

# Rebecca Vroom

MARCH 11, 2016

Mid-January in British Columbia was customarily damp and cold in 1997. In the early hours of a Saturday in January, the oldest seven children of the Vroom family were scattered in friends' homes for a rare sleepover. The house was quiet, as Arnold and Susan anticipated yet another life to add to their busy home. At 8 AM, Susan gave birth to her fifth daughter: Rebecca Faith Vroom.



Rebecca was the youngest girl in a house full of opinionated older siblings, and she was happy to live in quiet obscurity. She thrived in the shadows of the large personalities in our home. In fact, there was little she hated more than attention. William and Benjamin could reduce her to tears at the dinner table by merely asking her about her day.

Rebecca found a natural best friend in Rachel, her older sister by 19 months. The two of them were inseparable, and they were a perfect compliment to each other. Rachel's personality was bubbly and imaginative, overflowing in her ready wit and quick tongue, while Rebecca kept her thoughts to herself and was immensely practical. In their play, she was happy to follow where Rachel's imagination led.

When Rachel moved from the play-room to the school-room at the age of four, Rebecca was not content to be left behind. With many tears, she entreated Mom to allow her to learn to read. She was only two, but she was eager to show her abilities. Mom used to read children's stories to her two little girls, and one of their

favorites was about a little French orphan, Madeleine. Unbeknownst to Mom, Rebecca committed Madeleine's adventures to memory and could recite the story verbatim. She had also memorized where the pages had to be turned, and so would "read" to herself, to the amazement of family and friends. We often boasted jokingly about our "child-prodigy."

Rebecca's early aspirations to read were not confined to memorizing children's stories. She proved a quick learner, and by the time she was four she would perch upon Dad's knee at the dinner table and take turns reading Scripture with him during family devotions. Rachel would join her on Dad's other knee, and so together the two of them learned to read from the words of Scripture.

Besides her talent for reading, Rebecca was devoted to the piano. While she had many musical siblings, she surpassed most of them in her love for music. Nobody ever had to remind Rebecca to practice, and she could be heard playing routinely throughout the day. When the cancer came and the Make-A-Wish Foundation offered her an opportunity for a gift, Rebecca did not care for a car or a trip. She wanted a piano.

But when Rebecca was 13, her love for piano was suddenly hampered by a pain plaguing her right arm. For months we thought it was tennis elbow, aggravated by constant piano practice. But when the nagging pain grew worse, we went to the doctor. The tests slowly unraveled the stark and terrible truth. Our little sister had cancer.

Someone in our home said last week, "Cancer is an introvert's worst nightmare," to which another quickly replied, "It's everyone's worst nightmare." We laughed, but it is true. Our quiet, unassuming sister, who loathed attention from others, suddenly had a glaring spotlight upon her. She could no longer quietly live her life in the shadows of other personalities. Every day carried with it endless inquiries as to how she felt and whether she was ok. Visitors streamed through our home to see

her and encourage her. Rebecca shrank from the attention at first, but then blossomed.

For years, it was a running joke in our home that if you wanted to find out how Rebecca was doing, you asked Rachel. But when the cancer struck, we discovered that our little sister indeed had her own voice. Her personality began to emerge, and with cancer as her burden, our quiet girl became a young woman. She had a matter-of-fact outlook on life that required few words, and a sarcastic wit that only emerged occasionally. Through the long days and nights in the hospital, endless needles, and poking and prodding doctors, Rebecca displayed a radical patience and a calm. In moments, she struggled with the lot that the Lord had given her, but she persisted in spite of this struggle. She rarely admitted to pain or depression, and did not want anyone's pity for her burden.

Rebecca's teenage years were marked by her long battles with cancer, but they were also filled with much joy. She was able to be the maid-of-honor at Rachel's wedding last summer, and watched her best friend and sister marry the love of her life. Rebecca wanted to travel, and was able to take a month last summer to travel with Betty-Ann, her older sister. We have many delightful memories with Rebecca. She loved her brothers and sisters and many nieces and nephews. In the end, when it became evident that the Lord would take her, she confessed sadness that she would miss the birth of Rachel's first child. She spoke of the sadness of leaving her brothers and sisters behind.

Rebecca will be desperately missed by us. We grieve her loss, but we know that her suffering is over. In the end, her bodily suffering was great, but even when her body was eaten with cancer, she was able to tell of the peace that she had in Christ. She fell asleep as a woman with a hope. When we prayed over Rebecca over the course of the last year, we asked that God would either heal her or heal her, whether on earth or in heaven. Rebecca's story is not a story of a lost battle. She was faithful to the end. She ran the race that the Lord set before her with

tremendous courage. Our quiet little sister is with Jesus, and though we grieve, we know that we shall see her again.

## Messages of Condolence

Thank you for this wonderful eulogy. We are currently traveling in Australia but are keeping your family in our prayers. Please accept our deepest condolences.

— **John and Liz Dragstra**

"It is always surprising how small a part of life is taken up by meaningful moments. Most of them they are over before they start; although they cast a light on the future and make the person who originated them unforgettable." I did not know Rebecca well, but we shared 1 such moment, where she waited patiently to talk to me so that she could thank me for praying for her and for keeping in touch. What I saw that day was extraordinary; the blossoming of a young lady whose cancer wasn't just slowly stealing her life, it was also causing her to flourish as she walked out her faith in beauty and dignity radiantly. I am grateful that Rebecca chose to pour out her life for ours, sharing her journey with us, we are enriched and blessed by her life and example. (quote borrowed)

Vroom family, you are in our prayers. May our loving Heavenly Father comfort you in your grief, and may He bring joy and peace amidst your deep suffering as you mourn the loss of sweet Rebecca.

