

# Thoughtwell

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Short

Stories

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### Blood Moon

It was a sunny Friday afternoon. The walkway in the market was bustling with people from all around. There were witches, warlocks, Knights from far away lands, and even common people walking up and down the rows filled with booths. In one of these booths, a young lady and her aunt were selling medicine and little potions with healing properties. The girl's name was Tessa Evans. A Cleric, she devoted her life to the church and helping cure others from any ailments that they were struggling with. Her mother and father had been killed by a deadly disease when she was three or four. At the time, the medicine wasn't advanced enough to save them. So here she was with her aunt in the market. Hoping to save some lives. After she finished stacking empty containers on a shelf she turned to her aunt,

"When do you think we'll head home?" They had been at this for a couple of hours, and she was getting pretty exhausted.

Wiping the sweat from her brow, her aunt shrugged, "Soon as we run out of stock? We shouldn't be here much longer."

There was a squeak from below Tessa. She crouched down to meet eye level with her new companion. Usually when you hear the word "Dragon", you would imagine an

enormous, fire breathing monster that strikes fear into anyone that comes into contact with it. Not this little guy. He didn't exactly meet expectations. Tessa's height ever since she hit the age of 16 had always been 5'6. He wasn't tall enough to come up past her knees. He was on the chubby side, his wings weren't big enough to carry him,ki though he was still determined to try. He couldn't breathe fire, when he'd attempt to, he would just cough up smoke instead. He was a bit of a klutz, and she knew she had to keep a close eye on him or he might trip over his own existence and into an expensive vase. However, he was just a baby.

Ever since Tessa had brought him into town wrapped up in a little blanket, almost all the children seemed to take a liking to him immediately. His scales were as black as the night sky. His belly, spikes, and big eyes were bright blue. He was cute. He liked to play with the kids. She had found the little guy when she was out looking for herbs, or rather, she found an egg. It was late afternoon when she stumbled across it. It wasn't well hidden and because of its color it stood out like a sore thumb. The egg was bright blue, it contrasted the reds and yellows of the autumn leaves surrounding it.

She was sure to be cautious, considering she didn't like the possibility of being burned to ashes by a dragon, but by the looks of it, the egg was pretty lonesome. So, she saw no harm in checking it out. She noticed that it was shaking, she assumed it was in the process of hatching judging by the cracks in the shell that became more apparent to her as she drew closer. Once she had gotten close enough she crouched down. The egg suddenly stopped moving. After what felt like an eternity, the shaking of the egg and the little scratching noises started back up. He emerged slowly. First one

leg, then another. It was a struggle, but after his head made it through, the rest became easier. Tessa hoped it wouldn't be such a messy arrival. She was disappointed. The thing was covered from head to toe in a goopy substance and Tessa had to keep herself from gagging. Not only did it look gross, it smelled bad too. Like rotten eggs, but worse. He then proceeded to shake the goop off, like a dog would after taking a bath. And yes, it went everywhere, including Tessa. After wiping herself clean, she then turned her attention to the dragon who was now staring at her, eyes filled with curiosity. She slowly waved at it, as if it would understand what she meant. "Hi." He squeaked, which was not the reaction she was expecting. She tried to back away. He then proceeded to trot up to her. He nudged her hand with his face, and she began to pet him.

"I wonder where your mother is.." she pondered aloud while surveying the area for any clue. She assumed his mom had simply forgot about him, or dropped one of her eggs while flying to a different location. There was the possibility that the mother dragons other babies hatched, and he was just a little too late. The dragon simply tilted his head in confusion and whined when she wasn't looking at him.

Sighing, she shook her head, "I think I'm gonna take you home. It's not safe out here for you." She took a blanket out of her satchel and wrapped him up in it, "Let's go home."

A month passed, and here they were, at the market, selling what they could to get by.

"I think Azul is ready to get out of here soon, we can't keep the little guy cooped up

for long.” Tessa’s aunt stated, referring to the dragon.

Then, an unfamiliar voice chimed in.

“I can take the little rascal off your hands if you’d like. How much would you be willing to take for it?”

Tessa looked over her shoulder, carefully studying the man's features. He definitely didn't look pleasant.

He looked to be in his late 30's, maybe early 40's. His attire wasn't the neatest and he looked as if he hadn't seen the sun in years. Looking him in the eyes, she felt uneasy, those golden eyes looked as if they were planning something. Tessa wasn't one to judge someone by their looks, usually she'd pay no mind to it. However, she suddenly didn't feel safe. The way he looked at her dragon, as if it was some sort of prize. She stood, purposefully standing in between the mysterious man and her companion. She didn't really appreciate anyone referring to Azul as an 'it'. So of course, she was quite annoyed. Azul tried to peek around her legs to get a better look at the man, but Tessa just shushed him. Crossing her arms she shook her head,

“HE is not for sale. Is there anything else I can do for you?” She snapped at him. The man shook his head after thinking for a moment. “No, Thank you. It's a shame though. You oughta keep an eye on him.” The man stated, before giving Tessa one last look over. He turned, and walked away. She expected more of a protest, but she was relieved she didn't get one.

“Can we close up early, Aunty?” Tessa looked to her aunt, who nodded in response. Though the man didn’t say much, Tessa had a bad feeling that if there weren’t so many people in the market, he would’ve taken action, and it wouldn’t have been pretty.

It was late in the evening when it began to storm, and Tessa was finding it hard to sleep. She decided that maybe if she got up to get a glass of water maybe then she’d be able to relax. She stood up from her bed, but before she could even make it to the door, Azul ran in as if he was being chased. He seemed so determined to get away from whatever was scaring him that he ran past her and hid underneath her bed. She looked down the dimly lit hall outside of her room but to her surprise she saw nothing.

“What’s got you so freaked out?” She sat down in front of her bed and pulled up her lavender covers to reveal Azul’s shaking form. Frightened blue eyes met her calm, brown ones.

“Is it the storm?” She asked foolishly, as if Azul could communicate to her.

“Good guess. But that’s incorrect.” The voice of a man came from behind her. Azul saw him before she did, so he retreated further underneath the bed. It took a moment for Tessa to realize that it was the same man from the market square.

“Who are you? Why are you in my home?” She stood, glaring daggers at the man. He only laughed.

“I recommend you step aside, or I’ll make this painful for you.”

She stood her ground, there was absolutely no way she was going to let him lay a finger on Azul. The man chuckled and snapped his fingers 3 times.

Before she could react she felt herself being picked up by a strong force of magic, she was then thrown into her dresser. Dark clouds seemed to momentarily block her vision. She wanted to stand back up, but she felt as if every bone in her body was screaming. Whatever had just happened, it put her in a state of shock, she couldn't move. Eventually, her vision cleared up. She was laying on her side. She watched helplessly as she faded in and out of reality. Moments later her aunt was crouched over her, she was shouting but Tessa couldn't distinguish what she was saying. Then it all went black.

She awoke in the morning, most of the pain she had felt previously was gone. Sitting up, she rubbed her eyes. She recognized the room as the guest bedroom. She tried to recall what had happened. It was all so blurry, but she remembered watching the man grab ahold of Azul, who was trying his hardest to hide underneath the bed. She remembered the panic in Azul's eyes and how he tried to call out for her as the man escaped through her bedroom window. She suddenly felt so angry and disappointed. Disappointed in herself, Her staff was in the room with her, why didn't she just grab it?! Thinking back on it though, she probably wouldn't have done much damage. His magic seemed far stronger than hers. She assumed that he probably went to some wizardry school to become that advanced. Her thoughts were interrupted by a familiar voice.

"You know, you're lucky that I was up last night. I'm the one who healed your wounds." Tessa's Aunt was leaning against the door, her arms crossed.

"I know what you're thinking, you want to find the man who did this and get Azul back."



“Did you see which way he went?” Tessa asked as her aunt opened the curtains. Golden light spilled into the room, illuminating her aunts face.

“Yes, he headed south. Where exactly? Well, I can’t tell you that. Now before you get ahead of yourself, because I know you, and I know how you are, You’re stubborn. You aren’t going out there! I won’t allow it. It’s far too dangerous! Tess, I know that creature holds a special place in your heart, but I can’t lose you as well. Please don’t go.” Her aunt pleaded with her.

“But Aunty, he’s just a baby!” She argued, “He was my responsibility, and now he’s gone. Maybe if I go today, I might be able to get him back. There’s still a chance!” She slammed her hand into the bed, “I don’t think I can live my life knowing that I didn’t at least try to save him.” She stared at her aunt with worried brown eyes. Her aunt crossed her arms and looked out of the window in thought. Finally she sighed.

“Okay. But you are not going alone, find someone experienced in combat to go with you. I don’t need you dying on me.” She hugged Tessa, “Please be careful.”

Tessa wasted no time in getting her stuff together, she packed her bags with enough food, water, and money to get her through a couple of days. With one last hug, she left her aunt and set out to find someone to join her. On days when Tessa worked in the market, she would hear talk of a girl who was skilled in sword fighting. She decided to start there. Tessa had heard that she was a rather generous girl, she did big jobs for little pay. Her name was Piper. Tessa approached the house that Piper was staying in, it was a cute little brick house, stone steps led up to the door. She knocked three times. After a minute, a young lady with short black hair and green eyes opened the door.

“Good morning! Is there something I can do for you?” She smiled. She seemed like the bubbly type.

“Uh.. Hi. I’m Tessa, is Piper home? Can I speak with her?” She asked awkwardly.

“You’re speaking to her, actually.” She laughed, “I’m assuming you’ve got a job for me?”

“Yes, I need your help. It’s urgent.”

Piper invited her inside, while Tessa proceeded to explain the events from the night before. She explained that, while she knew how to fight, she still couldn’t take the mage on by herself. Piper happily agreed to join her.

“I know someone who might be able to give us a little bit of information.” Piper stated while packing her bags. “She’s a witch, so maybe she’d know what the guy would even want with a baby dragon.”

