Synopsis

A real-life testimony about the potter and the clay, metaphorically, of course. After a lifetime of brokenness, Hannah comes to the realization that all that God allowed to happen in her life was and is for a purpose. As the potter, the Lord, shaped her and molded her into what she is today. As the clay, Hannah, learned to walk in obedience to bring Him glory despite all the heartache, pain, and brokenness. God shapes the clay every time molding her into something more beautiful than before.

Outline

Chapter 1: May 28, 2016

-Ash commits suicide.

-My mom forces me to move to California for the summer.

-I go back to school for senior year

Chapter 2: December 9, 2016

-I go to school as usual.

-I get taken to hospital and receive the diagnosis of a severe nervous breakdown and AMS (altered mental status).

-Flashbacks to parents' divorce and grandparents' death.

Chapter 3: December 12, 2016

-I went back to school. I met with the counselors and my teachers and got a 504 plan.

-The spring semester was hard. I dropped almost all my advanced classes. relearned to read, write, talk, and eventually graduated high school.

Chapter 4: May 27, 2016

-I graduated high school. I spent the whole summer with John and Marie.

-I started college at OBU. I switched my major and accepted the call to ministry.

-I attempted to commit suicide. I went on a mission trip to Peru.

Chapter 5: July 2020

-I applied to SkyRanch and got a job as a photographer.

-I caught COVID. COVID led to pleurisy, then mesenteric lymphadenitis, then colon cancer,

then endometriosis.

Chapter 6: May 2021

-I graduated college and moved back home. My dad said he wished I was never born. I went back to SkyRanch. I came home to work for a startup private school. I started working at Church on the Rock.

-Left Church on the Rock to go be a Director of Children's Ministry and moved out on my own. I totaled my car and went on my first ever date and that spiraled into the worst anxiety I had ever experienced.

-I was having at least four anxiety attacks a day. Depression was my best friend.

-I resigned and moved back home. I went back to Church on the Rock.

Chapter 7: December 9, 2024

-Being delivered from anxiety and depression.

-Receiving spiritual gifts.

-As I looked back on everything, I have been through in this life, I can finally see God’s hand in it all. On this day it has been 8 years since I lost my memory. I subbed today and wrote the date down many times never realizing what today was. It was like every time I wrote it, the Lord redeemed it. I realized at 11:48pm, that today is the anniversary of the day that the Lord grabbed a hold of me and brought me back to Him and though this has not been an easy life, it’s a redeemed life. It’s a purposeful life. It’s a well-positioned life for the Potter, my Lord and Savior, to sculped something beautiful that tells the truth of His love, mercy, and redeeming power. A life molded and shaped to bring Him glory.

Preface/Introduction

Ever since the accident happened, everyone has told me to write a book. As I often brushed them off, the Lord began to grow in me the vision and message for this book that retells how the Lord never leaves you nor forsakes you. Three years ago, I was at a women’s conference with my sister. During the conference one of the speakers talked about the biblical account of the potter and the clay, Jeremiah 18. She spoke about how everything we have been through has applied pressure in a place to mold us and shape us into who God has called us to be. As I retell you my real-life experiences leading to the accident and all the events following, I am telling you them from the new, blinders off, perspective of how “God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them” (Romans 8:28 NLT). He has molded me and shaped me into who He has called me to be, just as the potter does with the clay to make a useful piece of pottery.

I want to be honest with you though. The retelling of these events are not all from my own recollections of my personal experiences, or my memory bank so to speak, but the combination of journals I kept growing up, friends who lived them with me, and family members who stayed by my side. All those things combined; have come together to create what I know to be my memory of how things happened. Actually, I don’t consider them memories at all, more like recalling scenes from a movie I have watched.

If I haven’t scared you off by now, you will see that my life is a real redemption story, a personified new creation, one with I aim to please God with by the power of the testimony He has given. One though I wish on no other person but am finally in a place where I can say, to God be the glory, I am glad it happened because it had to happen.

May 28, 2016

"Good morning! Good morning! It's great to be awake!" I sprung out of my bed singing. Not really, but I was definitely dancing around as if I was waking up the whole neighborhood on Christmas Day. Except, it's not Christmas time and it's just me that needs to get ready for church. I found the best outfit for the best day. It's Sunday and I woke up in plenty of time today. After I got dressed, I told my mom bye and that I'd see her later, I was going to church.

 Once I got to church, I parked the car and put on my biggest smile. I walked through the front building just to say hello to the door greetings. My destination was Sunday school, well youth group, and it's in the second building behind the first. This walk is usually filled with joy and singing, and today was no different. Until suddenly, I feel my phone vibrating in my pocket. No big deal, it's just a call from a girl from school, Em. We are on Drumline together and sometimes she wants to come to church with me, however it's been a while since she has come with me, so I'm perplexed as to why she is calling me.

