

MEMORIAL

REMEMBERING SCOTTY LARIN + MY MUM(S)

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BERNICE: 2016



For me, this date on the calendar is a powerful emotional day filled with sorrow, reflection, and, strangely, joy if I can get my emotional cards in the proper order.

On this date in 2016, my mum, Bernice, died. It was the second time my mother died in my life. The first, Rebekah, of course, wasn't my birth mother, but I didn't know. When I found out Rebekah wasn't my mother, my life began spinning in confusion as I dove into my past, searching for my identity and wondering why the people in my life had kept secret such a vital piece of who I am from me. To this date, I don't understand.

Rebekah was a remarkable woman carrying a heavy burden. Stomach cancer took her away less than two years after I had watched my father (not my birth father), Nicholas, lose his battle with the Big C.

On a cold, early December (1987) night (-37) in Saskatoon, it seemed Rebekah was winning her battle with the Big C until excruciating pain paid her a visit – Cancer wasn't going to be denied. I returned home from movies with friends, and it was apparent Rebekah had to return to the hospital. On that night, on the steps of our home, Rebekah, with tears pouring from her eyes, said to me, *"I'm never going to be home again, am I?"*

I lied.

Twenty-nine years later, I was alongside my mum's (Bernice's) deathbed in Calgary. This final visit, the first time I met Bernice as my mother, wasn't pleasant. Bernice chose to lash out at the world. It was the most extended conversation we ever had. I tried desperately to comfort her. I hugged her for only the second time in our life and told her I was giving her my love. As I was leaving her room, I looked back; Bernice's eyes were teeming with tears. Bernice, with her voice breaking, found the strength to speak and said, *"I'm never going to see you again, am I?"*

My body began quaking as soon as I left the room.

One week later, she died (October 15).

Our sporadic life together wasn't rosy. Bernice, playing a different role, constantly told me I wouldn't amount to much. I hated her. When I found out she was my mother, I was devastated.

As the years slipped by, my anger subsided, I can't fathom what she went through (deemed unfit as a mother because she wasn't married). After I was born, I was immediately ripped out of her arms. I was supposed to be adopted or sold, nobody wanted me, so apparently, I was passed around like a hot potato until Nicholas + Rebekah took me in out of obligation. I became a shameful family secret. Born in a place sanctioned by religion, to fix wayward women and the babies were never to be spoken of again. There used to be several places throughout Canada where these babies were born. Many of the babies didn't survive (sometimes the preferred result), and those babies are buried in these places, sanctioned by religion, a dark secret of Christianity.

I survived. My story is heart-wrenching, but thanks to the fantastic people who've meandered through my life, I'm okay. Never fully. But okay.

I must thank my mum and dad, Rebekah + Nicholas. And without hesitation, I wish Bernice and I had different lives together. I'm sorry for what she had to endure. But I am grateful she brought me into the world.

RIP BERNICE

SCOTTY LARIN: 2020

One of the fantastic people who meandered through my life is Scotty Larin. I have known Scotty for 18-19 years. I was watching TV last year (Thursday, October 15), when I picked up my phone and scrolled Facebook, I found out the awful news of Scotty's death. Like when I left my mum's room, my body started uncontrollably shaking as tears blasted from my eyes. Not a day has gone by since Scotty's passing where he hasn't ambled into my mind. Sometimes Bernice, Rebekah, and Nicholas are there at the same time.

There are some people in life you don't realize how much of your heart they occupy. Scotty was one of those people. It's not like we hung out together or talked all the time; however, there was a kindred bent to our interactions. Be that the glowing smile on his face whenever we were in each other's company or the sheer excitement, like a little kid, when Scotty had a story to share.

In 2012, one of our friends had major surgery, and he was in a room at VGH. Scotty wanted to see him. I drove with him to the hospital. We crossed the Cambie Bridge on the way to the Hospital and the Granville Bridge back downtown. I joked, *"I think this is the first time Scotty has been over two bridges in the same day."* If you knew Scotty, you'd understand.

Another time, Scotty was having surgery; I can't remember for what. He asked me to pick him up from the Day Surgery Clinic. Once again, if you knew Scotty, asking was a massive deal for him. I picked him up, picked up his meds on the way back to his place, helped Scotty into his pad; cringed when I saw the two or three sofas and the bemouth television. I laughed and laughed. Scotty was so incredibly thankful for the ride and companionship; my arms became littered with goosebumps.

One of the last times (a few Sundays before his death) I was with Scotty was at the FH. He had just finished his shift. I was heading out the door to go home. Scotty grabbed me, gave me a warm embrace, and asked me to hang with him a bit. Scotty had his takeout dinner with him; I sat. Scotty ordered us drinks, asked a server to heat up his meal and put it on two plates. We shared a last meal together as he opened up more and more about his life. Of course, Scotty was drinking Coronas, leaving a few ounces at the end of each bottle. This meal is a precious memory for me.

Scotty was a fierce friend. Scotty fiercely looked out for the people, no matter who you were, who came into his life. We were all his family.

I miss you, Scotty. I'm one of many people who love you.

Much Love

RIP Scotty.

Fire me a message on the TALK PAGE of my website: www.lindsaywincherauk.com if you have more suggestions on making our world a better place!