As the pair left town, The two began to talk about their goals in life. It wasn’t surprising that Piper wanted to become a hero, she seemed like the type. Piper also seemed to be far more energetic than Tessa. Tessa was never a very talkative girl so Piper carried on most of the conversation. She rambled about the witch, and how she had grown up with her guidance. The witch, Mary was her name, and Piper had a strong bond. Here’s where Tessa saw some similarities between Piper and herself. Piper had lost her parents to a beast when she was little. Mary found her, and took her in. Growing up with the knowledge that she lost her parents to a strange monster motivated her to learn how to fight, she wanted to help others. With Tessa it was the same thing. Sure, it wasn’t exact, but they both experienced a loss, and in the end, they

both wanted nothing more than to help others. As Piper lead Tessa to the witch's house, she did most of the talking. Finally they arrived at a little cottage in the woods. Piper knocked on the door and called out,

“Mary? Are you home? I need your help!”

The door slowly creaked open by itself,

“Come on in girlies! Make yourselves at home.” replied a voice from somewhere in the house. The two walked in, and took a seat at a little round table in her dining room. The interior of the cottage wasn't as normal as the exterior. Potions and spell books were scattered about, there was a skull bowl filled with candy sitting in the middle of the table. A pretty, young woman with curly blonde hair strolled into the room carrying a tray filled with chocolate cakes, a floating tray with sweet tea and a black Cat followed closely after her. She was dressed head to toe in all black. She wore little necklaces and bracelets that were an array of colors, some shifted to each color of the rainbow, most shimmered and left behind a trail of glitter when she would move her arms. Tessa was surprised that Mary looked so young. Tessa came to terms with it however. The lady was a witch, she probably found some way to reverse her aging process.

“Sorry to keep you both waiting,” She sat her tray down on the table. “Feel free to help yourselves to cake and tea. Now, what do you need help with Darling?”

Piper stuck a fork into her cake, “Well, my friend Tessa had a dragon that got kidnapped last night by a mage. We wanna know why he would want to kidnap a baby dragon. Maybe if we can figure that out, we might be able to pinpoint where he's at.”

Tessa chimed in, “Yes, he used some sort of strong magic to knock me out. It looked sort of like dark smoke, or fog. I can’t remember exactly, I had the air knocked out of me.”

Mary took a moment to think, twirling her golden curls with her fingers,

“There’s this old ritual, nobody knows for sure if it works. But there’s a rumor that if you slay a dragon during a blood moon, and drink it’s blood, you’ll gain immortality. The next blood moon is coming soon, I think it’s tomorrow evening actually. So if I were you, I’d hurry. I just have a feeling that might be what he’s trying to accomplish.” She sighed and kicked back in her chair while stirring her tea “Though, I don’t quite understand anymore why someone would want to live forever. It’s foolish, and the biggest mistake I’ve ever made.” Tessa connected the dots, so she’s immortal.

Suddenly the house began to shake, causing the books to fall off the shelves and plates to crash, the lights flickered. Mary cursed as she tried to keep the rest of her belongings in order. Mary’s Cat yowled and ran off as Tessa stumbled over to a window. In the distance, a darkness began to loom over a tiny village, the rumbling seemed to come from that direction.

“This could just be a wild assumption, but something’s telling me that the man who intruded last night, has something to do with that,” she pointed to the town while looking back at Piper, whose jaw was hanging open in awe. Mary elbowed Piper in the side,

“Close your mouth, you’re gonna catch flies.”

Piper covered her mouth, still staring out the window.

“I don’t think I’ve ever seen a storm like that! It’s all dark and twisty.”

She was right, the clouds were moving around like an anaconda around the town, choking it in its darkness. Mary had recognized it as dark magic. It definitely fit the description of what Tessa had experienced the night before. Tessa was smart enough to see that too.

“We should go, they need help!”

Piper grabbed her sword and ran out of Mary’s home in a flash.

Tessa rolled her eyes,

“You can’t just run off without me! Wait up!”

Mary shook her head as she watched the two hurry down the hill outside her window.

The muffled sound of Tessa yelling at Piper to slow down as she trailed behind Piper made her laugh. They were an odd pair but she had faith in them.

When they arrived they found that the village was in the middle of being terrorized by an enormous snake. The Reptile was jet black and it had a golden gem on its forehead. She assumed that the man had summoned this beast to distract the two of them. Tessa was very annoyed by this inconvenience, but Piper insisted that taking the beast out was the right thing to do. Tessa couldn’t argue with that. Tessa was about to attack when Piper ran past her, sword in hand. She swung at it multiple times, though each time it’s wounds slowly healed.

“What the hell? Why can’t I kill it?” Piper was too focused on her failures that she didn’t notice the snakes tail as it swooped in her direction.

“Piper, Watch out!!!!” Tessa yelled, however, she wasn’t quick enough. Piper was knocked across the ground. Tessa cursed underneath her breath as she slammed her

staff onto the ground, creating shards of ice, and flinging them at the snake with one swing of her staff in its direction. Most didn't affect him, but Tessa watched as one shard hit it in the forehead, right where the golden gem was. The reptile recoiled back in pain. That's when it clicked,

“Piper, the gem! That's its weak spot! Hurry and climb onto it while it's still down!”

Piper jumped up and nodded,

“I'm on it!” She ran along its back, slicing her sword down the middle until she got to its head, then she drove her sword deep into the golden gem. Causing it to yelp out in pain, before it started to disintegrate slowly into gold dust. As it settled into the ground, flowers began to slowly sprout from it as the sky cleared up, revealing the sun. Tessa then tended to any who were wounded as Piper started gathering information from the townspeople. Tessa's suspicions were correct, it seemed the same man who stole from the cleric passed through the village as well. They were informed that the mage mentioned something about a southern cave. Tessa's best guess was that he was hiding out there, with her dragon.

They decided to stay the night at the towns Inn. They'd be up bright and early to head out and save her dragon, Piper assured Tessa of this. As time drew closer, Tessa felt more and more uneasy. All she could think of were What if's. What if they don't make it in time? What if he isn't even at the cave? What if they lose this fight? But Piper did her best to reassure her.

“Have a little faith. You've got me here, so of course we'll win! Just try not to worry yourself over it okay? We've got this!” She told her as she was getting ready for bed.

“If you say so, little miss sunshine.” Tessa shot back, clearly stressed.

Piper just brushed it off,

“A little positivity can go a loooooong way, ya know.”

Tessa wouldn't have liked admitting it, but Piper's words brought her a little bit of comfort, that was good enough for her.

They left early, before the sun had the chance to rise. Tessa figured that they might as well be prepared, this could be a long journey. Once again, she was correct. It took almost the entire day to travel to the southern cave. On the way Piper started singing little travel songs. Tessa wasn't enjoying it as much as Piper was. The girl was tone deaf. Tessa was relieved when she had managed to get Piper to talk about something she liked, rather than singing. When Piper wasn't going off to slay monsters for others, she spent most of her time at an orphanage. Most of the money that Piper did earn from her job went to those orphans, it helped pay for new clothes, food, and water.

“It would be cool to be a royal knight and save the day. But even if that dream doesn't come true, I'm content with at least being a hero to those kids.” She said as they traveled.

Eventually, the two made it to the cave. It was surrounded by a rolling, dark fog. It seemed everywhere this mage went, darkness followed him.

The moon was already high in the sky when they arrived so they had to act quick. The two quietly entered the cave, to a room with a sky light above, and sure enough the mage stood alone in the center of the room, spell book in hand. Tessa's brown eyes

searched for Azul. In the corner of the room was where she spotted him, he was kept in a cage.

“I’m going in.” Piper whispered, before she grabbed her sword and rushed in, Tessa followed her close behind.

“Well, well. Look who we have here.” The mage turned around to look at the two adventurers. “I’ll admit, I wasn’t expecting you to show up here. Oh, and you brought a friend. How cute.” He took out his wand, “Ah, but I can’t have you stepping in the way of my plans.” He muttered a spell that made a poisonous vine grow up around Piper, wrapping itself around her legs tight enough that she struggled to move. It began to sink its thorns into her like a lion would sink its teeth into its prey. She tried to fight, but it didn’t last long. Piper collapsed, the vines falling limp, and useless. Tessa ran over to her, panicked. Tessa tried to focus on healing her, but nothing happened. No matter how hard she tried, her powers weren’t working. She felt weak.

“I don’t understand. My powers aren’t working. I’m trying everything I can.” Her hands began to shake. Piper grabbed one of her hands,

“Calm down, you can’t freak yourself out. It’ll make things worse for you. You need to believe in yourself, if you panic and tell yourself that you can’t do it, you’ll never reach your end goal. Remember what I told you. A little faith and positivity can go a long way.”

“Piper, I don’t think-“ Tessa started.

“Stop. Don’t worry about me. You need to save the little man, he needs you right now. You got this far, the only thing that’s stopping you is your own fear.” She let go of Tessa’s hand. The mage chuckled, “You can’t stop me. One woman against an



experienced mage? Ridiculous.” He snapped his finger and a cloud of darkness wrapped around Tessa’s ankles and wrists, keeping her in place. He picked up the rusty cage that housed Azul. Azul trembled in fear, looking to Tessa for help. He placed the cage on the alter, before grabbing his spell book. The room slowly began to turn a shade of crimson. Tessa looked up at the sky light, the blood moon was directly above them. That’s when it happened, right as the mage took out the knife he was hiding, Tessa felt a sudden wave of adrenaline. “No!” She shouted, the force around her wrists and ankles slowly faded, and a light seemed to come from deep within her. So bright that the darkness looked as if it was running away in fear. It became blinding. She couldn’t see a thing but the sound of the mages screams were the last thing she heard before the world became normal again. She realized she was floating when her feet hit the floor, she winced in pain. Looking around, the mage was nowhere to be seen. Piper was standing up straight, looking as if she wasn’t injured in the first place.

“I think you healed me.” She observed, “how’d you do that?”

Tessa ran up to Azul’s cage and unlocked it, the dragon jumped into her arms.

“A little faith and positivity can go a long way?” She raised an eyebrow at Piper, “I’m not entirely sure. I guess I had a sliver of hope in that moment and I desperately wanted to save him.” She hugged her companion close, he licked her face like a dog would.

“I told you so.” Piper laughed, “We should definitely take this little fella back home,” she booped his snout, it made him sneeze. “I’m sure he’s feeling very homesick.”

