes of her funeral play back in my head along with the home movies of us from our childhood. But instead of thinking about ways I can steal her toys, I wonder which shop student they had make her pine wood coffin. I wonder what I should write on their thank you card.