

My God, My Father

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My dad left when I was three. Usually when I tell people that, I receive one of two reactions. One is when they frown and continuously apologise; and the other is when they change the subject immediately. I don't really mind either way. I'm used to it. It's just the way people's brains are programmed to react.

When I was young, we used to visit Dad. I never really enjoyed it—my brother always held his attention. I was just... there. Yes, there were times when I enjoyed myself, but that was only sometimes. I didn't really enjoy watching movies with fighting or talking about karate. I was a little girl who enjoyed ponies and drawing pictures.

As we grew older, we didn't visit Dad as much. He said he was busy, or he would go away for long periods of time. From then on, it was only once a month that we got to see him, if at all. I started not going anymore; my brother kept visiting, though. He loved Dad and Dad's side of the family. They were his idols. I, on the other hand, never really felt comfortable around them. I even hid under the bed a few times to avoid them.

Eventually, Dad stopped seeing much of my brother too. My brother was upset, but I wasn't that bothered. I'd never been given much attention, so was used to not being in the picture. Then one day we visited Dad again. He included me in everything this time. We ate ice-cream and cracked stupid jokes the whole time. He even let me join in the Nerf war that we waged in my auntie's house. I had such a good time and I immediately let him back in to my heart. I loved him again... Well, I'd always loved him, just not in the way that puts a stupid grin on your face and makes you want to give the other person the biggest hug and never let go.

That was the last time I saw him.

He sent a letter to me and my brother explaining that he'd never see us again, but that he loved us very much. He had moved overseas and wasn't planning to come back. He didn't even tell us where he'd gone.

I cried. I actually cried. I never cry. But because I had finally let

him and had decided he could be part of my life, I had left my heart vulnerable. I felt used, stupid, worthless and forgotten. Why had I been so blind? Just because we'd had some fun didn't mean that he had changed.

So I prayed. I cried and prayed, asking God why on earth this had happened and why my life couldn't be like those happily-ever-after books I used to read all the time. No matter how hard I tried to forget, he was still my dad. My dad left me, and it hurt so much. It felt like someone had tried to pull out my heart only to leave it stuck like a huge lump in my throat.

Then I realised something. I didn't need Dad to be there for me. God says that he will be the father to the fatherless. Dad left me; he'd run away and wouldn't be coming back. But God would never do that. When I realised, I thanked God for being there, even when I'd turned my back or ignored him. I realised that God would always be there.

God won't leave me. He won't run away. I may not be able to physically see or hear him, but he's always there. I can live my life knowing that it wasn't my fault that my dad left us. I don't need to feel forgotten and lost. I don't need to feel pathetic and stupid. God will never forget me, and he gives me all the strength and knowledge that I'll ever need. He is my Father now, and that's what counts.