Tessa nodded, “I am too. Let’s go home.”

And so, the three of them began their journey back home, as Piper began to go on about how cute the dragon was. A thought still lingered with Tessa though. 'Where did that power come from? How was I capable of that?'

## Audrey's Shot at Hollywood

Ashley Crippen

Once upon a time, there was a girl named Audrey who wanted to become an actress. Audrey had blue eyes and dirty blonde hair. She did not consider herself popular, but she did have a few friends. Her best friend's name was Dakota. Dakota always gave Audrey support on everyday struggles of being a teenager. Audrey had a passion for being in plays which made her want to become an actress, but there was one major thing in the way. Audrey every week had to use all of each paycheck to pay for the bills at her house. She came from a family of five siblings and a single mom. She knew how important it was to have a job, so she could support her family.

Audrey hoped one day she would make it to Hollywood in some miraculous way. Audrey heard her alarm go off it was 7:55 a.m., and she started to panic. School started at 8:00 a.m., and she could not miss school. Audrey the previous night to work late shift at the diner she worked at. She had told her boss that she could not stay but he had had a bad day, so there was no point in convincing him to let her leave early for school the next day. Audrey made it to school fifteen minutes late.

On the way to her first hour class she saw a flyer on the band door that said "Play auditions this Friday for The Old Western." However this meant that Audrey would have to show up to work late. Today was the day Audrey would audition for the western play. The day was going pretty well, she had made it to school on time. All her classes went by quickly. It was the end of the day. Audrey stepped into the band room and started speaking the

monologue that she had been practicing all week. Audrey managed to have a western accent as she was doing her monologue.

After the audition Audrey felt confident that she would get one of the lead roles. She soon found out that she had made the main role for a character named Lily.

The time came for show week to begin. Audrey was nervous but excited. She had to be at the theatre by 7 p.m. Before Audrey headed over to the theatre she ate a packet of Doritos, a turkey sandwich, and drank a bottle of water. Audrey knew that she should not drink milk or soda before a performance and that water was the best choice. After eating Audrey headed her way to the theatre. It took her about ten minutes to get from where she lived to the theatre.

When

Audrey got to the theatre there were the usual crowd of people in the makeup room applying makeup to their faces. Showtime was only twenty minutes away which gave Audrey enough time to put on her costume and apply basic makeup. The twenty minutes dwindled by quickly and then it was time to perform.

Audrey stepped out onto the stage and said her lines. She was sweating profusely and she was secretly shaking. Audrey scanned the audience to see if her family were sitting out in the audience or not. Unfortunately, Audrey did not see her mom or any of her five siblings. However, Audrey did see a woman with frizzy brown hair wearing a suit looking intently at her. Audrey had no idea who this woman was but wondered why she was dressed so fancy to a community high school play. Audrey had a thought came to her mind then that it was a talent scout. Of course why had she not thought of it before. She knew what this would mean for her. This meant that she would have to do her absolute best in hope to get noticed by this unfamiliar lady dressed in a suit. So Audrey continued to do her absolute best.

After the show the audience stood up and clapped. As Audrey stepped down off the stage she was greeted by strangers that told her what an amazing job she had done. Audrey was overjoyed that all these people had enjoyed her performance. Even though Audrey was happy that all these people had been impressed with her performance there was something missing. The missing something was the talent scout not coming up to her to tell her how well she had done.

The crowd soon began to leave and Audrey was about to head out the door when she suddenly heard a lady say, "Wait up, Miss!" Audrey turned around to see the unfamiliar lady with brown frizzy hair wearing a suit.

"Um, yes mam how can I help you?" Audrey asked.

"Hello, my name is Amy Brook and I am a talent scout." the lady said.

"Oh! Well what brings you here?" Audrey asked. Amy looked at Audrey with a surprised look on her face.

"I am here because of you," "I have been long searching for a talented young woman like yourself, and after seeing you perform tonight I would like to ask," "would you like the opportunity to go to Hollywood to Audition for Hollywood movie scripts?" Audrey was taken off guard and stunned that this was actually happening. Yes, this had been Audreys' lifelong dream to become an actress but she highly doubted that she would ever be noticed and scouted out.

"Yes! Of course I would be honored to!" Audrey exclaimed.

Audrey drove home with a big grin on her face. She could not wait to tell her family that she now had this big opportunity to make her lifelong dream come true. Audrey pulled up to the driveway parked the car and rushed inside her house. To her surprise, there was no one home.

After noticing that there was nobody home Audrey began to become very worried. She called her mom and she did not answer. Audrey looked around for a note but there was no note. Just as Audrey was about to leave the house and search for her family, her mom and brothers rushed into the house.

“Where were you guys?” Audrey asked.

“Your brother had to go to the hospital for a sprained ankle that he got today in P.E.,” Audrey’s mom said.

“Is he okay,” Audrey asked.

“Yes, he will be fine the doctor said he will have to stay off the ankle but it will heal by itself,” Audrey mom said

Audrey pondered if she should tell her family about the offer she had gotten. Audrey thought it would be better if she waited until the next day to say something about it since her mom would be busy tending to her brother’s sprained ankle. Then Audrey had an epiphany, she thought to herself when was the last time I have had such exciting news like this and it would be nice if I told my mom about. So Audrey did tell her mom about it. Her mom was surprised by this news and her jaw dropped. Audrey was then drowned by questions from her mom about what she would do about school and how they were going to make it without Audrey’s paycheck. Soon, Audrey was consumed with guilt about not even thinking about any of these issues.

However, Audrey knew that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity that she could not let down, so Audrey called the talent scouts number that she had put into her phone. Audrey told the talent scout that she could leave tomorrow and the talent scout said to pack up all her things and she would be around near 7p.m. to pick her up.

The next day Audrey was consumed with anxiety. She ate some breakfast in hope that that would help with her anxiety. Unfortunately, Audrey still felt the same way after she ate.

However, this was not going to stop her from going with the talent scout to head over to California. Audrey suddenly heard a car pull up to her house. Audrey went outside to see a royal blue colored jeep. This is not what Audrey had expected but it would do, so Audrey got into the car with the talent scout and greeted her of course. The first few hours of traveling Audrey and Amy did not exchange but a few words to each other. Audrey was scared to say the wrong response to Amys' minor questions here and there. Audrey asked how long it would take to get to California. Amy said that it would at least take ten hours to get there driving the speed limit, but said with her speed that she drove it would split the time by two hours.

Audrey and the talent scout did not make it to California in eight hours and not even ten hours either. This was because they faced obstacles while getting there. Midway to California in the middle of nowhere the car suddenly ran out of gas. Both Audrey and Amy the talent scout did not have any clue what to do. They ended up having to wait in the middle of the interstate holding a sign that said "In need of gas, please help." Eventually, a car pulled up alongside where they were and two people exited the car.

"Hello folks." the two strangers said.

"Can you help us get gas?" Audrey and Amy asked.

"Sure thing, there is a gas station down the road like 10 miles we can get you gas there." the strangers remarked.

The two strangers left and Audrey and Amy were waiting for the two strangers to bring gas to them. Eventually, the two strangers showed up after fifteen minutes of waiting. Audrey and the talent scout both thanked the two strangers and then started to head down the road again.

Not too long of being on the road a cop put on its sirens in order to pull the car that they were in over. Amy ended up getting a speeding ticket amounting to \$200 for driving 100 mph for a 70mph speed zone.

After all the obstacles that they both faced on the way there they finally made it to California. Audrey thought to herself that California was absolutely beautiful. In California there were tall vast palm trees that hovered over the roads. In the distance, Audrey could see a beach that had gorgeous white sand and the waves were crashing to the surface. Audrey could not wait to audition for her first play.

“So when is my first audition for a Hollywood movie?” Audrey asked

“I am pretty sure that we can find some movies that you can read for today, it will be an open dialogue so you will not have to memorize it off the top of your head.” Amy said

Audrey walked in first audition to see four people sitting at a table. One of the people said “You can begin once you are ready.” So Audrey began reading the dialogue. Audrey stuttered a little bit through saying her dialogue but she managed to read it with confidence. After leaving the auditioning room Amy was outside waiting for her.

“How did it go?” Amy asked

“It did not go as well as I had hoped.” Audrey said

“Well you still have a chance of getting a call back.” Amy replied

Apart from Amy saying this, Audrey had a bad feeling about this whole Hollywood acting gig. She thought to herself what if I don't have what it takes to become an actress. She however did not want to just give up this early in time. This had been her lifelong dream and she would not let it end short just because she doubted herself.

The days went past and she did not get a call back from the agency. Audrey was beyond disappointed at this that she even had bigger doubts. Amy set Audrey up with more movies



auditions. Unfortunately none of them called back. Audrey never gave up but she was starting to lose hope in the whole actress dream thing. Days turned into weeks, weeks turned into months that Audrey waited for callbacks from agencies. Throughout her time in Hollywood Audrey had auditioned for various movie scripts. Soon the time came where Audrey had to leave Hollywood because she had gotten a note from the agency saying that her paid for time had ended. Audrey could not afford to pay for extra time in Hollywood so she decided to go home.

Audrey made it home with nothing getting in the way. Even though Audrey did not hit it big in Hollywood and did not achieve her goal to become an actress she still felt like a changed person. Audrey thought she had needed to become an actress because she felt as if it was her destiny. She no longer knew what her destiny was but for now she had great appreciation that at

least she had a roof over her head and a family to come back to.

Five years later, Audrey's life had turned out for the best. She is the drama teacher at the school she attended as a teen. She is now married with five kids and nice husband. Audrey does not regret her experience in trying to become an actress. She is thankful that she had the experience and thinks that she became more confident from trying.

## Colorless: The World of Gray

By  
Dallas Rivera

It is the first snow of the year. I see it slowly glide down and get devoured by the ground. The cackling of the fire fills the quiet night. I rub my hands together and blow on them to warm them up. As more time passes the more snow that falls. I've always wondered why people love snow so much even when it kills. I stretch out my hand and catch a snowflake. I take a close look at it and see it's beautiful pattern. I see now, I see why people love snow. This pattern is truly beautiful, I can't imagine anyone who can hate this.

