A simple memory

One day I remember waking up five minutes late in my favorite kitten pajamas. I like them so much ‘cause they were silky and soft, and the kittens were adorable. After a groggy moment, I rolled out of the messy room my sister Olivia and I shared. Eventually I even managed to shove food down my throat, barely keeping my heavy eyes open. Since I took too long to eat, I washed up a little *too fast* and in my haste, got soap in my eyes, making them puffy, teary, and red. After I washed them out to enough so my sight wasn’t *too* blurry I ran into my room and pulled on a pink shirt and my favorite blue skort. By the time I got to my front door both of my siblings were and relaxed on the couch, my mom was sitting next to them; ready to call my name if I hadn’t shown up just a moment ago.

We left for the car and the air smelled like pumpkins, I’m not quite sure why it did, but it was relaxing. It was cold too; at least I think so. I guess it more brisk than anything and although the chill was unexpected it was refreshing. We piled into the car with my mom driving, my brother, Alex, in the front, and my sister and I comfortably in the back. It seemed at the time to be a pretty regular day, a crappy one even, but it didn’t quite turn out that way.

My mom turned the key and the engine roared to life, albeit with a few a complaints. The car started to move and I gazed out of the window daydreaming about elves or something along those lines, it might have been being a spy; I was really into spies back then. Whatever it was it didn’t last long because 5 minutes through our journey, the car decided that it didn’t want to put up with us anymore and coughed, spat, and sputtered then gave out; only working long enough to give my mom time hurriedly pullover.

“What was that?” my mom asked more to herself than any of her equally clueless children. She looked bewildered and stressed.

“I dunno” I replied profoundly.

Honestly I was thankful for the car trouble. A minute before we left I remembered that I had forgotten to do my 4th grade English homework the night before and almost sighed. But I held it in, and didn’t show my relief. Of course, that would have been rude. Well also I didn’t want to be caught not doing my homework, but it was mostly the rudeness.

Really.

My mom started dialing AAA’s number and we all stayed (relatively) quite as she spoke. Her voice had a sense of relief and my own started to waltz right out. But I refused to let the fact I might have to see the disheartening look from my teacher if I came to school keep me down! No, I would make the best of this delay and enjoy it! My mom then sighed in a mix of relief and anguish.

“Well, they’ll send a tow truck, but the thing is that it’s gonna be anywhere between ten minutes and two hours”

“Wow! This is so cool! Like in the movies!” Olivia cheered.

“Yeah, and we get to miss out on school for a bit,” my brother agreed, grinning.

We all had fun; laughing, making both jokes and conversation, and happily waiting in the car. It was after about a half hour and I zoned out for a second and glanced out the window, the pine trees pressing up against against the green door and occasionally dropping pine needles down to the already covered ground. The wind howled, soft but strong, and I could hear it press against the car and rush by. I contemplated everything for a moment, just one, until my mom came up with a brilliant idea.

“Why don’t we sing some songs?” she proposed excitedly.

My brother, Alex, responded with a grumble that was a mixture between “meh” and “no” and shrugged. You can never really tell precisely what he’s saying when he does that, but you can always get the gist of it.

“Boo!” my sister and I chorused, sticking our red tongues out and pointing our thumbs downwards. Then I continued speaking exaggeratedly “Fine, but what about,” I paused until I (overly) dramatically proceeded *“….preschool songs!”* My brother must’ve thought I was insane.

“Come on let’s do it!” my sister pushed.

“Yeah come on Alex!” even my mom had joined in.

“Alex!”s and “Come on pleeeeeassse”s were thrown about till my brother couldn’t help but laugh and say yes. We cheered and Olivia started with “The cleanup song.” Forever a preschool classic of course.

We all sang along, even my brother joined in. We were off-key and often forgot the lyrics and ended in giggle fits. We didn’t care though; it was too much fun to notice that we sounded closer to screeching cats than a chorus. We continued singing for a while, occasionally stopping for other exciting activities you can do inside a car. I remember really well the warm tears I felt at the corner of my eyes occasionally from laughing *far* too long and how I couldn’t stop smiling even though my cheeks hurt from the wide grins and laughs. I completely forgot about my missing assignment and did something that sounds easy but is harder than it looks; being lost in the present. Everything else blurred away and all that was there was Olivia’s wild jokes and made-up stories and how her eyes squeezed shut from a hysterical laughing fit. Or how my brother seemed so much looser than he usually was and how he laughed louder and more than I think he ever has before. And I certainly will remember my mom’s ingenious ideas for games and how everyone brightened up when we played them; her most of all. We’re usually so caught up in the future or the past, but for a rare time, I was really fully *there.*

The only problem with being in the present is when the future comes. The towtruck pulled up in the middle of a word game; the one where you each say a word and it makes a sentence, and a courteous man walked up. He tapped on the window lightly with a gloved hand. My mom rolled down the window politely and they started to talk. I didn’t really pay attention to what they were saying, I drifted back to focusing on my school assignment and didn’t even notice when the man returned to his giant, yellow and blue truck. I tried to read the block-letters on the side, but it was directly in front of us so it was difficult. I kept struggling to do this, for no real reason, until my mom said,

“Awesome! He said that he can’t fit all of us in his truck, so we get to stay inside the car!”

