

Ki'Anra Bunch

November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Where I was, where I am & where I'm going.

Where I was? In the living room, crying like the baby I was at 6 years old after my sister broke the news and confirmed what I was already sensing. The words "Grandma died" replayed in my head like a broken record. I mean I kinda figured something wasn't right, it wasn't like my grandmother to go a whole day without calling to check up on me and my sister. Where I was? In the center of the last "siblings only" picture we would have with all 6 of us present, because death comes in 3's and the angel of death bends the rules for nobody. The back to back loss of my birth mother followed by my grandmother only marked 2/3 deaths. Little did we know she'd make another trip sooner than we thought. Where I was? In middle school doing whatever your average middle schooler does. A call from the counselor's office had my name all over it. I went to her office only to find the school nurse in there as well. Asking to see my arms, back, legs and stomach. What was this about? Then my counselor removed all my confusion when the words "How are things at home?" escaped her mouth. It didn't take rocket science to put the pieces together.

She didn't care if my cable was on, if my refrigerator was running or if my bed pillows were stuffed to my liking. She was talking abuse, child abuse. "Things are fine at home!" I said in the most convincing voice ever, or so I thought. Apparently the marks they found on my sister told a different story. Same meeting was taking place at her high school, only difference is she went to them herself. How could she do this I thought. I had to admit some of the beatings she got passed the thin line between child discipline and child abuse but does she know what this could mean for future us? Well the "future" was 3 days later in our case. ACS wasted no time, took us from our adopted mother who was more than willing to give us up to the hands of the system without a second thought. Where I was? 11 years old living in a childrens center far away from home waiting for a foster family to give me and my 14 year old sister the chance to have a home again. Months passed and still nothing, crying to my sister as she promised we were going to get through it and telling me she'll never leave me. Haven't heard from my mother and despite the circumstances I was missing her, and the last months of 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Where I was? Finally in a conference room with my sister a strange lady and her daughter

What's even stranger is she was there because she was interested in me and my sister. I had my hopes up as I was face to face with a potential foster mother. All was well until my sister started acting out and they were ready to kick her out and keep me. I couldn't leave my sister though so here I was about a month later packing, getting ready to be moved to another house. So we moved to another one and then 5 more after that, making 7 foster homes between the ages of 11 and 14. The moving didn't stop there at who would've known this last home would change my life forever. Where I was? My 8<sup>th</sup> foster home, March 27<sup>th</sup> 2013, when a strange number called me around 10 p.m. It was Kyky, an previous foster sister. "...what happened to your sister?" what do you mean what happened to my sister? She's getting ready for bed or up on facebook or sleeping like any other 17 year old. I was told to check my sisters facebook page and call Kyky back. All down her wall was "R.I.P Layshii" "You will be missed" "Gone too soon" "It wasn't your time." This had to be a sick joke. April fools was a few days away couldn't they just wait? Joke was on me though & she was sleeping, the sleep you keep on sleeping. I called my mom looking for answers "He'll talk about it

"tomorrow" was all she could say as I was crying my eyes out to her over the phone. My foster mother told me to get up and dressed to go to the agency. They were about to tell me what I already knew. I broke down in the car and she asked what was wrong. "My sister died, I already know." I told her. I found myself holding a few months grudge against my sister after all the fighting we did go up separated into our 8<sup>th</sup> homes. We made up Saturday & she died Wednesday. Thank God the grudge was behind us because little did I know if I were to hold onto the anger for even a few more days it would've been too late for the "I'm sorry's" & "I love you's." The court immediately moved me back with my mother seeing that we needed each other more than ever. Between planning the funeral, having to break the news and mourning, the autopsy report iced the cake. "Cause of Death: Homicide." Beat to death at 17 years old, lost her life to the hands of another one. The angel of death sure didn't bend the rules for this family. So there went the 3, my birth mother, followed by my grandmother, followed by my sister. The one who promised we were going to get through this and she'll never leave me, my blood sister, same mother same father, the only person I had to look up to was now the

3<sup>rd</sup> person id literally have to look up to, to talk to. Where I was? Home packing to go back into foster care shortly after watching my sister being buried 6 ft under. Didn't know how to cope with the loss in a healthy way. I started fighting, smoking, drinking, failing school and not coming home for days. I would let anger build up and then explode like a ticking time bomb. Even got into some trouble with the police. My mother didn't deserve what I put her through but I didn't know what else to do. Gave up on God, counseling and whatever else was supposed to help me through it. My mother decided she couldn't handle it anymore and I found myself back in the 8<sup>th</sup> foster home. The routine became old, I knew this isn't what my birth mother, grandma & sister wanted for me. I knew this lifestyle wasn't even like me, a honor roll student from K-7<sup>th</sup> grade, graduating middle school one of the top of my class, planning a bright future for myself, but the way I was going wasn't going to get me there. Where I was? 2 years behind in high school at a meeting with my counselor, social worker, adopted & foster mothers. I was in between a rock and a hard place "We don't know what to do with you Ki'Anai, you have so much potential, your smart, the classes you did pass you passed with 80<sup>s</sup> and 90<sup>s</sup>, but somethings not working, so what now?" said my social worker. I give it some

thought and suggested what a friend told me to look into "Job Corp?" I said, My Counselor looked into it and all the necessary arrangements were made. Which brings me to where I am. Where I am? Northlands Job Corp, the place where im making my turn around, where I transform from a young girl to a young adult. The place that's teaching me how to find something more important than a job, myself. The place where someone will pick you up if you fall, because this center teaches you growth but still understands we're young and will make mistakes. The place where staff make it clear the pay isn't the reason they come here everyday. Where I am? The place you come to with little to nothing and leave with a job, HSD/HSE, License and life long connections with students and staff. I'm at peace with myself most importantly, new attitude and mindset which is going to get me where I'm going. Where I'm going? To chase my dreams until they become a reality. To become a News Anchor and carry out my birth mothers dream. Where im going? To share my story in hope that because of all ive been through, being able to still make it will inspire a young girl or boy thats going through similar or worse to keep holding on. Going on to show your past doesnt have to define your future. Where I'm going? To travel the world, get married & have a family of my own. All thanks to Job Corp for making