



2021 Best College Essay Finalist

The Writing Initiative Award of \$2000

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“For Her”

The clock is ticking away seconds, minutes, and hours of our lives with no hesitation and there I was, at a loss of words as I stood watching her turn her back on me. There were no “I love you’s” being exchanged beforehand. No hugs either. The only word I remember slipping out of my mouth was “Goodbye” but another word got stuck on the tip of my tongue: “Stay”. Thinking back, I often wonder to myself, “Would that one single syllable word have made a difference? Would it have changed her decision?” There were copious amounts of emotions running through my body but I could never settle on just one. Was it hatred towards a mother who so easily left her eight year old daughter? Was it the confusion of why she would do such a thing? Was it the pure desperation of wanting her to stay?

That was the summer of 2011; more than nine years ago. I used to lie in bed and think about how different life would be if she was still with me. Every time I receive an award for either an achievement or accomplishment, I wonder if she’d be proud of me from wherever she is now. Deep inside, I’ve always had a feeling she is proud of me in one way or another; that she’s thought of me every night like I have been for the past nine years. I’m not sure whether it’s purely my wishful thinking or the reality of it all.

I’ve been using coping mechanisms for all these years she’s been away. I’ve tried to distract myself from the reality of her being gone and no longer taking a part in my life. I’ve learned to accept the question, “What about you? What are you going to do for Mother’s Day?” every year that holiday comes rolling around. I’ve learned to accept the part of myself that consistently feels empty every Christmas Day. I remember how we had celebrated every Christmas together; hanging up the lights around our little but cozy apartment in New York City, where all the memories remained. I remember having snowball fights with her, building snow angels and snowmen. I even remember how she hated the cold but she’d suffer out in the freezing winter days and nights with me for my happiness and desires.

They say live for yourself because in the end, your life is still yours, no one else’s. I believe that there are reasons behind why we as humans want to live for ourselves; reasons why we do the things we do. She is on the top of my list of reasons. I want to make sure I live a life worth living but at the same time, I want to make sure she will be satisfied with the way my life turned out. It’s not that I care so much for her opinion, or maybe it is perhaps. Why is it that I need some sort of approval from her to know that I succeeded? If I were to ask my younger self that same question, that little girl would have said, “I want to prove to her that I can do great things and become great things without her. Then, she’ll see all the things she’s missed out on.” Versus now, I want to tell that lost little girl, “I want to show her that I’ve forgiven her for all her wrong doings. All her mistakes that she has yet to regret for the rest of her life. All her no shows to my concerts, conferences, and award ceremonies. I’ve even forgiven her for not showing up to my high school graduation that’s yet to happen in 8 months. I want to live for the day where I can look her straight in the eye, face to face, and say, “Mom, I forgive you.”