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Fifth Grade

### War Took My Dad

April 8, 1967

"Caleb sweetie it's time to wake up."

"5 more minutes."

"Okay but, if you're late to school again don't blame it on me."

"I won't mom."

"I know you won't. I love you. Breakfast is downstairs so don't take too long or you'll eat cold food. Speaking of, I'm late to my meeting! Bye Caleb. Oh, and show those bullies who's boss."

"I will Mom."

"Good. Tell Dad I said bye."

"Okay. Should I wear my striped shirt or my plain black t-shirt? Striped shirt it is."

"Aren't you going to wear the jacket your mom got you?"

"Dad, it's like 90 degrees outside."

"Wear it in school at least. You're always complaining how cold it is."

"Okay, you caught me at cold. I'll wear it to school."

"Oh, and your mom told me you are getting bullied. Why didn't you tell me sooner? You know you can tell me anything."

"I know Dad but you would think I'm a wimp for not standing up to them."

"I could never think that about you. You know what? I'm walking you to school and giving those bullies a one on one talk with the principal."

"Thanks Dad I really appreciate it."

"No problem. Now let's go before you're late."

“What’s up dirtbag? I mean, gulp, who’s that?”

“My dad.”

“So, I’ve heard you’ve been bullying my son.”

“No sir he’s been bullying me.”

“Then why does he come home crying every day?”

“I don’t know sir.”

“Mhm. Well, I’m about to go get the principal so tell the truth or I’ll pull the school footage.”

“I’m sorry I bullied your son sir. It won’t happen again.”

“Good. Have a nice day at school Caleb.”

“I will Dad. I love you.”

“I love you too.”

March 3, 1971

“Bye da...”

Ding ding ding.

“Sorry this is my boss. I have to take this.”

“Oh, okay.”

“Sir we need you.”

“Why?”

“Sir we need you for war.”

“Okay.” Drip drop sniff.

“Dad, stop crying. What’s wrong?”

“I...I have to go to war.”

“Wait what? Who’s going to help me with my bullies, homework and who’s going to celebrate my birthday with me?”

“I know it’s been hard but your mom is going to come home soon from her business trip.”

“Why don’t you care about me? Why is the only reason you’re crying is because you might die?”

“Son I love you. I’m crying because I’ll miss you and I might never see you again.”

“When are you leaving for war?”

“I’m leaving tomorrow.”

“Why tomorrow? Why not a year? Don’t leave. Tell them you broke your leg or diarrhea. Just tell them something they won’t ask about!”

“Number one....ew....no, number two, that’s not how it works. I’m sorry.”

“Dad don’t leave. You can’t for the sake of this family! Why do you have to go to war anyway?”

“I’m going to war because this is the way I save other people’s lives!”

“Don’t save people’s lives. Instead save my heart.”

“Caleb it’s not my choice if I go to war or not.”

“Whatever Dad. I hate you!”

“Caleb, son, wait!”

Slam.

March 4, 1971

“I’m sorry Dad I shouldn’t have left. Wait, Dad, where are you? Dad! Dad, where are you?”

“Caleb sweetie he already left.”

“No! He couldn’t have. How could he leave and why so soon?”

December 13, 1973

Knock knock.

“Caleb sweetie please go get the door.”

“Okay.”

“Hi, I come here with a message.”

“Wait don’t tell me. My dad’s back from war!”

“No I’m sorry to tell you this. Your dad was a great soldier but he didn’t make it. A gun was being pointed at someone so he jumped in front of them. You dad saved another soldier’s life.”

December 14, 1973

“I love you Dad.”