*SLAM!* I turn around and see a door opened and a group of people coming out. There are three men and one woman. One of the men is wearing a thick coat with a beanie, the other two seemed to be wearing similar clothes, it seems that the three men are forcing her to go with them. The man with the beanie turns and looks at me. "Hey, don't even think about reporting us! Got it?"

I stare baffled for a second, "Oh uh yeah sure. I get it I won't say anything."

The man smiles as if he won some kind of domineering battle. As I turn to head out of the ally I see the woman's eyes. A dazzling bright blue, like the ocean if it had stars. It's strange, this is the first time I've seen any colors for a long time. Now that I look at her I can see her fully. She's full of colors, it's the most beautiful thing I've seen. Just like a snowflake, so lovable yet so frail.

I sigh and pull out a gun. All three of the men see it and stop in fear. I point the gun at them, "Sorry lads. Today's your unlucky day. I suggest you leave the girl and go before I start shooting."

The man with the beanie turns and looks at the man holding the woman, "Let her go."

The man is resilient, "B-but what about the money?"

The man that looks like the person holding the woman responds "Screw the money! If we die we can already kiss the money goodbye!"

The three men start bickering with each other, I start to get annoyed. I point the gun in the air and shoot. "Alright I don't think you get what's going on here." I point the gun back at them "You have two options here. One, leave the girl here and scram or two, I shoot you all dead right here." The three men quickly leave after my threat.

The woman that they were holding slumps down to the ground, shaking. I put the gun back in my holster. "You alright?" I ask.

The girl looks up at me, as she does I stare into her eyes. They truly are beautiful, such a vibrant color. I snap out of my daze realizing how creepy I look, and the girl looks back down. I clear my throat, "So, what's a pretty lady like you doing around these parts?" She doesn't answer she just continues to stare at the ground. I sigh, "Listen if you want me to continue to help, then you are going to need to answer my questions."

She continues to look down and as I start to lose hope that she will talk she says "My name is Rose Filomi." Rose Filomi huh? Why does that name sound so familiar? Agh! Who cares too much thinking. Now that the three men aren't here I finally get a chance to see how pretty she actually is. She wears a dress with god knows what color, she only has one high heel on I guess

she lost it when the three men caught her. She has long, wavy hair which is dirty blonde, her skin is as white as snow, but her eyes are still the most beautiful thing I've seen.

Wait, this doesn't make sense how can I see colors. How can I see her colors? I look at myself and see gray. I look around and still see gray. Yet when I look at her I see colors. I realize I'm staring at her again and quickly look away.

"Err, sorry for staring so much." She doesn't respond. "It's just this is the first time I've seen someone- I mean someone so beautiful." I hold out my hand and catch another snowflake, "To me you resemble a snowflake." She looks at me with a baffled look "Your skin is very white, and your colors are very beautiful." She doesn't respond

"Oh! I almost forgot. You gave me your name only fair if I give you mine. You can call me Marcus Ice." The woman just nods her head. She is difficult to deal with. "Do you have a home or something?" I ask. She shakes her head. So, she's homeless like me. "Ok here are your options as of now. One stay here, two come with me, or three wander around." She looks up and her face has such a confused look.

"Will you really let me come with you?" she asks.

"Sure, you can do whatever you want. Just letting you know I don't have a home." I say.

"That's fine!" she shouts.

"Alright then. Since you'll be coming with me you will follow my rules got it?"

She makes a pouty face "But you said I can do whatever I want!"

I make a smug grin "I did say that, but I was referring to your options."

Her face turns super red "That's not fair!" She yells

I burst out laughing "Honey listen here if you think life is fair you need to grow out of that dream, because life will one day betray you." I start walking out of the alley and wave my hand gesturing for Rose to come. As she fumbles to get up I notice I have a smile on my face. I hesitate, it has been so long since I've felt happy like this. It's much more different than the happiness I feel when I find good food, shelter, and clothes that aren't torn. It's genuine happiness. Although I don't have a home there is a place where most hobos live. It's commonplace for hobos and everyone tries their best at keeping it clean, but that can only go so far.

Rose says behind me "Say, where are we going?"

Without looking back I say "To our home."

With a confused look Rose says "But I thought you said you didn't have one?"

"I did, and I don't." She looks even more confused "You see the place we are going to is a place where all hobos, well most actually, live." Rose's confusion seems to wash right off.

"So, are you a hobo?"

"Indeed I am."

"Then why do you have a gun? Did you steal it!?"

"No I didn't steal it." I look down at my gun "This gun is of a very old memory."

Rose looks confused after I said that. I don't bother explaining either. After around 30 minutes or so of walking in a maze of an alley we finally reach the haven of hobos. To me it's nothing more than a pile of dirt and trash that I live in, but to Rose it seems like art. She stares at it with beauty and passion. I say nothing and so does she.

Like I said before, this place is the home of most hobos, but we don't have any houses. In this haven of hobos you pick a spot and claim it as yours. Of course that spot won't be yours permanently, because in this haven the strongest survive. There are battles of spots almost everyday, but I don't need to worry about that. I, Marcus Ice, am one of the hobo lords. Yes you heard me correctly hobo lords. Hobos that have a lot of power and gain a lot of spots are deemed as lords, but that's not the only way to be deemed as lord, you can also have a lot of power or strength. Since I have a gun I was able to obtain the title. I continue walking towards my spot. Although we don't have any houses that doesn't mean we don't have shelter. I took some crates and made myself a room for sleeping, it's very durable in the rain as well.

"Well Rose from now on this is now your new home."

Rose looks at the crate room in a baffled manner "I thought you said you didn't have houses?"

"We don't, but that doesn't mean we can't build shelter, I have been on the streets for a long time. I have my fair share of quality items." It's true, over the years I have found many good items like a mattress and a blanket some rich coot threw out, although it was a dangerous job. You see this city has sections dividing off the poor, middle, and high class civilians and below the poor class are us hobos. If a hobo is found in the high class zone they are punished with death, in the middle class zone is arrest on site, and in the poor zone we are allowed to roam freely. Only the most daring and capable hobos go into the middle and high class zones. Rose looks at the bed and mattress in my shelter with a surprised face.

"This is a high classed mattress and blanket! Where did you get it?" Rose asks

"I dumpster dived." I respond

"Dumpster what?"

I sigh "Dumpster dive, it's the act of searching through trash of others."

"But how did you find these items while dumpster diving!"

"Simple I just went to the high class zone."

"The High class zone?!? How are you even alive!?"

I burst out laughing "If you want to survive in this dog eat dog world one must become stronger, so that's exactly what I did."

"But even so, to be able to go into the high class zone and escape is unheard of!"

"Oh please I know the high class zone like the back of my hand." Rose looks at me even more confused. I sigh "Listen I wasn't always a hobo. I had a life, I had a job. I was able to go into the high class zone a lot with that job, so I was able to learn its streets, but one day I was fired from my job and my life was turned upside down." Rose has a depressed look on her face. I don't like telling my story, it reminds me of my past which I would rather forget. In fact it's the reason why all I see is gray. The reason why my world turned so colorless was because of that incident.

"Anyway don't worry about what I said. Although it's true I don't have a home or money. It doesn't make me weak." I look outside and see the sun setting. "I guess it's time to sleep." I let Rose have the bed for the night to calm her down. In the morning Rose to Philly The Collector. As it sounds Philly is a collector and pays money for items, the more rare the item, the more money he pays. I enter Philly's shelter and see him sitting on his "throne" of "gold". Philly looks in my direction.

“Hey Philly!” I say

In a hoarse voice “Mmm, it’s good to see you alive still.”

“I’m not planning on dying soon.”

“Is that so?”

“Indeed so.”

I show Philly some silver chalices I got from the middle zone, and he gives me my payment. Although Philly is a hobo he isn’t like others, he is a Hobo Lord as well, but that’s not what makes him special. Philly has a friend in the middle zone who sells Philly’s wares to others and gives some profit to Philly. That’s how Philly has so much money. If I had to guess Philly is about as rich as a high ranked middle class person.

Rose and I leave Philly’s place and head back to the shelter. At the shelter I pull out a bag of clothes. These clothes is what gets me to the middle and high class zones. I open the bag and pull out a black (I think) suit. I make sure it’s clean and ready to go and then stick it back in the bag. Rose looks at me and asks “What’s that?”

“This is my ticket to the middle and high class zones.” I respond. She nods as if she understood what I said. “I’m going to need you to stay here, I’ll come back with some more... suitable clothes.” After saying that I head off towards the middle zone. Walking to the middle zone takes about an hour and a half since the poor zone is so big. At the middle zone gate I put on the suit and walk towards the guards. The guards notice me and point their guns at me, I put my hands up and stop.

“Hello boys, you mind letting me through?” I say.

One of the guards (whom I presume is the captain) says “Who are you and why are you in the poor zone?”

I calmly say “Oh me? I’m Issac Youngblood.” Issac Youngblood is a fake name, but the Youngblood’s have such a big family they won’t check to see if it’s true or not. After all not many know that they have a big family.

The captain speaks again “Issac Youngblood? What are you doing out here in the slums?”

“Well you know captain. Just making peasants fight for pennies.” The captain sighs and gives out an order to let me through. I walk past the guards with a calm exposure. After walking far enough I take off the clothes and start dumpster diving. It doesn’t take long for me to find a dress for Rose, these rich coots always throw away good stuff. Although I got what I wanted I continue to dumpster dive to find more valuable items. After about 3 or 4 hours of dumpster diving I put back on my suit and head back to the gate. The guards see me and let me pass.

“I’ll be out late so don’t wait for me.” I say. The guards just nod and close the gate after I get on the other side. When I get far enough I change my clothes once again. Although I don’t know what color the dress is, it looks very fancy. At the shelter I see no one, not a single hobo. I find it strange, but don’t think much of it. I walk into my shelter and my vision goes hazy and I start falling to the floor. Just before I fully went unconscious I saw a pair of legs walk to me, and then everything went dark.