I answer the phone, "good morning!" I say just a chipper as kid in a candy store.
"Good morning. I need to tell you something, where are you?" Em asked, sounding worried.
"I'm at church, what's up?" Now I'm more confused than before.

"It's Ash, she uh...um... well she was found this morning." Em tried to get the words to come out, but I could hear tears falling from her eyes. "Ash killed herself, she's dead." Em bluntly blurted out.

Tears started flowing from my eyes and I didn't know what to do. I had just talked to Ash days before, everything was fine. As I slipped down the brick wall outside the second building I couldn’t say a word. It wasn’t expected. Ash always had the giddiest laugh and brightest smile. She was always cracking jokes. I couldn’t believe it.

I cleared my throat and blurted out, “Thank you for the call I’ve gotta go.” I hung up the phone and walked into Sunday School to find my best friend, crying, almost as if she already knew.

“I was going to call you,” Mae said sincerely. “I just found out from my mom.”

“Em called me.” I managed to speak.

I ran to Mae; we hugged for longer than socially acceptable. The news spread quickly. By the end of the day all of drumline met at the local park to grieve together. We talked about our favorite memories with Ash and relived the glory days with her on drumline. When we all left we had a game plan for a memorial service for her at my church. It was nearing the end of the our Junior year of High School.

The memorial service took place not too long after the day in the park. Three of us from drumline were chosen to give a speech, Mae, Jac, and me. I went last. Honestly I didn’t know if I was going to make it through without crying. At least by me going last it just appeared as though I was touched by the other speeches instead of like I couldn’t control my emotions about the whole situation.

“Ash had the brightest smile, and the most contagious laugh,” I began to speak. Tears seemed to stain my face and the words I had written on a page were getting harder to see. I don’t remember what the rest of the eulogy said, but I know that Ash was a beautiful soul and we had a lot of great times together in the five years we knew each other.

The memorial was beautiful, but we weren’t ready to say goodbye forever. On the last day of school, we had our annual band picnic. This was a time to eat junk food, play games, and celebrate all we had accomplished during the year. This year’s picnic was different though. We all dearly missed our band mate. After we ate and played games, everyone went outside and grabbed an orange balloon. With a black sharpie in hand, we wrote notes to Ash on each of the balloons. On the count of three we all released them into the air.

“Heavens gained another angel,” echoed throughout the church parking lot as the balloons released into the air. I know we don’t become angels when we die, but I couldn’t help but wonder where her soul went. Sure, we had serval conversations about God; she seemed to always enjoy them. However, she never said rather she believed or not. My curiosity wasn’t too focused on her belief or not, it was more focused on the way she died. I guess I wasn’t the only one because her suicide brought up a lot of questions amongst all our friends. It even affected conversations in my home. However, now was not a time to question my own beliefs. It was a time to be there for our friends, to encourage and comfort them.

My mom didn’t feel the same way. “Your nana is going to California, to stay with your sister, for 6 months while her husband is deployed. I think it would be best if you took this time to get away from this town and all the drama going on. You are going to live with your sister and nana for the summer.”

“But mom! I have plans with my friends!”

“This is not negotiable Hannah!”

By that tone, I knew my mom was not playing! She had already planned for me to ride to California with Nana and my sister as we went back for the summer.

We traveled in a white 2008 Toyota Matrix, filled with my sister and her Boxer, my nana and her Palmerian, me and all of our suitcases. To say the least we were beyond cramped. The drive was long and not filled with many stops. We may have stopped four times, each time swapping drivers. It was a 24 hour road trip. Driving through Texas was half the trip and once we passed El Passo the AC in the car could not keep up with the sunny blazing hot temperatures outside.

After finally arriving to California on base, I didn’t want to tell anyone I made it safely, there was no one in that moment I cared to talk to. I thought that feeling would go away, but it turned out I was just putting into practice what I had always been good at, pushing people away. Sure after a few weeks of being there the text came in from my so called friends, I never answered them. I was too busy being wrapped in my own head. My mom had goals for me this summer and they didn’t exactly include talking to my friends from back home everyday.

I came to the realization that I am really good at pushing people away. For so long I didn’t recognize that I did all the reaching out. That’s not to say my friends never reached out it’s simply to say, I know how to put myself out of sight and out of mind.

