

When my brother and I were little I used to sneak into his room at bedtime and we would play together. We would have Nerf wars, draw comics, make his action figures play soccer, or just talk. I remember he had this massive map on one of his walls and we would point out places with funny names. Balls pyramid, Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlantysiliogogoch (yes that's a place in Wales), things like that. We would tell scary stories and I would be too freaked out to go back to my room so he would give me his gross brown spare blanket to sleep on the floor with, I still remembered how it smelled and felt on my skin. My mom tells me she used to come into our rooms to wake us up in the morning to find that I was sleeping at the end of his bed. When he was around 5 or 6 he would dress up as Batman and I would be his Robin. I followed him around everywhere, like a good sidekick would. But he was the sidekick when it came to our "concerts" where I would make up a song and he was my back up singer. Always the two of us.

Now I'm fifteen and he's eighteen, going to college in a couple months. It's weird to know he won't be around as much. He'll be away for weeks, maybe even months at a time. I know this is how growing up works, but It feels so fast. Like It was only yesterday that we were little and we had our whole childhoods ahead of us. Now he's a legal adult and I'm a freshman in HIGH SCHOOL. He has a girlfriend, drives a car, has a job, and is getting ready to leave the nest. Whenever I walk past his room I feel his presence even if he isn't there, I'm just so used to him being in that specific room. I'm gonna miss him alot. Sure, he annoys the heck out of me sometimes, but that's just part of his charm.

Who's gonna complain with me about doing the dishes? Who's gonna whisper my name and pretend he never said anything just to drive me crazy? Who's gonna barge into my room at one in the morning on a school night just to ask for some scotch tape or a number 2 pencil?

Who's gonna eat the leftover chocolate chip pancakes when I make way too many? Who am I gonna pester really early on Christmas and Easter? Even though he has tons of friends and is gone a lot anyway, I've learned to appreciate the time I have with him as much as I can.

I remember when he was in 5th or 6th grade he asked me to write a love letter to this girl he liked because he thought his handwriting was too hard to understand. He has dysgraphia which is a neurological condition that makes his hand writing a bit less legible. (He also has ADD which explains the whole hyper focus on annoying me when he's off his meds thing). I sat there and wrote every word he said in the best handwriting I could. In his freshman year of highschool I helped him make a homecoming poster for his girlfriend because I'm the artsy person in our family, or rather, I was. He took an art class recently and found he really enjoys drawing despite his dysgraphia. He even brought home his sketchbook to show me and I was so happy for him. He had really improved in art even though it wasn't something he really wanted to do. My mom found it recently, thinking it was mine. I told her it was my brother's and she was on the verge of tears. She told me,

"I never knew my boy could do this."

We went through the hardest years of our lives together. Without him I wouldn't have ever been to the ER, which isn't really a good thing, but it makes for a fun story. He apologized so much that afternoon because he thought I was gonna die or something. I had to constantly tell him I was fine and I knew it wasn't his fault (It definitely was, but the guilt was enough punishment for him already). We were playing on a kids zipline outside and he shook the line, causing the metal part that moved around to whack me in the head. I fell off and he ran over to me, freaking out about how it looked like my hair was dyed red. I ended up needing two staples, thankfully my hair covers up the scars.

I was the first of us to get staples and he was the first of us to get a gaming console. He let me play with him most of the time. We would spend whole weekends working on a minecraft server together building houses and structures. If I couldn't find him in the game he would annoyedly tell me where he was then send me on a whole hunt to find him. I used to drive him crazy by stealing all the resources he spent hours getting and crafting hundreds of swords with them. When I wasn't playing with him I was watching. We used to have a babysitter who said each of us got to pick something to watch or do on the tv for 30 minutes and I would always let him play games during my 30 minutes. He even knew how much I wanted a console myself and made me an account so I would have one when I got my own console.

Now that I look back on it, I wouldn't be at all like I am today without him. He would get to pick what we watched, influencing what kind of media I liked to enjoy. He introduced me to some of my favorite shows to this day. When we were little and got to experience the rare joy of going to a fastfood restaurant my dad would always get us the boys kids toy because he wanted it to be fair. He said,

"If one of you gets a gun and the other gets a pony that seems stupid, I'd rather you both have guns." I still find that quote hilarious because to this day my dad still holds to that, calling it ridiculous and sexist how different the girl and boy toys are in kids meals. My brother taught me to fight too, because that was a cool thing to do. He showed me how to block punches, but somehow I still can't dodge his swings when we play fight. He is the reason I got into playing drums, because I went to his middle school band's concert and saw his friend playing.

I suppose in the end, one thing I learned from writing this, is that you don't appreciate the things you have until they're gone. When I was little I would get upset and say I wanted to be an only child because my brother was annoying. But looking back on it I am so grateful for him. He

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is one of my best friends and I am so proud of him for getting as far as he has. I can't wait to see where he'll go next, and what he'll teach me. I love you Robert.

- Your sidekick and annoying little sister.