



CAROLINA GUERRERO

My name is Carolina Guerrero and I am a seventh grader. I am 12 years old, and I want to be a journalist. My favorite thing to do is to be with my family.

MARIA

On December 11, 2011, many people were probably at home or shopping for coats and blankets for the winter or getting ready for Christmas. Only, that's not what I was doing. We had barely moved here from California on July 5, and we were adjusting to our new home. It was exciting because I felt like I was going to explore a new environment that wasn't like my old one, but I also felt that part of me was still in California. My old house was a part of me, especially my grandfather's rose bushes on the side of that little, old house.

My grandmother was 84, and she was very ill. It was cold and windy that winter, and we were going to take Christmas pictures. My grandmother had lived with us since before my older siblings were born. At the time, my sister was 14 and my brother was 15. I was nine. My aunt had bought a hospital bed for her, so she could be with us at home. We had nurses at our house almost every hour of the day watching over her. At the time, I didn't know if she had any real illnesses, I thought she was just old and as delicate as petals on a shriveled up flower. Having nurses at my house made me happy because I knew she was in good hands. At the same time, it was terrifying, because it only made me realize that I wasn't going to have her for much longer.

My mom decided to give her a strawberry yogurt before we took pictures. The next thing I knew my mom was screaming. My grandmother had choked and stopped breathing. My mom was yelling at the nurse to do C.P.R., but the nurse couldn't; my grandmother was too weak to handle it. My mom ran outside, and my brother went after her. My dad was at work, so he didn't know right then. I felt bad for the nurse. She was being yelled at for something that she couldn't control. The nurse didn't say much. She said she was sorry, and that there was nothing she could do.

There is this picture in my grandma's room—it is of her and my grandfather. He passed away before I was born. What made me a little happier that day was when the nurse said that before my grandma left us, she looked at that picture. That let me know that she wasn't going to suffer from all this pain anymore. She was going to be with my grandpa. She had waited so long to be reunited, and they finally were. So, even though I felt pain I've never had before, I knew it was going to be okay.

I just sat on that brown couch, thinking, "How could this have

happened?” I didn’t know what I was going to do without her. She was the glue that kept my family together. It was rare that someone wouldn’t smile when talking to her. She had 12 kids, including my mom. That meant that a lot of people were hurt. She was funny, and she had so much character. Most of all, she loved her family. Every last one of us. One thing that I will always remember about her was that she loved looking at the beautiful, lit-up decorations during Christmas. It was her absolute favorite thing to do during Christmas, after being with family, of course. Growing up with her at my side was fun, and I enjoyed it a lot. Every morning, I would give her medicine to her with a glass of water. She always went places with us, and I always tried to help her however I could.

Of course, my mom thought it was her fault. While my dad was working, my brother kept strong for us, but I knew it wouldn’t last long. Once my dad heard the news, he rushed home, and right when my dad walked through the door, my brother couldn’t help but start crying harder than I have ever seen him cry. I felt guilty that day because I sort of avoided talking to my grandmother, because she only spoke Spanish and I didn’t. If I knew Spanish, I would’ve talked to her all day, but I didn’t want to talk to her and not understand her. It was hard losing her, because I lived with her my whole life. She meant everything to me. Although I knew she was in a better place with my grandpa. I still feel the brokenness and heartbreak when I walk into her room. I’m healing everyday, and as that happens, I feel like I’m getting closer to her.

