

To: Eleanor\_Anne

I think the world of you--all of you; and I'm sorry that I'm not there for you and that you're going through so much without me. I'm your dad ... and ... I've let you all down when you needed me most.

Please don't think--for one minute--that I'm not kicking myself in the butt for screwing up so badly. I would give anything to be able to help you, to be able to be there for you. I should be out there, with shared custody of you, helping you and providing you a stable home and the things you need and deserve.

As for you making it 'til you're 18 ... you'd better outlive me, don't you dare let anything happen to yourself. You're capable of great things Ellie, just hang in there and you'll see. I know you hear stuff like that all the time probably from every adult around you, saying, "it'll be okay," or "time heals all wounds"--and the like; but everything's not always going to be okay and time does not heal all wounds; time only numbs most wounds and we have to learn to live with and make the best of what we've got. In your case, you still have hope of a good future; because right now you're still under the thumb of adults trying to rule you when they can't even rule themselves honorably--yes I know of your mother's and step-dad's "vices" and "habits" and all the stuff you and your brother and sister have had to deal with. You will turn 18 and get to have control of your life, just be smart about it and don't let anything put you into a bad path. Try to stay clear of trouble.

There are many legal outlets for you. Even the parent's termination of rights through the emancipation of a minor--though it's difficult to achieve and the laws of it differ from state to state. There are many one-eight-hundred numbers that exist for you to call and talk of this kind of stuff. Those boys and girls town places, stuff like that. Just don't ever take to the streets, stay clear of people that live badly and never ever keep secrets for people that involve illegal acts. Most cops and those in law are complete idiots and cause more trouble than good--but there are a few, one out of every dozen, that have enough intelligence to view each story from all sides. So you can turn to cops, just keep in mind that if you're not helped the way you should be, then find a better cop, but don't give up. There are people that will help. You're grandmother Rebecca "Mamaw" in S.C. will always have a spare bed for you, but you'll have to get to her legally. Call her sometime, she'd love to hear from you.

Finish your schooling first and foremost. Education is your tool and weapon at having the life YOU want!

I love you. Don't ever forget that, and you'll always be my pretty little princess that likes to dance and sing, calling yourself "Fiona." You always gave me the biggest hugs! I miss you like crazy, and could really use one of your hugs....

Love Dad.