

## **Brothers**

**I have divorced parents, so I rarely get to see my father. Every time that we do meet, he would always want us to go to his house as like a vacation trip. I enjoy the little moments that we share together. My brother and I go on these trips with our dad, and it's nice talking with him, and spending time with his family. He usually brings us out to go eat somewhere, and it's pretty nice. That's the only thing that we basically do together as a "family".**

**I remember this one time I went over to my dad's house, I was really sad, my grandpa passed away. I may not have known him the most, but it felt depressing, at a young age I didn't know how to react to a death. It felt traumatizing, and I still go to this day, to respect him. In that situation, I was tearing up, but my brothers were there for me. They kept me company, and told that it was going to be okay. My step brother attempted to enlightened my mood with light jokes after we went home, and that cheered me up. My brother ensured that it was going to be alright.**

**I guess that without my brothers, I wouldn't be who I am. They're the reason that I could keep on having the confidence to witness a funeral, and I'm grateful for them, I'll never forget how they reacted to my sadness, and their actions to prevent that sadness. They're amazing brothers.**

## Soccer

It wasn't a casual humid day in Orlando, Florida, it was the day that the semi-finals would be on of the Danone Cup qualifier. Barely making it past the group stage by a 1 goal differential, we won the quarterfinals 2-1, giving it all we got. This wasn't just an ordinary tournament out of the state, if we won this, we would go to Morocco for the U-12 World Cup where we would be representing the United States to face other countries that also had their own qualifiers. Best of all, we would be given the chance to meet Zinedine Zidane, one of the best soccer players in the 2000s decade, who the international ambassador.

As we had the game in the morning, we lined up horizontally of the field to listen to the national anthem. During this time, you can imagine and think about what you're going to do during the game. Scoring a goal, landing hard tackles, all these things to possibly imagine. We needed to win. It was a tough game, the other team was pretty small compared to the size of people in our team, but they were quick. Our team had that 2011 English Premier League style where we would have strong players up top for the center backs to lob the ball. Our game was off for some reason and that caused us to defend almost the entire game, the ball was probably on our side of the field for 90% of the 60 total minutes.

Considering that they were small, it was very easy to foul them and quite hard to even use our physicality which caused a lot of screaming and trouble from not only the field, but the parents also from both teams. We couldn't afford to let them score so we would need to make some hard tackles at times since it's better to get a yellow card rather than letting the other team score. This is what happened and our center midfielder got 2 yellow cards stopping goal scoring opportunities for the other team. We were a man down and there were 10 minutes left. It was difficult parking the bus

and other team had many players with fresh legs ready to come on the field. Our coach decided that now, we had to take out the striker and substitute him for a center back. So that meant that we would have 4 in the back and 3 in the midfield to defending our hearts out. With the game ending scoreless, we went to penalties.

I was the first one to take a penalty for my team and I stepped up to the spot, my heart was racing. What if I missed? I should calm down. I know that many goalkeepers at this age would think that people most of the time kick the ball with the inside of their foot so I did the opposite of that. I ran up the the ball and kicked it to the other side of where the goalkeeper guessed, I was so relieved. It just went downhill for the other team from there as they missed all of their penalties except 1 and we went on to lose the finals but that's besides the point.

From the first time of the group stage until the final, I gave it all I got, I wasn't used to the humidity and at times I felt like I couldn't even breathe, but my willpower and love for the sport pushed me through it. Drowning in sweat after every game and having my legs almost be num, I'm proud of what I accomplished. I'm also surprised at how far we went, I didn't expect going this far and this was a team effort paying off. Soccer gives me a feeling I don't feel doing anything else, it's been 5 years I've been playing this sport and all the hardwork and support I got pushed me to go many places around the country, meet new people, and see new cultures.

## **The Other Side**

Volleyball is a sport that I really love and enjoy playing. Each time I spike the ball, I am very desperate to make a point for my team, but there was always a wall that blocks me from doing so. That is why I need my teammates to help me get through that wall. Volleyball is a game where you cooperate with the other 5 teammates in order to win; there is no such thing as a team of one, two, or three, but there is a team of six.

There was this one game where I kept on failing my spikes since the net was way too high. My team was not communicating during the first set, so we lost that set because we were way too frustrated and stressed out. So on the second set, we starting communicating. That was when I realized that I could have spiked the ball during the first set, it was just that I was not believing in myself. During the second set I told our setter to set the ball higher so I could hit it over the net.

After a few points I managed to spike the ball passing through this imaginary wall. The other side of the net was a beautiful view. Everything on the other side of the net seemed brighter and colorful. That was when I saw the true beauty on the other side of the wall.

## Chinese New Year

Chinese New Year, one of the best time in the year, is my favorite holiday! Each year, my brother, my step-sister, and I get money from our parents like every other kid who celebrates Lunar New Year. There are just so much things to love about this holiday! Sales from stores to stores(sometimes), mooncakes, money, and best of all, spending time with the whole family!

My family probably celebrates similar to some other people or a bit different. The way we celebrate Lunar New Year is eating a hot pot! Hot pot are huge pots filled with broth that has two different sides, one part is spicy, and the other one is not spicy. There would be plates of frozen food(what my family usually brings), raw meat(already sliced of course), noodles, and vegetables! Whatever you want to eat, you can just put in your choices and wait until the food you put in is perfectly cooked.

There are many reasons why I love Lunar New Year but the two main reasons are that me and my family are able to spend time together since they are usually busy at the restaurant. The other reason is that I get money!

## My Phone

It was a hot Tuesday morning when I quickly jumped out of bed and ran to the humongous calendar, dangling from the wall above. I quickly ran my fingers against the smooth paper to find the date and it was August 30. A rush of happiness waved through me because my birthday was finally here! I couldn't wait to see all the surprises that were coming my way today.

I delightfully headed toward my closet, where of course were my clothes. I pulled out a nice new pair of jeans and a t-shirt and headed towards my bathroom. As soon as I got out, I just couldn't wait to see all the presents, decorations, and smiles on everyone's faces. But all I saw was neutral expressions on everyone's face, with not even a hint of joy.

At first, it struck to me that everyone had forgotten my birthday. I just wanted to break everything and cry my heart out. I stomped my way back into my bedroom and just sat there, thinking about nothing when I came to the conclusion that probably they're just playing with me. I wiped the wet tears rolling down my cheek and managed to walk out the room with a smile.

When I went back into the living room, I could tell everyone noticed the grief on my face and started to feel guilty about the act they'd played on me. I was trying to act normal, but it was difficult. Finally, the silence broke and I was dumbfounded with everything presented in front of me.

I had an enormous breakfast, which was layers and layers of beautiful rainbow pancakes dressed in the original, elegantly thick, sweet syrup. I loved it, the pancakes were presented like a cake with 13 rainbow candles flickering their yellow light. I blew them out while everyone cheerfully sang happy birthday to me. After breakfast, it was finally time to reveal my present.

My sister was bringing a rectangular box, wrapped in an ornate wrapping paper. I was thinking it would probably be a piece of jewelry I wanted for a long time. She was taking her steps

so very slowly, I was starting to become restless. After about 1 minute, which to me surprisingly felt like a gazillion, I got my gift and started to unwrap it. When I saw what it was, I just went crazy with joy!

It was an iPhone! An iPhone 6s! I was jumping and screaming because this gift was unexpected. I was so happy that day, that if I think about it right now, excitement still fills inside of me because it surely is, the best gift I've ever gotten in my life.