

2020

By Jessica Lynas

2020 can be named the worst year I have ever lived; I doubt anything in the future could beat this year. I believe the same goes for millions of people around the world, a deadly virus confining us to our homes. If you live in England, a five-month lockdown started it all for us in March then another lockdown in November.

The beginning of 2020 wasn't bad for me, I got to spend New Year in Denmark with my best friend. It was amazing, just getting to see the Danish culture and the unbelievably colder weather than England. I learnt so many new things there, for example, don't leave your mailbox out or they might go boom. It wasn't until two days before I was due to fly back home, I read in the news about a new virus that had been found in Wuhan, China back in December 2019. I didn't think much about it because it was something happening so far away from me. How wrong was I?



At the end of January, things took a massive turn and Covid-19 was spreading around the world like wildfire from February to March. We all know what happened in March in England, lockdown. My college life was affected greatly, and I was out of work meaning I wasn't earning any money and I wasn't working enough hours to apply for the furlough scheme. I survived lockdown with £300 that I had saved up for a BTS concert, I'm so thankful that I saved that money.

Lockdown started in March, I thought it wouldn't last for long, but I was still taking everything seriously. However, the most unexpected thing happened. My mum got sick. It all started at the back end of March, at first, we thought it was something to do with her stomach and the doctors gave her something to soothe it. But when that didn't work, the doctors gave her something else hoping that would work, sadly, it didn't.

The beginning of May had rolled around, and my mum wasn't getting better. 8th of May my stepdad woke me up early explaining he was taking my mum to the hospital for testing and he wasn't sure when they would be back. That whole day I was begging that they didn't find anything bad and that they could help her. When I finally had a chance to get a moment to myself from my siblings, I remember thinking, please don't be cancer. Soon as I thought that my parents came home, and everything was quiet, really quiet.

11th of May, my stepdad's birthday, he woke me again saying he was taking my mum back to the hospital. They came home a lot earlier than last time, I assumed that they had gone to get test results. The next day came, I had just showered and gotten dressed and I heard my older sister's voice coming from the living room. I was a little confused to why she was here because she had moved out in February and she didn't tell me she was coming to visit. I said to myself, "I'll go down and say hi in a minute, I need to do a little bit of college work first."

It wasn't long after that my stepdad came to my room asking me to come downstairs to the living room. I finished up what I was doing and went down, I was talking to my sister like nothing was wrong. When my youngest sister entered everything went serious and quiet, I remember my mum sitting in the corner with her hands joined. She looked at my stepdad then at everyone and she started talking about the hospital and how she's been ill recently. Then she said the three words everyone wishes they don't have to hear, "I have cancer."

Choking. That's what it felt like, someone was choking me because I didn't know what to say. My mum explained she had limited

time left; I knew what that meant but I didn't want to admit to it. My youngest sister asked, "Does that mean you're going to die?" That was the only time ever in my life I hated myself because no ten-year-old should have to ask if their parent is dying. Even though I already knew the answer, she replied yes, I ran out to my room crying.

Once I calmed down, I contacted my friends and college tutors explaining the situation, that's all I could do. At that time I knew my mum had to tell a lot of people, so I told some people to shorten that list for her. They were all so supportive, I've lost count with how many times I've called them crying at midnight, still not wanting to accept what was to come.

District nurses started visiting, making sure that my mum's pain was under control and manageable at home. However, it was about two weeks and a half later, 29th of May, she was taken to a hospice and my stepdad had gone with her. I called my older sister and said: "Mum has gone to a hospice and I don't think she's coming home." We stayed on the phone for a bit comforting each other as we couldn't hug. Once I hung up, I took my youngest sibling to the shop to distract her, we cooked dinner together and laughed a little.



Taken when we went on holiday to Cornwall

We went to our rooms and I fell asleep accidentally, I awoke just a little after six in the evening. The first thing I did was look out the window and I saw my stepdad's car in the driveway. I walked downstairs to the living room to see my nan, my stepdad's mum, and her boyfriend along with the rest of my family. Everyone had tears in their eyes, they didn't have to say anything because I already knew what had happened.

During those two weeks and a half, I was mentally and physically preparing myself because I knew my siblings would need someone to turn to. As we all knew, the rest of the year wasn't going to be easy, I took the role as a second mum (carer) to my younger siblings. My mum and I had a chat before she passed, about university and joking about my dumb moments. We did get serious at one point, as cliché as it is, I promised her I would become a journalist and I intend to stick to it.

In remembrance of her, I got a tattoo of her favourite flower on my right arm, lily of the valley. We've always used to talk about getting our first tattoos done at the same time, so doing this felt so special.



From this whole experience, I've learnt so many new things and I hold them very close to my heart because I know all I can do is try my best. My mum was loved and she will always be loved even if we can't see her, I know she will always be with us. I love you, mum.