

This toast is given by Zenod'ande'rson and is based on very real IRL experiences. I write this in loving memory of Drake. No words can do justice to how much we miss him, but I certainly gave it a try.

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"There is little I can say that will bring comfort to those who need it most. Grief is not something so easily overcome that words alone will mend the cracks present in all your hearts. No amount of consolation or sympathy will bring them back, no matter how much you want it to, no matter what you would do to make it possible. I am a firm believer in justice, though sometimes, I am forced to admit that there are rare circumstances that justice feels far out of reach and unobtainable. Instead, only questions remain.

Perhaps the most tragic example is the death of children. The who, the what, and especially the why of it all. As parents, it consumes you, the weight of the galaxy pressed against your shoulders as what feels like the impossible becomes reality. Your world shatters along with every part of your soul, and no matter how well you are put back together, there's always the most important missing piece that will never be there again.

Words alone cannot describe it, so instead, let me give you an example. I knew a small child. He was happy, healthy, and had his whole life ahead of him before his passing. He was supremely intelligent, the top of his class when it came to reading and writing. He loved to learn. The child, a young boy just five years of age, was taken ill. After two hospital visits, he passed away so suddenly. The father was by his side when the doctors made the decision to stop trying resuscitation.

Everyday the boy's parents cried for him, and even now, two months later, that hasn't stopped. They grieve for him. They miss him dearly, and they miss the things that will never be. The first kisses, the first job, the start of his own family, all taken away because of an illness that wasn't caught in time.

It would have been so much easier to give up, and indeed, the thoughts crossed the mind of the father. Death didn't feel so bad if he could see his son again, right? His wife and other children latched onto him. They needed him now more than ever as much as he needed them. This sort of event can either tear a family apart, or bring them closer together. I'm happy to see in this scenario it's the latter, rather than the former.

Life isn't easy, and every day is a challenge. If there is one message I can leave you with today, it's to keep moving forward. Moving on isn't the right word, you never

move on from the loss of loved ones. Moving forward, however, is something achievable, and something that all your loved ones would want you to do. Just like their son would want them to do.

And lastly, a toast. To our dearly departed, may they forever live in our hearts. Gone, but never forgotten."