— **Sheryl Spratt**

I thank you for this, the most beautiful obituary I've ever read! I didn't know Rebecca, but I knew via the fb posts and updates from your family that she had a long and difficult struggle, and that the Lord gave her the faith to bear her struggle well. We are very, very sorry for your loss, and will continue to pray for your family. You will miss this beautiful girl/woman; she was a beauty inside and out! May the Lord comfort each one of you. Theo and Margaret Hoekstra

— **Margaret Hoekstra**

Your grief and sadness at this time is unimaginable, I send prayers of peace and strength.

Sincerely.

Vanessa

— **Vanessa Heard**

What a wonderful tribute and story of such a lovely young woman! Our church has been praying for her for over a year and now I know more of the story behind the name (which is quite unique, by the way - Vroom!) Thank you for taking the time to share details of her life so that we can appreciate more fully her life. May God grant you peace and assurance as you grieve.

— **Phyllis Brode**

In the little time that I knew Rebecca, I knew her to be a bright young woman, full of joy, facing her many trials with incredible courage. And nothing has changed. Indeed, it has become more true, except her trials are over. She has fought the good fight and has conquered.

Ellyn and I are praying for all of you, Rebecca's family and friends and church. And we are looking forward to the day when we will all join together in that heavenly celebration of life eternal that she enjoys today.

God's peace and blessings to all of you.

Chris

— **Christopher Kou**

I am so sorry for your loss. I know she was such a treasure to you on earth, and I know she will be even more of a treasure to all who get to know her later on the new earth with her new healed body, and of course, to her Lord now. God bless you with more of the Holy Spirit, our comforter.

— **Barbara Shanley**

Thank you for sharing this beautiful testimony about your Rebecca. We are praying for family. May GOD strengthen you for the days ahead and give you His peace.

— **The John Unger Family**

To the dear Vroom family. Our condolences to all of you. You are in our thoughts and prayers. Beautifully written piece!

— **Lori and Rob Breukelman**

My deepest condolences

But we should celebrate that Rebecca is now with Jesus

And will be forever happy and no pain. It is a beautiful piece written about

Rebecca

Prayer that you will feel Jesus presence to help you thru the grief of missing her

— **Arina**

My deepest sympathies to your family. Rebecca was a beautiful strong young

woman. I followed her battle and admired her so much.

— **Leslie**

I met Rebecca only once, after a concert in New Westminster. I was getting coffee

and felt this very gentle tap on my arm. "I'm Rebecca!" Though she was in mid-

treatments she had this sparkle and spark about her, which just amazed me. She

knew where she was going, and I thank God for that, that she's home now and the

pain and treatments are over! God bless dear Rebecca and her dear and faithful

family.

— **Wilmer Fawcett**

Dear Vroom family;

It was a privilege to attend Rebecca's funeral today. Susan, your eulogy for your sweet daughter was absolutely beautiful. I found out today where Betty-Ann gets her strength. You are a dear woman, whom the Lord used greatly today. As I listened to you it seemed as if heaven itself strengthened you and to witness the power of God through that this afternoon was quite something indeed. You honoured Rebecca and all of us through what you said. Thank you so much.

Not only that, but the words of love that came from Rebecca's sisters were a testament to a family that just surrounded Rebecca with love and support. I am proud to know you and in my heart count you as friends. It is with a deeper respect and love! that I pray for you, Betty-Ann. My heart felt sympathies and prayers in the coming months as you continue on life's path without your beautiful little sister. Love to you all, Tracey

— **tracey tobin**

We were so sorry to hear of Rebecca's passing. What a joy, though, to know her to be in Jesus' arms now. We will continue to pray for you, at home and in the church.

Love from Jeff, Jacquie, and the family

— **Jeff and Jacquie Hay-Roe**

It is with tears that I read this beautifully-written obituary, having prayed for Rebecca about as long as I've known Jill Farris as my prayer partner.

Your faith in this blesses me, and Rebecca's trust and dignity encourage and inspire me.

— **Ronni Dealy & family**

Dearest Vroom family,

My deepest condolences on the passing of Rebecca. Please know my thoughts and heart are with you as you go through this difficult time. May you find peace amidst the chaos of grief. Rebecca is certainly still with you in spirit and now up above looking out for you. All my love. Jessica MacGregor

— **Jessica MacGregor**

Grieving your loss while thankful that Rebecca is present with her Lord. Upholding your family in our prayers. Joe and Becky Harrell

— **Becky Harrell**

Arnold and Sue, it is so sad to hear of the loss of your daughter Rebecca. May you be comforted by the grace of our Father and feel his peace and presence in the weeks and months that lie ahead.

Roger and Annette Hoekstra

— **Roger and Annette Hoekstra**

Susan and Arnold and family, it is so sad to hear of the loss of your daughter Rebecca. May you be comforted by the grace of our Father and feel his peace and presence in the weeks and months that lie ahead. I was very shocked because I didn't know about her cancer. I will pray for you. Please accept our deepest condolences

— **Carol van Ramshorst**

Dear Arnold and Sue: Rebecca's story is so very touching! What a courageous young woman! My deepest sympathy to you and your family. Praying for God's peace and comfort.

— **Helene (Hoekstra) Christopher**

I feel so blessed to have been honoured to have known Rebecca. I truly loved her and was happy to have been able to care for her for a time. My thoughts and prayers go out to this beautiful family, you made her life such a wonderful place to be. She had some very tough times, but she was never alone. Peace be with you all

— **Kim Harrington**

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<https://www.myalternatives.ca/obituaries/vroom-rebecca>

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