

Difficult Times

When I was a little girl growing up, I didn't have very much. My family lived in an alleyway for four years, and what we found on the streets was what we would wear. I never really thought anything of it when I was younger; I just thought everybody was the same. However, as I got older I realized that people would judge you on what you wear, how much money you had, and how you lived. People used to always make fun of me when I went to school. Some kids threatened to beat me up if I didn't bring them money. When this all started happening I was in the 4th grade. I tried telling my teachers and my principal, but they just let it slide.

Now to tell you I am an African-American and Caucasian little girl. At this school they only liked the white girls with a lot of money and long blond hair. One of the girls that used to pick on me was Izzabelle. She used to always pull my hair and make fun of me when I walked past her. Only one of the teachers used to deal with Izzabelle. This was the teacher that I liked when I was in the 4th grade. Her name was Kalie Vandyke or Mrs. Vandyke. She used to always tell me I was the smartest girl she has had in her class. I knew when she said, "girl" she meant the most smart African-American girl she has had in her class. I guess the reason she said "girl" is so I wouldn't feel bad. Mrs. Vandyke used to also tell me that I had "Spark" in my eyes that were as bright as the stars. I never really had anyone to comfort me like she did the night on 9/16/08 (November the sixteenth two thousand eight). Mrs. Vandyke said she wanted to speak with my parents about my behavior and my grades. She said that it's not going to be a bad conversation; However, she has to speak with my parents as well as the other students' parents. As she

drove me home, I told her how my dad died, " He was fighting in the war. He went overseas, and they left him in a foxhole in the middle of Syria." My mom says that knowing my dad he would not just give up. She says I have that same kind of spirit. Anyway she says that before the men that went overseas with my dad could come and tell her she got a video and letter from my dad. He said, " These would be the last we would hear and see of him." On that video I saw my own dad get shot. Now to remind you, I was only nine years old at the time. I didn't really get why anybody would want to shoot him if he made peace with everybody. At that time we did not learn about war and stuff like that in the fourth grade. I used to always ask Mrs. Vandyke why we had to wait to learn about the past and how African-American people were treated long ago, and she used to always reply saying, " It's just because we don't think you guys will be ready for that until you get in the sixth grade." Well I already knew what she was talking about when she told me she didn't think " You guys" were ready. I never really understood why white women and white men were so cruel to the African-American kind. My mother said I was suspenseful I didn't really know what that meant. She said it could be a good thing or a bad thing. I never really knew why I was so curious about things, but when we got on the subject about the past I wanted to always know more than what I was told. I was called a geek and a nerd because of this, but I didn't really care.

As I got older, life got harder for me (I was in the ninth grade when this happened). I was diagnosed with cancer. In the African-American group cancer was really common and really bad the type of cancer. I had breast cancer. Now from knowing me you probably already know we don't have a-lot of money, and I know to get this money I will need a job. I am only 14, and no one will hire me

because of the way I look (what race I am). It took me a while but I finally found a job. They have me clean their house and bathe their children.

Growing up was hard for me as you know but there are more things to what I told you. Growing up I felt like my dad never loved me. I had these feelings because he was always gone. He used to always "tell" me that he loved me when he did come back, but I never really felt that way. Not only was my dad gone my mother was acting kinda like a drug head. I was by myself cooking for myself and doing everything a mother and father should be doing for their child.

But that was in my past. I am now twenty-six years old. I have one five year old boy and two seven year old girls who are living in a peaceful home with their mother and father who have "great" jobs. As I had my children I knew I was on the path to being in the situation my mother and father were in but I had to think about it. As I did I knew I wouldn't want my children to feel how I did.

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