Throughout the summer my sister and I decided we needed to be healthier. Our plan was to eat better and exercise more. We took turns cooking and lugging the laundry up the hill. During the day we swam in the pool and went to a different beach every weekend. In the evenings we went on runs. Well, we would try to run but it soon turned into jogging which eventually led to walks. It’s the last week of summer and my attitude has become prideful. I started pushing my sister and nana away since I knew it would be a long time till I saw them again. My sister had been inviting a friend on our walks, and I became jealous that she wasn’t spending as much time with me. On our last walk of the summer, I decided to run up the hill and that’s when I decided to body slam the ground. It wasn’t a purposeful discission, but my feet sure thought it was. After an ER visit and some x-rays, the doctor told us I had severely sprained it. This was a relief, since the instant swelling and already dark green and purple indicated to us it was broken. The doctor decided a brace and crunches for a few weeks would be just the thing it needed to heal.

A week later I was headed back to Texas to start my senior year of High school. All seemed to be alright in the world. Both of my sisters moved out, my mom is remarried, and I have a part-time job. Health wise, I could be doing better. My relationship with God, kind of just exists. My friends and I started a new bible study group last year, since most of them graduated I will be taking over. I am also a second-year business manager for the yearbook, section leader in band, and have great plans to take five advance placement class as well as three dual credit classes. Life was good, so my pride tried to tell my depression.

December 9, 2016

At 17 years old I thought I had life all figured out. I was on top. I had straight As and Bs in all of my classes, I was Business Manager for our high school yearbook, I was a section leader in band, and I had a part time job.

Mornings come early with a schedule like that, but this day started off just like every other day of the school year.

It’s a Friday, December 9, 2016. There is a football game tonight, an essay due in more than one class today, a test in college algebra, and don't forget finals are next week and my last chance to take the ACT for college acceptance is tomorrow. I went to band rehearsal early this morning. We made it to the playoff season. "It's going to be a shorter show since competitions are over." A band director probably announced. "A show a show no matter how short it goes," I most likely annoyingly reminded my section.

*It’s audition day for band. When I start sixth grade I will be playing the saxophone, so I think. My dad surprisingly took me to auditions. I think I auditioned because my mom was in band. She played Trumpet. I wanted to play Saxophone. As we walked into the band hall*

 Band, check!

Now to second period. Honestly, I don’t remember what class this was and nobody has told me.

Second period, check!

Now to enrichment. I mean UIL (Universal Interscholastic Leage) practice. My mom is my coach and this time being in her class has been a lot easier than the first go around, when I was a freshman in her English class.

 *"Get up girls! Come to the living room, we need to talk," yelled my absentee father down the hallway, the same morning his mother was pronounced dead. Dad never wakes us up for school, and plus I thought we weren't going to school today because we had just said our last goodbyes to Grandma, my dad’s mom, 3 hours prior. What could this possibly be about? I pondered.*

 *"Girls! Living room now!" Dad shouted down the hallway, as if there was an emergency. Once we all sat on the coffee table my dad stared at us and without hesitation said, "I've asked y'all's mother for a divorce."*

*The man that looked like my dad but could have never said those words, spoke the very thing, the only thing that could crush my world.*

*That's when it happened. My perfect normal life wasn't so perfect anymore, but funny enough it became normal. Almost all of my friends' parents were divorced, I had been the odd ball out all this time. And I was completely fine with that. In fact, it was a big thing that contributed to my perfect life! I prided myself on having loving parents. Who not only loved me but loved each other. They were going to grow old together. I mean sure, I never saw my dad due to whatever job he chose to take that would put him on the road or overseas at the time but still. They were perfect. So only pretty much I thought.*

 *"Your mom has already called the school and told them y'all's grandma died early this morning and has alerted them that she won't be there and most likely neither will yall. But I told her it's y'all's choice. Your mom is going to our hometown today to plan y'all's grandma's funeral. You can go with her or go to school. It's up to you." My dad explained with little care as if he didn't just drop a whole bomb on my life.*

 *"I'll go with mom!" The oldest strunely stated. I got the feeling she knew this was coming.*

 *"I'm going to school." The middle child said, as if that's the better option. I think she just wanted to avoid all things death talk.*

 *"I'm going..... I'm going..... I'm going to band practice." I said as I stumbled across every word. I wasn't processing anything. I just knew I couldn't handle much talking about anything with my mom.*

 *"That's it then. Love y'all see ya later." Without a hug or kiss goodbye, Dad was already out of the door.*

*Mom took me and the middle child to school. "Try to have a good day," she exclaimed, trying not to hold up the car rider drop off line, with tears streaming down her face.*