**The End**  
**To be continued?**

## **Finding Belonging**

By

Sophie Henson

I sit in my room looking at all the pictures from my highschool years. These four years passed by fast, just like how everyone told me they would. Although I'm sad I'm leaving my friends and the town I grew up in, I couldn't be more ready to leave. My life is about to start, and I am more ready then I'll ever be. From the outside, people may think my life is the normal, basic, life most teenagers live. I live with my mom, dad, and six siblings. I've lived in the same house, with the same people my whole life. The thing is, they aren't my true family.

I mean, legally they are, but my mom isn't my real mom. I was adopted the moment I was born. It was planned that way, which I understand, my mom being only 19 at the time. She had a whole life to live, she didn't need a baby getting in her way. That's the only detail I've ever been told about my mom. My adopted parents think it's better for me not to know anything about her. Don't get me wrong, I love my adopted parents. They can't have kids themselves, so they decided to adopt as many as they could possibly take care of. Me and all of my siblings don't know our birth parents for our "own good". I don't think my siblings care about their real parents, but I do. I just wish I could meet my mom, even just once. I want to know where I came from, my family history, and just have a relationship with my mother. Trust me, I've tried looking for my original birth certificate to look at my original last name. My adoptive parents have them all hidden. They think that "ignorance is bliss", and that knowing our original

parents has no significance, because we are in a new family now. Back to the whole starting my own life thing. I am moving to New York City tomorrow from my small town in Ohio. This has been my dream ever since I was five years old. I got accepted into Fashion Institute of Technology earlier in the year, and I couldn't be more excited. I decided to finally close my yearbook after reminiscing for about an hour. I jump into my twin size bed that yes, still has Disney Princess on it. My parents never really wanted me to grow up. That's why tomorrow will be so hard. My parents want me to stay their little girl, but I just want to grow into my own person. My thoughts and worries about the next day makes me tired enough that I eventually fall asleep.

Beep, Beep, Beep. 7:00 am. My alarm rings and wakes me up to the day i've always been waiting for. I get up, change into a comfortable outfit (I will be driving eight hours, so I don't need anything nice). I run to the bathroom to brush my short black hair and brush my teeth, trying to compete for time in the bathroom from my younger brothers.

"You're taking a million years!!" says the youngest, Jasper.

"Two seconds" I shout, not actually taking two more seconds, but more like 10 minutes.

When I'm finally done, I walk down the long and dark hallway from my bathroom to my room. I run my hands against the wall examining the pictures of me and my adopted siblings growing up. As my hand runs against the coarse wall, I feel a bump. I look again, straining my eyes because for some reason, we never got lights installed in this hallway. My parents are pretty cheap. I take out my Iphone and turn the flashlight

on and i see a small knob. I was confused, because I never noticed this was here before. Out of curiosity, I pull on it. Nothing. I try again, harder this time. It budes. This looks as if it hasn't been opened ages. I look inside the small compartment in the wall and I see nothing but papers. I gasp, and whisper to myself,

“Is this what I think this is?”

I grab the paper sitting on top of a tower of papers.

“Isabella Smith, born on December twelfth two thousand and one. Daughter of Sarah Smith and Carter Blain.”

My mouth drops. I feel like i'm dreaming. I quickly close the hidden door and stuff the certificate under my arm. I run into my room with a million thoughts running through my mind. Why have I never seen that door before? How am I going to try and contact my mother? What if she's married and has a different last name now? I don't have time for this. The clock now says 8:00. I have to leave now. I put the certificate in my bag and head downstairs.

“Are you all ready to go?” asks' my mom.

“Yes. Just getting everything together.”

My parents immediately burst into tears. Just how I expected them to.

“We're going to miss you so much.” Says my dad.

After all the goodbyes and hugs, I finally made my way to the car, starting my journey to adulthood.

After eight hours of driving, stopping at gas stations, and getting lost only once, I finally made it to the city of my dreams. I bring my bags in and take them into my dorm



room. I don't have a roommate, which doesn't matter to me either way. Before I do anything else, I take out my birth certificate once again. "Sarah Smith", I say outloud to myself. I've never gotten to say my mother's name out loud before. I feel like this is a name I should of never learned. Why does she have to have such a generic name? I bet there are over a million Sarah Smiths in the world. I get out my computer and google "Sarah Smiths from Marietta Ohio." Nothing. I decide to just put off looking for her for now and get my dorm together, since classes start tomorrow.

Morning comes again and I get myself ready for my first class. I get out my schedule and I go to find my first class, fabric styling. I leave my dorm and head to my class. When I enter my class I find my seat and get my books out. The classroom is big, unlike the small classrooms from highschool. After about two minutes our teacher enters the room. She has short, black hair. She's fairly pale, and maybe 5'6. I started to get a weird feeling. Maybe it's just me overreacting, she almost has the same features as me. But that can't be. I can't get my hopes up like that. My mother could be anywhere in the world. I don't even know if she is still living or not. The teacher begins to clear her throat and then speaks,

"Welcome to your first day of class, and for some of you your first day of college. My name is Miss Smith. Today we are just going to go over the syllabus."

My heart stopped the moment she said her name. This has to be a coincidence. I didn't listen to just about anything she was saying, which probably isn't the best thing to do on the first day, but I didn't care. Before I knew it, class was dismissed, but I waited for the class to disperse and I made my way up to her.

“Excuse me, Miss Smith?” I asked, my voice shaking.

“Yes?” she asked.

“There’s no easy way to say this, but I think you may be my mother.”

“Excuse me?” She asked.

“Im sorry, I shouldn’t have started it that way. My name is Isabella Adams. I’m from Marietta Ohio and I was adopted when I was born. After 18 years I just found my birth certificate and found out my last name is in fact, Smith.”

I say that all in one breath and all I see is her sitting there with a blank, shocked face.

“You found me.”

Miss Smith got up from her chair and looked at me.

“I thought I would never get to ever meet you” She said, her voice shaking.

“I bet you have a million questions, correct?” She asked.

“You have no idea.” I say.

“Go for it” she says.

“Why didn’t you keep me?”, the question i’ve always had stuck in the back of my mind.

“I was only 19. I had my whole life ahead of me. I wanted to have a career and I couldn’t take care of a baby at the same time.”

That part I understood, the events that happened next changed my life forever.

“You weren’t supposed to find me.” said my mother.

“What?” My heart almost broke in half.

“Your adopted parents weren’t supposed to show you your birth certificate. You never needed to figure out who I am. It would just be too hard on you.” She exclaimed

“So you’re not even a little happy to have met me?” I say in tears now.

“Listen. Whenever you were born, I didn’t even look at you. I felt terrible about myself, but I just couldn’t handle having a child with me. I had so much going on in my life, and my future was on the line. Not having a memory of you was easier on me, because I knew I would have kept you, and I needed to have my future.”

At this point, I was furious. I have always had dreams of meeting my mother, and this isn’t how it was supposed to happen.

“I have always dreamt of having a relationship with my mother..”

At this point I was crying, nothing in my world felt right.

“I’m sorry, but I just can’t do this.” She answered.

I stormed out of her class and ran back into my room. The day I finally met my mother, after trying to find her for so long, and I find out that she hasn’t wasted any time thinking of me, after 18 years. It was my first day of college, and I’m already crying myself to sleep.

The next morning, I have to walk right back into that class and see her. “Mrs. Smith” as I’m supposed to call her. This is going to be incredibly awkward, and I don’t think I can do this for the rest of the year. I walk in, and she is nowhere to be seen. I find my seat in the incredibly large college classroom. A woman walks into the classroom, but this woman isn’t my mother.

“Hello students. Your former teacher, Miss Smith has moved to work at a new school. We are currently in the process of finding a new teacher. Thank you for your patience during this time.”

I am in utter shock. She left me. Again. I thought there could have been some kind of relationship with my mother. Now she is gone for good. After a long day of studying and actually doing work, unlike yesterday, I return to my dorm and I call my parents.

“Isabella, you’ve only been gone for a day and you miss us already?” My dad sarcastically says.

“To be honest yes. I have never really showed you guys the appreciation I should of. Thank you for taking me, and showing me unconditional love.” I say, truly meaning every word that I’m saying.

“I don’t know where this all is coming from, but you know we that you feel this way, and we love you so much more.” My mom says back

From that moment on, I realized that I had been living my life completely wrong. I always wanted to know who my mother was, while taking my adopted parents for granted. My parents never found out that I met my mother, and I am going to keep it that way. I now know why they kept me away from her, and I should of listened to them in the first place. I wasted too much time on a woman who didn’t want to have any part in my life. My relationship with my parents has strengthened that day, even though we were living so far apart. I plan to one day love my children, more than my mother could ever love me.



You

By

Kylie Helm

The color purple is a really pretty color unless it's a sign of losing blood circulation in your legs. Waking up and feeling like I have no legs is the scariest thing anyone could go through. My legs all purple and feeling lifeless, the coldness of my legs from the outside takes my breath away. I began to panic and bang on my wall to wake my mom up, I continue to bang on the wall and yell but there was still silence throughout my home. Trying to calm down to grab my phone, I call her 10 times and still no answer. My anxiety worsens and I finally decide to find something to throw at my door without moving my legs. A charger block was all that I could find close to me. I then took the charger block and threw it at my door, it bounces off and comes back to me, I began to get freaked out even more. Finally 10 minutes into crying, yelling, banging, and throwing things I finally hear her running across the house. My door slams open and my mom instantly freezes. Not knowing whether to ask what happened or what was wrong, she could just see that there was something terribly wrong. I then threw my blanket off, still freaking out she runs to grab her phone. I can hear the phone ringing hoping it was an ambulance or someone that can help me, but it just kept ringing and ringing. I finally hear "911 dispatcher, how can I help you." My mom yells through the phone as the person on the other side of the phone says, "Ma'am, please try to calm down and talk more clear." As if my mom wasn't already upset and scared just like I was, she tries to say calmly, "My daughter just woke up and her legs are purple, she has no circulation and we need help!" Again minutes go by and I hear something rolling across my floor. I wipe my tears as i'm hyperventilating and see two

