

Michaela Brooke McCurdy, Southwest Middle School, fall 2016



My name is Michaela. I love mystery books, unicorns, and Deep. I'm very crazy and talented. I hope you have fun reading my work.

If I Could Change One Thing

If I could change one thing in my life, I would make it so my mom and I never left Georgia. I didn't want to move because I didn't want to leave my dad, and I wanted my parents to stay together.

When I was born, I lived with my mom and dad for two years, then with just my mom for nine years, and lately with just my dad for six months. I miss my mom now. I miss doing everything with her. (I mean, I did live with her for 11 years.) We did many things together, like taking goofy and serious selfies or watching TV, which was usually whatever my brother wanted to watch. What I miss most of all is when she would drag me into the kitchen saying, "I have a surprise," and then she'd teach me how to make a new meal.

I'll miss her for the rest of the time I'm with my dad. I'll miss my dad when I'm with my mom. I'll miss golfing, bowling, cuddling...except we don't do much of that anymore, but I would still miss him.

I realized I was only with one parent when my mom said Dad wasn't joking when he said, "You're leaving me."

One Friday at the very start of eighth period, in fifth grade, Mrs. Davison handed me my stuff and sent me to the office. When I got to the office, I realized the Department of Human Services lady was there instead of a family member. She was chubby, with brown short hair, and she had pretty brown eyes.

When I saw her I became nervous, even though I'd known her for a while. The thing that made me the most nervous was that she didn't say anything to me like she usually did. Usually she would say, "Hi Michaela, how was your day today?" But this time she just gave me a blank stare.

When I got in her car, I didn't know what was going on, and when we reached our destination about 10 to 15 minutes later, I still didn't know what was going on.

One of the other ladies came in with my little brother, Alexander, who was two at the time, and offered me a glazed donut.

When I saw my brother—the second I saw my brother—I knew something was wrong. So wrong I almost cried, but I stayed strong because of him. My heart started beating fast, my palms got sweaty, and my mind was making a list of things that could be happening. *Are they going to take me away? Did something happen to the house?*

Soon after that, my mom came into the building drying away her tears. I crouched down to give her a hug as she put the brakes on her wheelchair.

The first thing she said was, "Hi baby."

Seeing her made tears run down my face as I nervously asked, "What's wrong?" But she didn't answer.

Mom, Xander, and I went into the playroom and played for a while. After five or ten minutes, I asked Mom what was going on and she broke into tears immediately, and I knew something was wrong.

Mom didn't go into details when I asked what was happening. "DHS is taking you and your brother because they caught Chad leaving the house. I asked him to bring some cough medicine for your brother because he wasn't feeling good," she said.

She told me that Xander and I were being taken away and placed in foster care because she had let her ex, Chad, into the house when we had a protection order where Chad can't come near Xander or me because he choked Xander and slapped me in the face over little stupid things.

We stayed in the playroom for 20 minutes, not counting the five minutes I cried trying not to have to say goodbye.

We spent some time in foster care. It was scary at first, but then it felt like home. The people I stayed with were wonderful. They bought me toys, new clothes, new shoes — they were just indescribably generous!

Then we lived with my grandparents, which was awesome. Just being there felt like vacation because that was where I went for most of my breaks off from school.

Then Dad came to pick me up to live with him.

The first few months living with my dad I cried myself to sleep. It was hard because he had told me I couldn't go visit family that summer, and that was sad. The most depressing part was just leaving Mom, my brother, and all my family there, including friends.

I knew I was going to be with Dad longer than normal, and I just wasn't ready.