

WRITING

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Studies show that the most common age to experience your first heartbreak is around the age of eighteen. I experienced my first heartbreak at the age of four. Your first heartbreak makes you want to build up walls with the world. It makes you lose trust in all those around you because you live in the constant fear of being hurt again. You can hide your pain from others, but you can't hide it from yourself. And I know that you may be thinking that I might just be talking about a preschool romance, but the first person to break my heart just so happened to be my father.

When I think of my dad, I think of trains. Sometimes they are consistent and arrive on time, but other times they leave you stranded with nowhere to go. When my father left my siblings and I, we were all heartbroken. Days went by without a phone call, without seeing him. I blamed myself for years for my father leaving, arguing in my mind: why was I never good enough for him to stay? What made him not

love me anymore? Why did I always have to ruin everything? And all of this starting at only the age of four. But in reality, I was never the problem, my mother was never the problem, and my siblings were never the problem. It was always my dad's responsibility.

As time went on, the pain lessened. lessened. I no longer felt the same amount of love for my dad that I did when I was four. I finally realized what real love felt like because of my mother. If my dad's a train, inconsistent and sometimes just doesn't show up, then my mother's the home that I can always go back to when all else fails. No matter the struggles of being a single mom, like debating on whether or not she should go grocery shopping or pay the rent, her commitment to our family and her passion behind giving my siblings and I a better life was most admirable. She was the person who was always willing to help out others without asking for anything in return. She was the person everyone leaned on, knowing that they wouldn't be judged. She is my person. My mother became my best friend. We would take days to just spend time together, whether it be getting our nails done or going shopping. She is the person I always want to be around.

Now that I'm seventeen, I realize the many sacrifices my mother made for me to grow up the way I did and I wouldn't change a thing about it. You see, my father may have left me with pain and heartbreak, but my mother gave me the tools to turn that pain into

power: power to get into and make it through college, and eventually, the power to become a great parent. The same power I saw in my mother while growing up, I now possess. This power motivates me to be there for people the way my mom always did for others. I'm going to make my way to medical school in the field of Obstetrics, bringing children into the world, knowing that I will be vital in bringing a mother and a child together, and knowing that there is a possibility that they become as close and as vital to each other as my mother was to me. While most people my age may now start experiencing their first heartbreak, I've had many years to learn how to turn pain into power. I've learned how to combat any challenges that may get in the way. I'm ready to become the person that my mother raised me to be.