

Which Path to Take

I felt everybody's eyes on me when my sister said those words. It was a Friday night. The weather was getting nicer. It felt like spring was finally on its way. It was finally Friday, the long week was over. When I walked into my house every seat was taken except for our black leather reclining chair. Usually I go right to my room after a long day of work, but today I decided to stay downstairs. I sat down on our big black chair and joined in on their conversations. We were all just having a normal conversation when suddenly my sister said she thinks she found my brother. I felt like everything in the room paused. The tv was almost silent to me now. The only sound I could hear was the tick-tock of the clock that was hanging on our cream colored wall. My heart was before beating almost to the rhythm of the clock. Now it felt like it was going to beat out of my chest. I could tell by their stare's that nobody knew how I would react. Maybe they were expecting me to cry. That's what it seemed like. My emotions felt like a jigsaw puzzle. So many thoughts running through my head.

"My brother?" I thought to myself. "What does she even mean?"

After trying to solve the puzzle in my brain I finally spoke out loud.

"What do you mean? How did you find him? Where did you find him?"

She began to explain that her and her boyfriend were talking about it the other day. That they wanted to find his house and do something to it for what he did to me. She continued to explain that Chris started searching their names on Facebook and found a guy that looked just like me and my dad combined. She asked for my phone to show me the picture.

I handed her my phone and waited for her to show me. My heart pounding from the anxiety still.

I could still here that obnoxious clock ticking.

The minute I saw the picture I felt a smile grow on my face.

“He does look like my dad, but I don’t think he looks like me” I said.

He’s covered in tattoos, from his hands to his neck. He has the same lips as me. He has the same go-t my dad had the last time I saw him.

“Are you kidding!?! That looks just like you and your dad mixed together!” She said.

“Let me see” my mom demanded.

And then everybody in the room asked to see. I felt more anxious than before waiting for their opinion of whether he resembled me. They all agreed that it looks like it could be him.

When my phone was handed back to me I couldn’t take my eyes off of the picture. Pain started growing in my cheeks and I realized I had a smile from ear to ear on my face. My sister must have noticed because she began talking again.

“Message him” she said.

“No! What if it’s not him. That’s just to weird and awkward” I said.

“Hailey he looks just like you.”

“Still if it’s not him... it’s just too weird.”

“You’ll never know unless you try.”

“No I can’t.”

My mom interrupted and told me she still has my dad’s work number if I want to try to call him.

“I’m not going to call him.”

I reminded her of the time when I was younger and I tried to call him. He didn’t answer so I left him a voicemail, and he never called me back.

“Yeah, but you’re older now. Maybe he’ll want to talk” my mom said.

“I don’t even care to know him though. I just want to talk to my brother. I just want him to know I exist.”

As soon as I said that my sister jumped off of our black leather couch and ran to our old red computer chair. I could hear her fingers hitting the keyboard.

“I’m going to look the up in white pages” she said.

She told me she found them. She told me it only cost ten dollars to get their phone numbers. Ten dollars is all I would have to pay for a chance to have a relationship with my other family.

“I don’t think I want to” I said, mainly because everybody was still staring at me.

I think the biggest reason I said no was because of my mom. She’s been the only parent in my life my entire life. She means more to me than anything else in the world. I don’t want her to feel like I’m undermining her importance in my life. I heard whispers in the other room, so I peeked my head around the wall and saw my mom and her boyfriend whispering to each other.

“What?” I asked. Curious to know what they were talking about.

“We were just saying that if you choose to try to talk to them you have to be prepared for all outcomes. They might not have open arms for the situation” he said. “But whatever you decide to do we’ll be here for you. Do whatever you need to do for yourself.”

I guess I should have mentioned that my brother Joey doesn’t even know who I am. At least I don’t think he does. I’ve also only met my dad a few times in my life. From ages one to four I saw him about once or twice a year. The only time I really remember is the last time when I was four. My mom took me to this huge park. It was like a castle in my childish eyes. It had everything. Swings, slides, seesaws, and so much more. My favorite thing to play on at the park

was the zipkrooz. It's like a downgraded zip line. But this is the part I distinctly remember with my dad. When my dad finally got there after hours of me and my mom waiting, he was pushing me on the zipkrooz. I remember how happy I was. Laughing obnoxiously like the little girl I was. That's the last and only memory I have with my dad, or even of my dad. After waiting hours he only played with me for less than an hour before taking us to get food, because by the time he got there the sun was setting.

I started feeling uncomfortable with everyone still concentrating on me, so I decided to finally go up to my room. I walked into my small, cluttered gray colored room and jumped right into bed. I snuggled up under my cozy plum colored blanket and turned my tv on. I put my favorite tv show *Gossip Girl* hoping it might take my mind off of everything. I realized I was barely concentrating on my show so I decided I wouldn't change the channel. When I was searching for my thin black remote buried under my blanket somewhere I noticed my laptop on my discolored purple floor.

I thought to myself "should I look them up again?"

I decided that I would. Maybe doing it alone would change my mind. While I was on their pages I continuously kept checking my phone for the time. After a while of checking the time I realized I spent over an hour staring at the same screen contemplating whether or not I should spend the ten dollars to get their numbers. I convinced myself after some time to just do it. Just because I get their numbers doesn't mean I have to do anything with them. My heart racing filling out my card information, wondering if I'm making the right choice. As soon as I finished filling out all of my card information I closed my computer and put it back on the messy

floor. I curled up under my fluffy blanket and just started thinking about every possible outcome of me choosing to contact them.

“Will they answer me? Will they want to talk to me? Will it change my life? Will they hate me? Will I ruin their lives?”

It’s nerve racking knowing that right now my brother and dad’s phone numbers are in my phone. I have access to try to talk to them at any point.

I go on my phone and click my brothers name. I go into the message box and type out “hey is this Joey?” I sat there for what felt like forever trying to convince myself to send it but I couldn’t. I don’t know what’s going to come next. I don’t know if I’ll ever go down that path. I don’t know if I actually even want to go down that path. So for now I’m choosing not to send that message. But who knows. Maybe one day I’ll go back into that message box and instead of clicking the back space I’ll click send.