EMTS, before I can say what was wrong or how I was feeling they pause and say “holy crap”, not making my situation any better. One guy picks me up and the other puts a blanket under me, putting me back down they roll me up like a taco and count to 3. Picking me up in a blanket like a taco, they carry me up the stairs and out the front door putting me on the stretcher slowly. I finally arrived at the hospital, still have so much fear that I might be paralyzed for a really long time or for the rest of my life. All these blood tests and spinal taps, no one knows what is wrong with me. My doctor walks in with a bunch of nurses and I then knew it was serious. I asked what was wrong with me but no one would tell me, the doctors asked my mom to step out of the room and my heart drops. She comes back in the room, she and the doctors explained to me that I'm going to be transferred to Cardinal Glennon in St.Louis. Asking no more questions I get put in the ambulance and taken to St.Louis for further testing. Sitting in the hospital bed I thought to myself about all the bad things that are wrong with me and I start crying again. Wishing someone could just find out what was wrong with me. A few days go by and the color finally goes down in my legs but I still could feel nothing. I couldn't get up without help, I couldn't walk to the bathroom by myself, I couldn't do anything and it changed everything for me at that moment. Finding a cure was something I looked forward to for a few weeks now. Five different medications and I get pushed in a wheelchair to my car. I finally get to go home but still can't walk. Getting carried into my house to lay in bed for who knows how long. I start to try to sit up by myself but it's not as easy as I thought, sharp pains running up my back and my legs getting their feelings back a little bit. I tried my hardest, but it took two weeks for me to keep trying to move my legs, try to walk by myself or even trying to stand. Everytime I walked or stepped on my feet I would feel this really sharp pain go through my foot. The pain was more

like pins and needles just like when your foot is asleep and you start to get that tingly feeling. It was the worst pain I have ever experienced. Finally on October 6th 2018 I could stand again by myself, having to relearn how to walk. It all took a major toll on me. Taking several medications I finally ran out, I was still in pain so my mom called to refill my prescription. At that time the doctor explained to her that I have inflammation in my body and it caused the inflammation to cut off my circulation in my legs. The Doctors today still don't know exactly what's wrong but after almost losing my walking ability forever, I have done everything to keep the inflammation down. Knowing it could happen again at anytime is the scariest thing that has ever happened to me. I then began to feel the cold air on my legs. Watching the color come back in my legs made me feel so relieved. I thought that would never happen.

This experience changed me for the better. Bad things always come before the good things in life. This was one of the scariest moments of my life but it made me change my diet, exercise a lot, and to take care of myself even better. Before that happened I didn't care about what I ate because I was too little to gain barely any weight. Now I have put on a couple pounds and my body feels more energized than ever. I'm so glad I can finally walk again. The color purple is pretty until it changes lives forever.



*Poetry*

**Earthquake** Written By:  
Jessica Foreman

The door creaks open, my windows  
rattle The ground begins to shake My  
knees go weak, I cannot speak You've  
left me in your wake

Walking outside; tears fill my  
eyes The world turned upside  
down But I can't fix the mess I  
see There is nothing left for us  
now

The trees have fallen to the floor  
The branches all stripped bare A  
soft breeze creeps up next to me  
Almost like you're standing there

As I shuffle my feet, I feel  
debris Of the love that we  
once had The broken glass a  
reminder Everything good  
goes bad

Now I'm left with the  
pieces The shards of you  
and I I wish it didn't end  
like this I wish our love  
was blind

You were my world I do recall  
My one great mistake I gave  
everything I could And you  
gave me an earthquake

# You Are My Sunshine

Written By:

Jessica Foreman

You are my sunshine My heart  
flutters every time you smile But it  
breaks when you get upset My love  
for you is nothing new Your eyes  
make me forget

You are my sunshine I forget  
about my problems In the  
moment, they seem so small I  
hear your little squeals And I can  
rise above it all

You are my sunshine And I can't  
wait for your first steps The  
wobbly ones The bobbly ones  
You'll be scared, but don't you fret

You are my sunshine I want to see  
you grow My heart aches as each  
day passes Because I wish that  
time would slow

You are my sunshine And I hate it  
when you cry Because I know that I  
can't help you Because I cannot  
see inside

You are my sunshine One day  
you'll be where I am The world

balanced on your back But I'll be  
right next to you  
I will not let you crack

You are my sunshine And I love  
you so Wesley, you light up my  
life The sunray on the horizon  
line May you glitter, gleam, and  
glow

Maiden of White Flowers  
By  
Josh Gillenwater

Skin of porcelain so soft and fair  
Locks of ebony, attentively brushed hair  
Eyes of sea green  
A wondrous sheen  
A beautiful flower she is  
A doll of a woman she is  
Curious and serious  
She is quite the sight  
Little do we know the things she can fight  
Monstrous terrors hidden from sight  
She protects us all  
Though she may fall  
She never stays down for long  
For those that can not fight  
She begins to take flight  
Her silver blade in hand  
All though we don't know it  
She does not have to show it  
Our protection is its own reward  
A maiden of white flowers she is

Psycho psychosis  
By Schuyler Easley

Psychosis, *Murder*

Dark figures I see, *Screaming*

Psychosis, *Killer*

Bronwyn Schulte

Christmas

Growing up the holidays were lots of fun  
When I was young enough to play and run  
In your backyard we'd play make believe  
Your home was welcoming every Christmas Eve  
But as I grew older and older  
Winter grew colder and colder  
I'm not sure how it occurred  
My vision became foggy and blurred  
In mid July  
You passed us by  
When death finally caught up to you  
He took you without leaving a hint or clue  
Christmas seems to get more dreary  
As the years pass my eyes get a little more teary  
It hasn't been the same without you near  
And I've slowly lost my Christmas cheer  
But after enough thinking  
I've learned that time is a valuable thing  
And I should've spent it better  
Maybe this year I'll write Grandpa a letter.

*Hunter Richardson*

*Kickers*

*These boots are all worn  
They're ripped and torn  
They've seen many of miles*



*They've been through the trails  
Without them I forlorn*



Father  
Is a term everyone uses  
But no one takes serious  
Atleast, mine does not  
Just know,  
I've always wanted your love,  
But you never gave me the chance  
I wake up and crave for you to love me  
I crave for you to be proud of me  
Like you are with everyone else  
But for some reason,  
I was never enough for you  
I was never the daughter you wanted,  
So you just left me behind,  
Like some trash in an alley  
I tried so hard for years  
To get you to love me  
For who I was  
Instead  
You just left me hanging  
I will always love you Dad,  
But it's time for me  
To love me  
Instead of loving you

-Izzy Arnold-

*Mother,  
Is a term everyone uses  
But no one takes serious  
At least my mom doesn't,  
You were only 18  
When you found out about  
me  
Life was hard  
But i was supposed to be the  
light  
In the middle of a storm,  
I was suppose to be your sun  
But  
We were always on the go  
Nowhere felt like home  
But in your arms,  
Was my only safe place  
You kicked me out  
Like i was a bag of old clothes  
Because you couldn't handle me,  
But i was just like you  
It tore me to pieces  
When all i wanted was you  
You're my mom,  
And you only have one*

*-Kylie Helm*

**Coming to Terms**  
**By: Abigail Juarez**

**Mind is racing**  
**I am spacing**  
**Thoughts are deep**  
**I start to weep**  
**Finally I snap**  
**I don't want to crack**  
**I am a butterfly**  
**Trying to fly high**  
**I want to soar through**  
**the sky**  
**Spread my wings, they**  
**start to flutter**  
**I want to go, I start to**  
**stutter**  
**But finally I start**  
**Going as fast as I can**  
**Leaving everything behind me**  
**But as I go, something happens**  
**I can't go any longer**  
**I have to stop**  
**I can't go on, there is a pop!**  
**Of something loud in my ear**  
**I finally realize I don't belong here**



# Mom

Every child deserves a friend  
But not every child wants a friend  
Some want their mom  
I always sit here and wonder  
why my mom couldn't be a mom  
The moment I needed her the most  
she wasn't there  
I had only one child  
but it felt like I had two  
I constantly had to deal with the drama  
But I was the one who was in high school?  
You were acting like such a child  
You dropped my kid  
And even overfed her  
You kept going against my wishes  
So I had no choice but to cut you off  
Now you blame our failed relationship  
On the woman who stepped up in your position  
So to the mom that stepped up  
Thank you for being there for most of my life  
I am who I am today  
Because of you

Abigail Hawley

# The First Time I Held Hands With Someone

Abigail Hawley

The first time I held hands with someone.

I was three years old

We were walking through a parking lot late at night,

It was really cold

getting ready to go home from our annual Christmas party.

My mom let go of my hand to put groceries in the car,

my dad was somewhere left behind

He was really really far

I played by the car for a minute

Then all of a sudden my dad grabbed my hand

It was sudden and scared me a little bit

we started walking toward a white van.

I looked up, sad,

and that's when I realized,



**A Guide To...**

# A Pitch Guide To Different Kinds of Soccer Players

By Mikayla Aden



Soccer is one of the most intense, wild, and diverse sports in the world. It is played in almost every country, any terrain, and played in so many different styles. There is the kid who keeps kicking their soccer ball into your garden to the big league professionals to the freestyler on Instagram. You can play on gravel to roads to bumpy unmown fields to the big stands. If you are new to soccer or a veteran, you have probably wondered where you fit into soccer's diverse culture. Are you the Messi of your squad or the football player turned soccer player? Who should be your favorite player? There are many different categories of players, you just have to find where you fit on the spectrum.



### **The Trickster**

This player definitely has the “moves like Jagger” when it comes to a ball and their victim. These players have no mercy in nutmegging (or kicking the ball in between their victim’s legs) or faking the ball one way to only go the other, leaving their opponent confused and with a broken ankle or two. They can juggle the ball with their feet and run circles around others, but sadly these players never are the star scorer. They will entertain others with their tricks but in the end, someone always scores off of their hard work and they get the assist.

**Position on the Pitch:** Goalie, Mid-Field

**Secret:** They killed all of the birds in 1967 and replaced them with spies that are now watching us. That’s how they know all of their tricks...