*"Love y'all!" Me and the middle child yelled in unison. I'm not sure where the middle child went that day, but I walked right into the band hall, straight to a practice room, sat on the floor with my knees as tightly held to my chest as I possibly could hold them, bent my face down into my knees and cried.*

 *That was the whole school day. A few of my friends checked in on me throughout the day. But I didn't move. I didn't eat lunch. I didn't go to geometry, or whatever science class I was supposed to be in. I just sat. And cried. I didn't know if it was an A Day or a B Day and it didn't matter. I just sat and cried. I was already counted absent, since my mom called the school that morning, so it didn't matter and therefore I didn't care. I just didn't want to be with anyone, or do anything. I wanted a safe haven.*

*This may have been the sprouting moment of what had always been going on chemically in my head. The weeks following were miserable. My mom couldn't hold back her tears when I walked into her classroom. She'd hug me and sob, she couldn’t hold it together, as if I was her reminder of everything going on.*

 *Thankfully I always knew what we were going to do in her class. She'd run it by me when she made lesson plans, always asking, "you think y'all can do that?" I'd always respond, "yes of course mom, you're a good teacher."*

 *And so it was, I'd stand in front of all my friends and classmates, make an excuse as to why my mom was sobbing at her desk, and proceed to give instructions for the day.*

*I couldn't be sad. I couldn't be the one who was crying at their desk. Someone had to be strong, and it wasn't my mom.*

*By now my oldest sister was engaged and practically lived at her future in-law's house since my future brother-in-law was at boot camp. The middle child was nowhere to be found anytime I needed her so there it was, just me and my mom. Both of us sad. Both of our worlds were falling apart. And yet when you looked at us, only one of our faces showed the signs of the bomb that blew up our whole world.*

UIL practice went normal as usual. I hugged my mom bye and told her of my afterschool plans, which consisted of getting on a bus and traveling to the playoff game. The bell rang, and I was excited because it was lunch time, my favorite time of the day. At lunch I got to sit with my friends and talk as much as I wanted to. What I never looked forwarded to was the food that probably tasted like plastic, but it hit the spot. A short thirty minutes passed and the bell rang, it was time to start walking to my favorite class, College Algebra. Just as I stood up to start my trek to the class, my head started pounding. Instead of walking to the nurse I continued the course to get to my class. The march up the stairs in the math and science building made me think I was about to faint, but nevertheless I pushed through and got to class. Upon arrival I sat my stuff at my desk and approached my favorite teacher's desk.

 "My head is pounding." I said while holding my head in my hand.

 "What would you like to do Miss. Terry?" My teacher asked in frustration.

 "What are my options?" I questioned, slowly remembering we have a major test today.

"Lay your head down and get a zero for the possibility of cheating, go to your mom’s room and get counted absent, but you can take your test later, or take your test now and lay your head down after you turn it in." My teacher calmly explained.

I stood there and stared as I carefully but quickly thought through each option. I have perfect attendance and it's my senior year; I don't want to ruin that. Why would I lay my head down and get a zero on a major test when I know for a fact, I could ace it in my sleep! I had come up with an excuse for all of them except for taking my test. There wasn't actually a choice to make here, there was actually only one option.

"I'll take the test." I said in a moan knowing all I could hear was the pounding of my head.

 She handed me the test and I went and sat down. I started by putting my name on the front page then I carefully answered every questions. Finally! I thought to myself, its done. I turned it in and as I was returning to my seat to put my head down, I glanced at the clock and noticed there was twenty minutes left of class. My head was throbbing! I felt like it could explode at any moment. I had high hopes a twenty-minute nap would cure the ache, when all of a sudden, a loud noise echoed through the room. It felt as though it had been set off right next to my ears. The resounding sound was the bell, so I stood up to start my venture to my next class.

I always toke the long way around to avoid major social interactions with the big crowds, and plus it was a Friday, I didn't want to be caught in the middle of yet another stupid fight.

Much to my dismay, not from lack of not trying though, I ran into one of my mom’s students who also happens to be one of my classmates' little brother, we called him little Fun-Chips.

 "Hey Hannah! Your mom said you signed to a college, but didn't say where. Where will you be in the fall?" Fun-Chips asked with eagerness to learn of my college choice.

I stare at him as if I should know him, but my brain tells me he's a stranger. I started shouting and trying to run away. It was at this moment when my feet didn't move the way I wanted them to and my face headed straight towards the ground, when suddenly Little Fun-Chips hurried to my direction, stretched out his scrawny arms and caught me. We just so happened to be right behind the freshmen building, the exact stairs that lead right to my mom's class, though no one was supposed to use those stairs as an entrance. Little Fun-Chips, carried me up those steps and banged on the back door. To his surprise my mom was the one who heard the knocking and came running.

