

2018 Essay Contest

Recipient: My Dad

Subject: Complaints in Your Household

Hello Father,

Everyone has pain one time or another. No one is immune to pain weather you would like to admit it or not. It is inevitable. Pain is a broad word housing eclectic meanings that can never truly be expressed to its fullest extent. Pain is so general. Yet pain is universal and never, ever fun.

Pain can sweep over you like a wave of mass destruction. Encasing you in a wind that slowly and gradually accumulates to create all wounds and scars. Ephemeral or eternal or implicit or esoteric, it will hit us all. And it's funny. Pain is one of those things you can not explain.

What kind of pain is it? Is it a growing pain? Or more of a stabbing pain?

*In the heart or your lungs? Back or front of your neck? Or is the pain in your lower jaw?
Oh, it's in your stomach! Probably indigestion. Just take some Pepto-Bismol and you'll be fine.*

On a scale from one to ten, how much does it hurt? Ten being atrocious and one being kinda bad.

“It burns” or “it stings” are not the best description of pain. But really all you can say is

“it hurts.” Unless you have time to spare words that elicit emotions so grand and amazing that others start to empathize.

I have time to spare. I will try my best to express you the pain, complaints, and concerns I am currently feeling under your household.

The pain will be expressed via the five senses we both can feel. And some other things I will include will be extraneous.

I hear you Dad. I hear that you think theatre and acting is a waste. I hear that you think most things I do are a waste. I heard your answer when I asked you if theatre is only good for my college resume. You fervently agreed. I will keep hearing you say how I should improve my math and be the best in school. I hear you when you say theatre is not a priority let alone viable career. I hear you and contrary to your popular belief I am not immune to your words.

I see you Dad. I know you can see me. I know you do not see me when I am on stage. I know you'd rather stay home and loaf around on the couch watching football instead of seeing me sing. I see you stay at home while Mom prepares to drop me off at a recital, a recital she will watch. I have seen you purposely skip out on my performances because as you say you, “well, just don't get art.”

I can feel the shame in your voice when I do not do my extra math homework. I can feel the weight of your sigh sink in on my fragile shoulders. Shoulders that will soon combust if you do not stop. I can feel your blood running through mine. Blood is a poor excuse for family.

I can taste the irritability in the atmosphere when I ask for dance lessons. I can taste the dismissive air when I ask you to come see me perform.

I can sniff out whatever anger you hold when I do not do exactly, precisely what you say. I know it's there and will most likely remain.

I hear you. I am not deaf and I can hear the words you say.

I also hear my friends and Mom clapping. Always with wide smiles and red hands from providing me too much applause. Family is not intertwined by blood, just by love and support. Support is a color you refuse to see and a sound you refuse to hear and something you are never willing to fully give me.

I also hear my friends raving, "That performance was, like, amazing!" Of course, with their own special, teenage expression.

I also feel the embraces and hugs they give me. I can feel the paper of the cards they give me for my birthday. I can feel their eyes on me when I talk. I know they are listening to all I say. I can feel.

And sometimes I do feel like fighting back. I will want to let my anger unleash like a thousand fires that engulf myself and the world and my words. The words that I would yell to

you.

I've tried and fire will never burn you down. It only makes your fire worse. Like dam gates opening at the wrong time. Not just wisps but eruptions of cheap insults that come in hues of deep, dark red. Not just colors that dance but colors that clash and cry for the yelling to stop. You are a like a wildfire when you yell at me. And even if I cry, you will keep letting your fire grow like a cancer and let mine slowly dwindle down.

Then I always have to let my voice give out during the argument. This solely because I have to save my voice for the performance you'll never see. I let my hope give out because I know it's no use to persuade you with shouts and screams. I will always be the one to end the fight.

You don't hit me or kick me or punch me or cut me. You don't bruise me. But you don't come to my shows or hear my ideas or show that you love me. You yell at me consistently. You can say all you want that you love me. But hearing doesn't always make it true. And that really hurts.

I hope you will take these complaints in your household into consideration. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Your daughter