That snapped me right out of my thoughts and I soon found myself smiling from ear to ear, despite how weird it is to hear your mom say awesome. I think my siblings did too, and we must’ve looked like a bunch of puppies, invisible tails wagging and perked up ears.

“Wow really? Oh my god that’s so cool, are you sure? I can’t wait! This is awesome!” is what it should have sounded like, but what I ended up saying was, “Wowreallyohmygodthat’ssocoolareyousureIcan’twaitthisisawesome!”

“Slow down,” my sister laughed, “But this is really cool! Oh! He’s starting to drive!” She squealed in utter excitement.

“I know, this is really an amazing experience,” my mom smiled.

“Yeah! Whoa, where do you think he’s taking us?” my brother excitedly continued.

‘*School’* I thought dismally. The world grew a bit greyer as I wallowed in my though, although it was so vivacious just a moment ago.

“To the mechanics” my mom answered nonchalantly. The tone of her voice hinted that she was nearly as happy to not take us to school as we were.

The drive continued and for the third time that drive, I peered out of the window, this time in total awe. I felt the tilt of our towed car tugging me down a bit and the 45 degree angle made the view infinitely more interesting, a foreign world almost; it’s weird how an angle can do that. I watched the colored leaves drift in the autumn wind and saw the dark shadows dance as sat and watched the show. We continued our word game and time flew by, soon enough we were at the mechanics and opened our doors. The blood had settled down at my feet and at the same time that I wanted to stretch and walk and run, I also wanted to stay out, and had difficulty coming out. I had been pressed up against the seat for so long, it felt weird to not feel it cradling my back with its perfectly me-shaped indent. I stretched the moment I got out and so did the rest of my family. My mom spoke to the mechanic and he said we had to wait for about twenty to thirty minutes. Us children eagerly accepted this announcement and went on our merry way.

My mom then suggested we wait in Starbucks; we all nodded instantly and vigorously. We walked across the street to the corner right across from the mechanics’ and there inlayed the holy Starbucks. Truthfuly, I often forgot that one existed; it was near Trader Joes and we hardly ever went there and when we did it was usually rather…*forgetful.* But this time it seemed as if it was the only place in the world, and the only one I wanted to be in. I took s great whiff of the fresh yet musky air before waltzing in with my family. I immediately smiled.

The scent of a coffee shop is hard to describe. It’s a wonderful swirl of peppermint, coffee, hazelnut, chocolate, vanilla bean, whip cream and so many other subtle individual scents. There were other people there. A couple sharing a scarf and cradling there steamy drinks in the comfy leather seats in the corner, an author trying to focus on his work, wearing a big inviting coat and typing excitedly into laptop, a group of grad students with papers cluttered all over their table, and other people like a few middle-aged women gossiping and a lone hipster(although I didn’t know what that was at the time) wearing some ridiculously cool pre-trendy outfit. Maybe it was those people, maybe it was the smell, or maybe it was something else entirely, but something made the shop feel so calm and homey.

We walked up to the line, trying to figure out what to order in mumbles. There was only one person on front of us, I think, and it was a blonde runner who ordered some skin milk latte with no anything or whatever other bland healthy version of a delicious drink. By the time she was done ordering, we finally decided what to get; my mom a coffee and my siblings and I chose our usual double-chocolate chip frapacinos with extra whip cream. Eventually they called our drinks and we gazed at them like they we were looking into the eyes of God, which to 4th, 6th and 8th graders essentially were.

I savored my drink, slowly sipping it, feeling the smooth plastic against my fingertips and the chocolate chunks and cold chocolaty concoction in my mouth. The whip cream was like eating a cloud and I felt I was in heaven. We chatted and laughed as we enjoyed the seemingly peaceful world and my sister accidentally got one of her curls in her whip cream drink which caused all of us to giggle even more, I almost snorted up my drink when this happened and my brother almost spat his out from laughter. We were all having a wonderful time until we realized that our time was up; and we had to return to the real world.

We returned to the mechanics, still happily, but slightly less so because we knew that we’d have to return to school. Although I knew my teacher wouldn’t even care about my homework at this point, I still didn’t want to return because we were all having so much fun together. The mechanic had finished and we all thanked him and went on our way. On our trip to my school, my mom had said that it wouldn’t have been any fun without us and thank us. Alex agreed, then Olivia and I chorused him. I was dropped off, and although I knew that the experience had ended, I could still enjoy the rest of the day and would always have that memory.