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English 102

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Chimera

There is a gap in my life where I feel my memory is shaky. My earliest memory derived from when I was six and I lived in a house that was unbelievably large for a six-year-old girl. This was before my family spent time moving from one area to the next. Sometimes I visit that house because it is close by, but when I do, I realize it is not as big as it was when I was six. This would be the moment where I feel my memory is shaky and I do not remember it all as well.

The best memory I had when I grew up in my childhood house was that my father always made seem like we lived in a mansion. As a kid, I was under the impression that my family had so much money. One morning, I woke up and there was a jacuzzi with a waterfall made from tiles and rocks like a collage. The next day, there was a big white fence surrounding the yard. The day after the next, 11 foot deep, inground pool in the backyard. I never questioned it -- It seemed like magic. There were a lot of situations in my life where I felt as if my family had an unlimited amount of money for the wrong reasons. As a kid, I thought my father loved the new television much, he slept on the couch every night to watch. I understood -- I would sit in front of the TV before I go to sleep too, but that was not the reason he slept on the couch.

I get nostalgic when I go to the beach today. Sometimes my father would often take my family on vacations to express how much he loved us. These vacations were mainly in Atlantic City and he would have been taking us there since I was six until I was nine. My brother, Austin and I loved the idea that almost every other week, we got to go to the beach even in the winter time. In the winter time, my mom would take us shopping at the stores near the hotels and spoil us with clothes, candies, and room service. During the summer, we would book hotel rooms that overlooked the sea and smelled like sea salt. My mom used to drench my brother and me in sunblock until we went into the water to rub it all off. While we were in the water, she used to go to the boardwalk to buy us boogie boards, Curly’s fries, and shovels for the sand. My dad wasn’t around. He used the opportunity to go to the casinos which is how he won our hotel rooms in the first place. It’s very important to know that he didn’t always win. This would be another part of my life where my memory is shaky because all I can remember was my dad telling me how happy he was if we won even a little bit of extra cash. He would end up spending more money on us to make us think he won the lottery. My mom was upset with the idea that she had to watch after us while watching all of our money disappear at the same time-- there wasn’t much she could do about it.

The days my dad did not win anything took tolls on our family. My bedtime as a kid was nine o’clock -- that was just so I would be asleep by the time they started fighting. One thing that made my mom happiest was her collection of Swavorski animal figurines. She kept them in a pristine glass case where she would clean every week and would yell at me for touching them. They were so clean and pretty-- I mean, I was a kid, I wanted to touch everything. These glass figurines were so important to her that if she caught my brother and I touching them, we would be beaten. She never let anyone touch them. One night when I was supposed to be asleep, I stayed up waiting for my dad to come home. He came in around three o’clock in the morning and my mom was already waiting for him. I was supposed to be asleep so I stayed upstairs so my mom wouldn’t yell at me. I was in my room when I heard my mom screaming and crying about money. I had no idea that when he slept on the couch it was because they fought over money. My dad would come in late because he would spend all of our money at the casinos and my mom would lock our doors so he couldn’t come back home. It wasn’t long after I heard my mom scream a loud screech and glass breaking everywhere. I was scared. I cried. I was by myself.

When I woke up the next morning, I went downstairs to find my mom’s crystal collection destroyed. She was so angry with my father she smashed it and broke them all. I came to the conclusion that my father planted a lot of information in my head that we had money when we didn’t. He bought big-ticket items for the illusion that we were getting by fine. He took us on vacations so we would think we were just going to the beach and having fun while he was gambling all of our money away. He made us feel like we were being loved and nurtured, but someone who loved us wouldn’t risk our well-being.

When I turned twelve, my family reached the peak of bankruptcy because our business wasn’t going well and my father gambled every last bit of money we had left. Thinking back to my life as a kid-- it was a chimera. It was everything I hoped and wished for in my life, but it was an illusion. Everything we had was something we shouldn’t have had in the first place if it could save us money. It was almost impossible to achieve the things we had, but my father had to show off.