

UNKNOWN LOVE

I never really fully understood my parents' love, especially my father's. Most of the time it did not show, but it was just one of those things that you knew was there. Looking back into the past, the memory that I would remember the most was fighting with my dad all the time – in those moments, you would just have to have great faith to believe that the love was actually there.

My father had never shown much “direct” love. He was not a man who often showed his emotions; words were not his specialty. What he did constantly show was an authoritative figure who would make up the rules, restrictions, and conflicts. Even when one of his imposing rules seemed a bit unreasonable, he still strongly stood by his decisions and punished who disagreed with him. We seldom talked because most of our conversations would conclude in argument. He was not exactly a generous person either. It was certain that he would willingly provide us with everything we needed, but it was very rare to come across a present beside the birthday cake or under the Christmas tree that said, *From: Dad*.

His love was there though. He would often secretly express his true feelings about me and my sister to my mom and in turn, she would tell us that our father indeed did not mean what he said. At times it was hard to believe that he was as gentle as my mom described him to be. But it wasn't until I made the big step to college that I understood what my mom was talking about.

I had just graduated from high school and I already chosen to attend Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. From where I lived, Hamilton, Ontario, it was approximately a seventeen hour drive away. Local universities had also accepted me and offered generous scholarships; however I chose Samford, perhaps to get as far away as possible from the rules, restrictions, and conflicts.

I woke up one summer morning, got myself a bowl, poured milk and cereal into it, and sat down to eat breakfast. Just as the cereal began crackling in my hungry mouth, my mom walked over to me slowly.

“Your father woke up really early this morning,” she quietly told me.

This didn't really surprise me much (perhaps he woke up to finish up some work). She continued saying in her soft voice that he couldn't sleep the night before because he kept thinking about what it would be like when he drives the long trip back home without me in the car, and what it would be like when he walks in the front doors of our house only to notice that he would not be able to see me; only to be confronted by an empty room. Part of me couldn't believe that strong authoritative figure was that sensitive about my leaving.

The hot summer days of July whizzed by and mid-August quickly approached. I emptied out my room of everything I wanted to bring with me to Samford and tightly packed everything into a couple of suitcases. The suitcases were safely placed in the van that was ready to head south to Alabama.

The first day we arrived, we brought my suitcases into my assigned dormitory. After everything was brought up to my room, we noticed a few necessities that were missing. We drove to a nearby Wal-Mart and as usual, my dad would buy me the things that I needed. Of course, I didn't bother asking for something that I wanted; I already knew the answer. But to my amazement, he voluntarily asked if I wanted to purchase anything. I did want a digital camera and new headphones. And what astounded me even more was the fact he bought them.

After a couple days had passed, I was finally settled into my room and school was about to start – it was time for my family to go home. But before they left, my dad sat on a bench outside and said he wanted to talk to me. I was thinking, “What's up?”

“Do you really want to stay away from home and stay at Samford?” he asked.

Whether I really wanted to stay or not, I told him I didn't have a choice. It was already too late to turn back and select another school. He acknowledged that fact. However, he continued to tell me that he had already contacted universities back home and learned that the schools would still be willing to accept me if I was to return the following year. Throughout our final conversation, he informed me several times that if I ever wanted to return to Canada he would do his best to help me – I realized then that he didn't want to leave without me. For a moment, silence fell between the two of us.

As the warm wind wafted past us, he picked up the conversation again, revealing his true thoughts directly to me. He said he did not expect me to leave the house so soon. He confessed that we did not get along a lot of the time and that he didn't really get a chance to know me and give me much freedom. He thought I would have chosen a school in Canada and that he would have another four years to get to talk to me, to get to know me more. Now, he felt like he lost those four years

One by one, tears began rolling from his eyes.

Uncontrollably, I began to do the same.

We wiped off our tears, hugged, and for the first time in my life, I heard him say the words, “I love you, son.” At first it felt awkward as I had never heard him say it before. But quickly, that awkward feeling transformed into warm, affectionate feeling.

Sadly, it was time for my parents to leave. We said our final goodbyes and they climbed into the empty van. “Take care of yourself. Don't let mom and dad worry about you,” my dad said through the window, and drove off. I stood outside the front doors of my dormitory, watching them drive off into the distance until they could no longer be seen.

I just stood there only thinking, “Thanks, I love you too dad.”

Samford University

UCCA 101

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Assignment for Personal Narrative

Submitted by: Enoch Ko

Submitted to: Mrs. Lynette M. Sandley

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