

pains.

THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF PAIN. SOME ARE VISIBLE, OTHERS STAY HIDDEN. WHEN YOU HAVE A WOUND—ON YOUR ELBOW, YOUR BACK, WHEREVER—IF YOU'RE BARE, PEOPLE WILL SEE IT. MAYBE SOME WILL ASK ABOUT IT, NOT BECAUSE THEY TRULY CARE, BUT BECAUSE IT MAKES THEM FEEL BETTER TO PRETEND THEY DO. BUT IF YOU COVER IT UP, IF YOU WEAR A SHIRT, A HOODIE, SOMETHING TO HIDE IT, NO ONE WILL NOTICE HOW DEEP IT REALLY IS. YOU COULD BE BLEEDING UNDERNEATH, AND THE WORLD WOULD KEEP MOVING LIKE NOTHING WAS WRONG.

BUT PAIN ALWAYS FINDS A WAY TO SHOW. IF YOU REALLY LOOK AT SOMEONE, IF YOU PAY ATTENTION, YOU'LL SEE IT—THE WAY THEIR HANDS SHAKE WHEN THEY THINK NO ONE'S WATCHING, THE WAY THEIR SMILE NEVER QUITE REACHES THEIR EYES, THE WAY THEIR VOICE CRACKS WHEN THEY SAY, "I'M FINE." THE BODY DOESN'T JUST CARRY PHYSICAL WOUNDS. IT CARRIES INVISIBLE ONES TOO, THE KIND THAT DON'T HEAL WITH TIME, THE KIND THAT GROW HEAVIER WITH EVERY PASSING DAY.

PEOPLE COULD SAVE LIVES IF THEY JUST CARED A LITTLE MORE. BUT THEY DON'T. THEY LOOK AWAY. THEY PRETEND NOT TO NOTICE. BECAUSE ACKNOWLEDGING SOMEONE ELSE'S PAIN MEANS TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT, AND NO ONE WANTS THAT WEIGHT. SO THEY CALL IT "ATTENTION-SEEKING." THEY ROLL THEIR EYES. THEY WALK PAST LIKE IT'S NOT THEIR PROBLEM. UNTIL ONE DAY, THAT PERSON ISN'T THERE ANYMORE. AND SUDDENLY, THE "HOW ARE YOU?" OR THE "HOW WAS YOUR DAY?" THEY NEVER BOTHERED TO SAY TURNS INTO "I WISH I HAD KNOWN."

THAT COULD HAVE SAVED SO MANY LIVES.

OR AT LEAST... IT WOULD HAVE SAVED MINE.