**Favorite Soccer Player:** Tobin Heath





### **The Soccer Mom**

This player always has the granola bars and juice boxes in the trunk (or the front pocket of their backpack). They are always the first one to notice if someone is not feeling well or needs a break. Within the wind's breeze on the pitch, you can hear them yelling at the team to "Drink more water!" or "I told you not to go to that concert last night!" They are almost always the coach's favorite player. They are a stickler for the rules.

**Position on the Pitch:** Striker, Mid-Field

**Secret:** They care for others with little gestures because no one ever cared for them like that.

**Favorite Soccer Player:** Cristiano Ronaldo



### **The Shooting Star**

This player watched *Bend It Like Beckham* and *Goal!* religiously as a kid. They've spent their summer days kicking at brick walls and begging their parents to take them to the soccer pitch. All that YouTube recommends to them anymore is tutorials on how to bend the ball, take power shots, or chip it in. This player has a golden foot and will not stop trying to get a goal, even if they have to break a goalie's hand or a defense player's shin. You can bet on that at the end of the season they will get best offense or MVP.

**Position on the Pitch:** Striker, Offensive Mid-Field

**Secret:** They fear the freshmen striker who has the most goals on JV.

**Favorite Player:** Lionel Messi



### **The Silent Guardian**

This player plays within the shadows of defense. They make no complaints and guard the ball from getting into the goal at all costs. The only time they are recognized by others is when they get one too many yellow cards. Another time is when they knock a player so hard into the pitch's grass, they get a KO in the wrong sport. The team misses them on the defense line when they are gone. Without their guardianship, a goal or two finds its way in. The athletic trainer is always seeing them for some kind of leg, face, or hip injury. They also solely run on adrenaline and the juice boxes supplied by the soccer mom.

**Position on the Pitch:** Defense, Defensive Mid-Field

**Secret:** They have played defense since the pee-wee soccer league days and wonder if they could have made it as a striker.

**Favorite Player:** Sergio Ramos



### **The Flower Picker**

This player has a treasure chest full of dandelions from each game they have played from kindergarten to high school. They zone out of the game and think about what they want to eat for dinner. At practice, they try to stray away from the drills and scrimmages. They play soccer because their parents have already invested too much money into various cleats, shin guards, and tournament shirts for them to quit. Also, they get out of physical education as a plus!

**Position on the Pitch:** Defense

**Secret:** They are actually really good at soccer but are burnt out from all the years playing.

**Favorite Player:** Whatever player is on that old jersey their grandma gave them a few years ago...



### **The Hype Man**

The hype man is so HYPED for each and every game! They are almost always yelling at the team, the coach, the other team, scorekeepers, ball boys, parents, teammate's siblings, dogs and cats, and even the goal post about how they are so excited! They got some good skills, have a little too powerful of a shots, and hit a few too many headers. These players can and will try to cheer everyone up after a tough game. They are always goofing off, smiling, and laughing about their mistakes on the field. Sometimes the team wishes they would be a little more serious about the games and practice but no one can be truly mad at them. LET'S GO TEAM!!!

**Position on the Pitch:** Striker, Mid-Field, Goalie

**Secret:** They beat themselves up after a bad game or practice but to refute those feelings they cheer others up.

**Favorite Player:** Emily Sonnett

### **The Brick Wall**

When you come into contact with this player you might as well just run head first into an actual brick wall instead. This brick wall of a player cannot only probably injure you more than an actual brick wall but they yell curse words, fight with the ref, and elbow you in the ribs more than absolutely necessary. This kind of player has no remorse for the black eyes, broken ribs, or

ligaments they shatter. All they care about is stopping the ball before it ever reaches the box. I would bargain on having a better time trying to beat an actual wall at soccer than this player.

**Position on the Pitch:** Defense, Mid-Field

**Secret:** They may be giant and scary, but they really are chill outside the game.

**Favorite Player:** Tyler Magloire



### **The Hot Head**

This player does not need earmuffs, they already got steam flowing from out their ears. This player yells at every call, every player, and every coach trying to make the soccer field into a debate competition. These players rack up yellow cards with notations written on them along the lines of “they made the other team’s coach cry” or “punched another player for scoring a goal”.

You do NOT want to mess with this player or you might be out for the rest of the season.

**Position on the Pitch:** Offense, Mid-Field

**Secret:** They actually have great personalities, the game is what makes them angry but after they are as sweet as pie!

**Favorite Player:** Lindsey Horan

# A Field Guide to Your Everyday Mother

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*Abigayle Russell*

**We see mothers every day--some working their tail ends off and others taking it on the easy side. Have you ever wondered how many different mothers there actually are? No two mothers are exactly alike but we can classify the similar ones into a few categories. Check out our mom types of the 21st century down below!**

## 1. The Fun Mom

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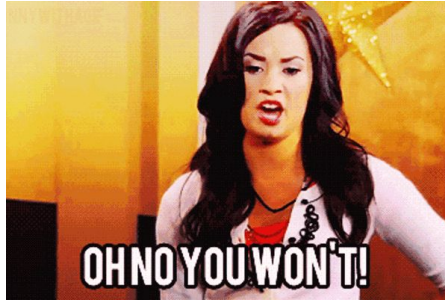


Link to this GIF found [here](#).

We all know a fun mom and we all adore her! These moms are always positive and coming up with creative ways to spend their time. They're always playing games or doing crafts with their children and they're an optimistic person we LOVE hanging out with. Don't be surprised if you walk into her house and find a giant fort spread across her living room!

## 2. The Strict Mom

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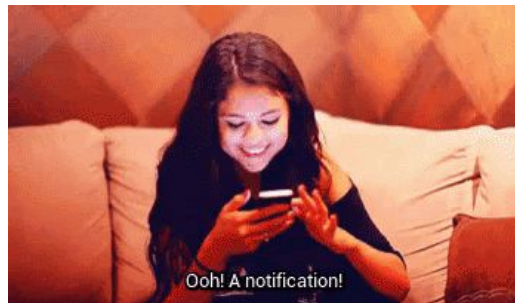


Link to this GIF found [here](#).

This is a mother who basically gets angry when her child is having any type of fun. She believes they should be focusing on their studies and working on scholarships for their future. Other moms tend to stay away from them because they give off a pretty intimidating vibe--usually staring their kids down with a glare on their face.

### 3. The Social Media Mom

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Link to this GIF [here](#).

We've all seen a mom like this while scrolling through our news feed. The Instagram picture of her and her family matched perfectly with the caption "live, laugh, love" underneath. She looks like the perfect mom when in reality, she is shooing away her kid while she scrolls through her newsfeed and obsesses over the amount of likes her "cute pic" gets.

### 4. The Overprotective Mom

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Link to this GIF found [here](#).

This is the mom we see at the playground who puts knee pads on her children when they're playing on the slide. She goes above and beyond to protect her child, even if that means embarrassing them in front of all of their friends by leaving twelve voicemails or reminding them to put their ointment on before two o'clock on speakerphone.

## 5. The Vegan-Granola-Natural Herbs Mom (anti vax)

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Link to this GIF found [here](#).

"Like, OMG, you have to try this new natural herb-chicken pox tea for your baby!" This mom is the one we see all over social media posting about the risks of vaccinations along with replacement options like natural herbs and teas. Their kid is probably munching on a granola bar every morning instead of having a mighty breakfast with eggs and bacon. Their child's expiration date is usually six years of age. (R.I.P. little Johnny.)

## 6. The Complainer Mom

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Link to this GIF found [here](#).

We never like hanging out with this momma. You see her approaching and you already know she's about to make a complaint about something. Children being too energetic for you? Get over it! They're kids, they will be hyper and playful. Stop trying to one-up everyone with how hard it is to raise your children. So the next time you hear this mom talk about how she didn't have enough sleep--even with her solid seven hours she got-- try not to resort to violence or sedatives.

## 7. The Hot Mess Momma

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Link to this GIF found [here](#).

Is she okay? Is she sick? Does she need help? No, it's just the hot mess momma. Usually arriving in sweatpants and a messy bun, this woman barely has it together. She's always arriving to places late after she got her breakfast burrito and frappuccino from McDonalds.

## 8. The "Perfect" Mom

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Link to this GIF found [here](#).

You've never seen her make a mistake. No one has! Her kids are angels sent from God himself and this woman's got it made! Her house is a perfect mansion. She has the latest mom car to drive all of her flawless children to their perfect private school, and everyone envies her entire life. (Don't be jealous, EVERYONE has flaws somewhere. Even perfect-perky-momma over here.)

## 9. The Workin' Mom

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Link to this GIF found [here](#).

Some kids have a part-time mom. Her career is basically her life. If she's not IN the office then she is answering phone calls or working from home. Her children value every split second of time they get with this woman since they spend most of the time with their father who—let's face it— is probably telling those god awful dad jokes.

## 10. The Bragging Mom

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Link to this GIF found [here](#).

“Of course my kid made the basketball team.”

“My child has actually been going to Maestro Figaro’s School for Gifted Children for about three years now.”

We all roll our eyes at mothers like this--usually named Susan. Their child could draw a picture of a dog and it look more like a giant turd that fell from the sky and they’ll hang it up on their fridge and brag about it all freakin’ day long.

## 11. Fashion Icon Mom

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Link to this GIF found [here](#).

Everyone stares in her direction when she walks by. She looks ten years younger than she actually is! How does she do it? She has three kids but has the perfect body of a 21 year old, her hair blows in the wind like a scene from a movie, and her face is wrinkle free. Name brand clothes cover her body as well as all of her children. Great, so she’s perfect and she wears name brand clothes? She’s literally a perfect mother and the person you see on the cover of a magazine!

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So which mom are you? The overprotector? Hot mess? Maybe something not on this list like the “go with the flow momma?”, “Sports mom?” I’m positive that no matter what mother you are, you manage to get everything done and your kids are healthy and breathing (except little Johnny). It’s hard to be a mother, but in the end I’m sure you have everything under control. And if not, you can always hide from your children in the bathroom.

# Why Thanksgiving is the Most Dreaded Holiday

Abigayle Russell *December 6, 2019*

There's always so much hype about family Thanksgivings. The food is being prepared days in advance and everything must be PERFECT. If the turkey is just a tiny bit burnt then the whole meal has been ruined. Just thinking about Thanksgiving fills your body with dreary emotions. Let's break it down and figure out why this highly anticipated holiday is actually the worst.

