

What Happened with Jacob

We never really had a conversation about it, but Jacob and I broke up for good that day. I sat on the ground outside his apartment, red-eyed, sniffling, and barefoot. An older Asian man was walking by holding his granddaughter's hand. He leaned down a little as he passed on the way to his apartment, and silently mouthed, "It's going to be okay."

I held back my English Bulldog, Arthur, by his collar as he tried to greet the passersby. His leash was still inside, along with my flip-flops.

Most of that day is blurry like a close-up of a watercolor painting, but certain moments are sharper than I can stand. The Asian man's reassurance, his words, might as well have been written on a piece of paper, rolled up, placed in a bottle and thrown into the ocean. That message wasn't for me. But his face stuck in my mind. The granddaughter didn't look at me at all.

One of the two police officers exited Jacob's apartment carrying some collared shirts on hangers in crinkling bags from the dry cleaner. I stood up halfway, keeping my hand looped into Arthur's collar so he couldn't run away.

"Here are your clothes," the police officer said without making eye contact. "You should probably go home."

"Sure," I said, my patience long gone. "Still gonna need my shoes and the leash, though. Can't walk home like this." He remained stoic, but nodded. There was no indication of whose story he believed - mine or Jacob's. I took the clothes, and he disappeared back into the apartment.

I'd seen Jacob just thirty minutes before everything happened and things were fine. Of course, we did spend the entire morning in the emergency room, so the day had been a little uneven.

Visits to the ER were common for Jacob. He had a congenital condition and couldn't produce the hormones his body needed during stress and trauma. Some

minor injuries could be fatal. He had a bathroom counter full of prescriptions, and he always wore a silver emergency medical ID necklace to inform paramedics.

That morning he called me to take him to the hospital as a precaution because he felt dizzy. We sat there all morning. By the time he saw the doctor, Jacob was annoyed but not dizzy anymore. The doctor couldn't do anything, considering Jacob was fine and well, so it was a big waste of time.

On the way back to his apartment, Jacob said, "I know things have been hard lately, but you've been such a good boyfriend. I love you."

He was going to shower and walk to my place so we could get lunch. Before he got out of the car, I placed my fingers under his chin and lifted his eyes to meet mine.

"I love you, too, and all I need from you right now is for you to do what you say you're going to do."

He promised.

Just thirty minutes after that promise, I was holding the dry cleaning bags in one hand and Arthur by the other. The crinkling of the bags was loud and it scared Arthur, so he kept pulling away trying to escape. I finally just threw the shirts on the concrete..

The other cop came outside to stand. He didn't have my shoes or the leash, but at least he made eye contact with me. He shrugged.

"Well, he's very drunk," he said with an odd chuckle of sympathy.

"Yeah."

"How long have you guys been broken up?"

"I'm not sure. How long ago did your partner bring me my dry cleaning?"
