
Message After Death

Some words are too important to leave unspoken.



Dear Sarah Mitchell,

The letter enclosed with this note was written for you by James Mitchell and left in our care, with the request that we deliver it to you when the time came.

James Mitchell made a deliberate choice to ensure these words would reach you. We have held this message carefully from the time it was entrusted to us, and the words inside are exactly as they were written.

We understand that receiving this letter may be unexpected and carry with it a range of emotions. Please take all the time you need.

It has been an honor to keep this promise for James. We hope this letter brings you comfort, closeness, or peace.

With our deepest respect,

The Message After Death Team

Dear Sarah,

I have been trying to write this letter for a long time. Every time I sat down to start, the words felt too small for what I needed to say. But I realized that imperfect words are better than no words at all, so here I am.

First, I want you to know that being your father was the best thing that ever happened to me. I know I was not always good at showing it. I came from a generation of men who thought love was something you proved through work, through providing, through being there without ever actually saying the word. I was wrong about that, and I am sorry it took me this long to tell you.

There is a day I keep coming back to. You were about seven years old, and we were sitting in the backyard watching the fireflies come out. You asked me where they go during the day, and I made up some ridiculous story about them working in tiny offices underground. You laughed so hard you fell off the lawn chair. That is my favorite memory of my entire life. Not my wedding, not any promotion, not any trip I ever took. You, age seven, laughing in the backyard. That is the one.

I need you to know something about your mother and me. The reason we separated in 2003 was not what we told you and your brother. We said we grew apart. The truth is I made a terrible mistake, and your mother could not forgive me for it. I do not blame her. I am not going to put the details in this letter because they are between me and her, but I wanted you to know that it was my fault, not hers. She deserved better, and so did you and Michael.

About your brother. I know things have been difficult between you two since the estate issue with your grandmother. I do not have the right to tell you what to do, but I will say this: Michael is carrying more pain than he shows. He always has been. If you can find a way to reach out to him, even a small way, I think you will both be better for it. Life is shorter than either of you think.

I want to close by telling you something I should have said every single day: I am proud of you. Not for your career or your accomplishments, though those are remarkable. I am proud of the person you are. The way you treat people. The way you stand up for what you believe in. The way you love your kids the way I wish I had loved you, openly, loudly, and without embarrassment.

You were always enough, Sarah. You were more than enough. You were everything.

I love you.

Dad