## The "Delicious" Food

We always prepare days in advance for the Thanksgiving meal. Let's just step back a moment and focus on how good the food actually is... it's not! There's a very good reason we only eat turkey--this dry and unseasoned chunk of dead bird--one day a year. It's not tasty! The stuffing is just meat bread and the green bean casserole is just soupy disgustingness. The only people who are honest about how unappetizing the food is are the children. They poke their fingers into the corn casserole with disgust lying on their face. Me too kid, meee toooo.



## **Family**

There are some people in your family who--no matter how hard you try--you just cannot stand! Your overly annoying aunt hounds you and interrogates your plans for the future. "“Oh you're taking off school for a year? What a shame, I would never let your cousins do that.” Hold your breath. Don't strangle her.

Her husband has already found his way to the couch. He props his stanky feet up on the cushions and turns the football game on like he owns the place.

Your aunt was supposed to bring the pumpkin pie like she does every year but now she's on a new diet so she brought her famous meat pie--what the heck is that? Who would make that into a pie!?

# The Much Needed Guide to Joining Color Guard



[You can find this picture here.](#)

When I was a senior in high school I wanted to join an extracurricular activity. I had previously done band my freshman and sophomore years, but decided to take a break my junior year. But I realized that I missed having something to do all the time—so I joined color guard.

Deciding to join a sport that I've never done before my last year of school probably wasn't the smartest idea at the time, but I'm glad that I did. It pushed me to put my all into something and to be passionate about what I was doing. It was grueling and it took up so much of my life that it was the only thing I was concerned with for the last five and a half months. I joined it not knowing the struggles and challenges it would put me through, and I definitely wasn't expecting it to be as hard as it was.

When I say I was in for a surprise to find out how hard guard actually was would be the understatement of the century. Manipulating a 6'0 flag around in the air with all the moves that go along with it, on top of having to do tosses that I've never done before was quite an interesting experience.

There are several things that I wish I knew about Color Guard prior to joining because having knowledge about them would have made the experience easier than it was. Color Guard ain't no walk in the park, so here are the top 5 things that you should know before joining Guard:

# 1. These people will become your second family.

Here at my school we have Guard and Percussion practice every Tuesday, and full band every Thursday. Once school starts we gain football games on Fridays, and competitions start taking up our Saturdays so we add Monday night practices as well. So we spend 5-6 out of the 7 days of the week together, almost never leaving each others sides, so we have no choice but to become close. You might not like everyone thats in your guard, because I for sure did not like everyone in mine. But as the season goes on you'll learn who they are and grow to love every single one of them and that special quality that they bring to guard. You will tell these people more than you will ever tell anyone and they'll always help you through whatever you're going through. Now whether their advice helped or not will probably be stretching it, but nonetheless I am still grateful that I'm apart of "The Killer Guard".

## 2. There will be drama, stay out of it.

Now even though you guys share almost everything, and are as close as people can probably get, majority of the guard will be girls, and girls tend to blow things out of proportion and cause drama most of the time. Stay away from it if you can. It will better your performances, and your mental health later on after the season is over. You guys will get frustrated and lash out at each other and maybe even bring up personal matters to push each other harder, and that might just push you over the edge and you snap. And that's okay, but don't cause drama, it'll make your life easier, and guard more fun.

## 3. Some will be fascinated by what you do... and others will pay no attention to you.

Don't mind the whispers you might hear from underclassmen who don't understand why you're even here or considered apart of the band. Hell even the upperclassmen will probably talk shit about you, but just know that you belong there just as much as they do. There would be no show without the colorguard. We give the most visuals, and we tell the story. But pay attention to the ones who pay attention to you. Those are the ones who you need to surround yourself with. They'll be so fascinated by what you can do with your flags. And even give them a whack at it a few times too because it'll make them appreciate color guard just that much more when they see how hard it really is.



## 4. You will hurt people a lot with your flags, but it's okay, it's worth it.

The amount of times I hit myself in the head with my flag or someone else for that matter is endless. Trying to swing around a 6ft flag and it not hit someone is very challenging. My glasses are basically broken from the amount of times they almost got knocked off my head from my flag. You ARE going to hit people with your flag, there's no doubt about that, it's not a matter of if but when it happens. But its all worth it to get the routine down and make the show the best it can be. If you think you're going to hit someone's instrument, hit their instrument, if you think you're going to hit someone's head, hit their head. Don't stop the show to preserve something from being dented that can be repaired. You only have one chance at that trophy and you better give it your all regardless of the injuries.

## 5. Believe in yourself no matter what.

Joining guard out of the blue and going into it not knowing anything about it is very intimidating. You're surrounded by people who have been doing this since 6th grade, and rookies like you. These people are going to push you over your limit with the intention of making you better. And some people just aren't meant for color guard, because lord knows I wasn't. They called me a "uncooked noodle" because I was so stiff and not flowy what so ever. But I powered through all of that and by the end of the

season I was only a “ half uncooked noodle”. Your weaknesses will try and pull you down but don't let them, believe in yourself and everything that you do with this guard. Color guard will tear you apart and make you into a new person. And make it make you into the right person that you want to be.

At the end of the day you'll be so happy with yourself for making the decision to join color guard. Just take my advice and stick to these tricks to help you through it so you can have fun. Because that's what it should be about, you enjoying what you're doing and who you are doing it with. So you go join color guard, you make that decision to be apart of something, you make that decision to be involved at your school. Also we need more guard members, so please come join, we're desperate.

# An Open Letter To The Child I Had When I Was Still A Child

**You became the miracle I never expected.**

By Abigail Hawley



To my little buggy,

On 6.10.19 at 5:59 P.M. you became a light in the lives of everyone around you. You came into this world crying, but quickly calmed down. The nurse laid you on my chest to have our very special skin-to-skin contact moment that every pregnant mother dreams of, and you stopped crying. You looked up at me. You knew who I was by the sound of my heartbeat, and by the smell of my skin; you couldn't recognize me yet, it was your first time seeing me but just by the way you cuddled up on me I knew that you knew I was the special person who is supposed to take care of you.

The second night in the hospital, I decided I wanted to put you in a cute outfit I had brought along with me. Together, it took your father and I about five minutes before we decided to ask the nurse to help get you dressed. You were so little and fragile, and we had never put clothes on a baby before. We never had any experience with a baby before you. All of your "firsts" were also ours too. We had no idea what we were doing but we learned quickly.

The third day in the hospital, it was time for us to go home. We put you in the car and we learned that you LOVE car rides.

In that first week home we learned a lot of things that you loved. You loved being swaddled in a blanket, which we found out was because it mimics mommy's belly. You loved just being held and cuddled all the time and I loved it too. I don't care what anyone else says, the love I have for you just as strong as any other woman if not more.

I still see you as that little, fragile baby.

You grow everyday, and you've changed so much since your first day in this world, but when you're older I'll always look at you and see the little girl who told me she loved me like last night.

That's right, I know what it sounds like when you try to tell me you love me even though you can only babble. It always comes right after I tell you I love you. I know the difference between your cries. I know what you sound like when you want mommy, and I know what you sound like when you want daddy. I know how to get you to fall asleep at night, I just have to rock you and keep my lips pressed against the spot right in between your eyebrows.

When you're upset and I kiss you, you do this thing where every time I give you a kiss, you do a fake whine and you make a sound like "ahh" in your tiny voice. It is one of the most adorable things you have done so far.

When you laugh, you don't really laugh. You always make a "Sssskkk" noise, and you bite down on your tongue with your gums. I've only ever heard you really laugh while you were sleeping. It was a tiny giggle followed by a smile and it was perfect.

You finally rolled over by yourself for the very first time the other day. You were laying on the couch sleeping, and I was watching TV. All of a sudden I heard a thump, and you had rolled onto a pillow next to the couch. When I picked you up, you were still asleep.

I still remember the first time you smiled while feeling actual happiness.

You brought happiness to me and daddy as soon as you were born. We both cried when we first saw you, you were so perfect. You ARE so perfect. You're perfect in every way imaginable. I cannot wait to see the person you become. I'm so happy I get to watch you grow and flourish like a flower in a garden.

I'm glad God chose me to be your mommy.

I strive for the moment the 3:15 when I get to go home and see you. I think about you every second of every moment. I always wonder what you're doing while I'm not there. Are you eating? Sleeping? Is daddy making your bottles the right way? Is he changing your diapers when he's supposed to?

Someday, when you're older and run into tough obstacles in life, I'll give you this letter to remind you that you're never alone and I will always take care of you. No matter where you are or what you do, daddy and I will always support you. We love you more than you could ever believe.

You will never truly understand the love I have for you until you have a child of your own. A child is a blessing expected or unexpected, and they can change your life in the most unbelievable ways just like you have changed mine.

You showed me a better way of living.

You are love at first sight. I'm scared for the day when you grow up and I grow old. I don't want you to grow up too quickly, I wish I could travel back in time to when you were a newborn. You may only be three months old now, but you're already so big it's heartbreaking.

Why do you have to grow? Why can't you just stay my little baby forever? Everything is changing and it's scary to mommy.

I'm always going to love you more than I love anybody else, even daddy, and it's the same way for him, that's how it will always be.

Sadly, I am going to have to let you grow up someday, but you'll always be my little buggy. There's so much you'll learn as you get bigger and I'll be there to help you every step of the way. Someday you will be an independent, strong woman and you will be amazing at it.

No matter what anyone says you're not a burden. If I wasn't meant to get pregnant at that exact moment, God wouldn't have allowed it. Every single little thing happens for a reason, and I think you came along because He knew I needed my forever best friend. I'm glad you're alive.

You've become my everything. You're the star in my sky, you're the flower in my garden, but most importantly you're the baby bird in my nest and I will always be there for you, no matter what pumpkin.

Thank you for being the best baby I could imagine.

I love you so much Mae Ashten Ewing.

Sincerely, mommy.

one last thing...

## **Haiku**

What am I doing?  
I am writing a Haiku  
That's what I'm doing.

Abigail Hawley