 "What are you.... HANNAH! Little Fun-Chips, what's wrong?" Her voice slowly rose as she heard nothing but screams coming from my mouth.

"Something's wrong with Hannah! I'm not sure what. One minute we were talking, the next she was running and screaming, she almost fell, I caught her, I didn't know what to do so I brought her to you." Fun-chips went on and on trying to describe the indescribable event that had just taken place moments earlier, as he helped my mom drag me to her classroom.

"Alright, thank you fun-chips, I'll take care of her. Here's a note for class." My mom, somewhat confused and scared, managed to blurt out.

She finally sat me in a chair that sat right in front of her desk. She tried to make conversation and figure out what was wrong, but my gaze was transfixed on the things of her classroom walls. A cowboy with a gun, Romeo and Juliet, The Raven, and other English literature characters. They were moving.

As I looked over to the cowboy, I could tell that He was getting ready to charge after me. Then within seconds he was running towards me as if I was his opponent in a duel, I was unaware I signed up for. He had his Gun ready to pull the trigger.

"Stop! Help! Stop!" I yelled in agony catching my breath in between crying and screaming.

"What's wrong Hannah? What's happening?" my mom questioned me in confusion.

"They're trying to kill me!"

 "Who? Nobody's here but me and you. You are safe."

"Them!" As I raise my pointer finger in the direction of the cowboy. "Ahhhhh! It hurts! Make it stop!" I scream holding my shoulder believing I had been shot. “He’s going to kill me!”

The yelling turned into sobs and indistinct chatter.

"What's happening now?"

As I hold my arms and rock back and forth, I yell out, "The birds! They hurt," tears continuously flow down my face. And the gaze is not broken.

"Hannah, there are no birds in here! What is happening?” my mom was frantically thinking through all her options and responsibilities. She knew I needed to go to the hospital, but she had to get her class covered first.

“Ahhhhhhhh!!!” The screams continue without stopping.

“We’ve got to get you to the hospital, to see what's wrong.” My supposed mom tells me.

At this point I have no idea who she is, where I am, or who I am.

She begins to ask me questions about my schedule, as she tries to figure out which of my teachers, she needs to call to let them know what's happening. She starts to dial for her principal first but it's too late. He heard the screams down the hallway and comes to the door.

“Mrs. Terry, what is… why is Hannah not in class? Why is she screaming? What is…”

My mom interrupts him, “something's wrong with Hannah. She's hallucinating and Little Fun-Chips brought her to me. She can barely walk and she is not talking in full sentences, just a word here or there. I need to take her to the hospital.”

“I'll take care of things here for you, go. Take her to the hospital now.”

“Thank you!” My mom gathers what she needs to take me to the hospital.

It took a little convincing and some restraint, but something in me decided to trust her. She hoisted me out of the chair and hung my arm around her neck, tucked her arm around my stomach and began to carry me to the car.

Streams of screams followed me wherever we went. Once we got to the car I screamed for my nana, so my mom went to get her and then we went to the hospital. When we arrived at the local Emergency Room, my mom didn’t even park the car in the parking lot, she just pulled up to the door and got out. She ran and got a nurse, they brought a wheelchair and took me inside. Then mom moved the car. Everyone was frantic. The hospital nurses seemed scared too, so much so they took me straight back into a room.

The level 2 trauma crash room was not lonely. It was anything but. It was confusing, and overwhelming, and a bit much for someone who had no clue who they are or where they are. It was terrifying.

So many people rallied around. A sister and brother-in-law whom I had also forgotten. A father and his nurse of a girlfriend or whatever she was to him at the time. A mother, whose face was as serious as a momma bear protecting its cub from their prey. And a nana, whose tears next to mine could have filled the whole room. Of course that is what I've been told.

The doctor came into the room to tell my mom all the test they were going to run and had already ran.

"Hannah, do you know who Jesus is?" Shouted my supposed mom in anticipation, and hope that I'd know the answer.

 Popping up from a nervous ball and having paused from screaming, I turned to her with a blank gaze on my face and no personality in my voice and stated, "Jesus is my Lord and Savior."

"Hannah, do you know who I am?" My supposed mom responded in desperate hopes that since I remembered who Jesus was then I would have all of sudden just remembered her. Much to her dismay, I returned to my previous state. Scrunched in a ball, rocking back and forth, releasing nothing but screams, at the top of my hospital bed.

I say supposed mom because that's who they say she is. At this point I still don't know who she is, honestly, I don't even know what a mom is. And who is this Hannah they keep asking me about.