



# The Man I Call My Daddy

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“Angela, go get me a brrr.”

“A what?”

“A brrr.”

“What is that?”

“A beer, go get me a beer.” He would say with his devilish grin. So I would go into the kitchen and take the white can with the blue writing out of the refrigerator and take it to my daddy. Then I would climb into his lap as we watched T.V. We would watch *Sanford and Son* or *Married with Children*. He’d always give me some of his beer and tell me it was good for me. My mom would yell and tell him not to do that. Sometimes when we’d watch T.V., we’d share a bag of chips. My hand was so small and his was so big, I barely got any chips.

My daddy is 6’5”, so when he’d pick me up I could touch the ceiling. Sometimes when we would walk under a doorframe he would stand on his tip toes so I’d barely bump my head. Other times I would sit in the palm of his hand and he’d lift me up that way.

Sometimes he’d come home from work and we’d head bang to Van Halen, other times he’d come home drunk. I had just started kindergarten, and had laid my homework on the coffee table and went to my room to play. “What’s this on the table? Take it out of here.”

“But daddy it’s my homework. I need it tomorrow.”

“Take it out of here, now!”

“But I need it tomorrow.” He picked up the paper, ripped it into pieces, and threw it in the garbage can. I began to cry.

“Stop crying, now.” As I continued to cry he said, “Go to my room.” I went to his room and laid on my parent’s waterbed. As I was still crying, he got up and walked into their room and said, “Stop crying or I’ll whip you with my belt, young lady.” I cried harder. So, he unbuckled his belt and pulled it off his waist. Being so he drunk, he could barely hit me. Not long, after my parents separated, and I moved in with my grandparents.

After that, I didn’t see much of my dad. Occasionally my baby sister

and I would stay the weekend with him. He would leave us there alone so he could go get beer and cigarettes. After a while, years would go by before I saw him again. Then it became a regular routine to see my dad every couple of years. Right before my thirteenth birthday I told my grandmother that I wanted to see my dad, so she got in touch with his parents and I visited with him one Sunday afternoon. After that we just talked on the phone, but I felt like he was smothering me, so I wouldn't answer his calls. He finally got the picture and stopped calling. On Christmas Day, I had just come home from visiting other family and there was a message from my dad. I had not spoken to him in a couple of months, but since it was Christmas, I decided to call him. He was drunk, as usual, and he thought I was his girlfriend, so I hung up on him. I never saw or heard from him again until my high school graduation. I didn't keep in contact with him after my graduation because I didn't want to.

A few days ago his mother, my MeMa, died. I wasn't close to her. Luckily I did get to see her one month before she died. I went to the viewing and the funeral only out of respect for my father. When I saw my dad, he hugged me and repeatedly told everyone "This is MY daughter." Every time I see him, he tells me things from when I was little, over and over. He blames other people for the problems in his life; he blames my grandparents for ruining our "father-daughter" relationship. I'm not ignorant. I know that it's his and my mother's fault. And no one has told me otherwise. I can see for myself. He tells me he wants to make it up to me, that he wants us to have that relationship a father and daughter are supposed to have. A big part of me wants to; the other part doesn't. There's so much resentment, hurt, and anger that I have towards my daddy.

Each year on Father's Day, two women from my church sing a song titled "Daddy's Hands." It talks about a little girl growing up and having the comfort and support of her daddy's hands, and sometimes getting spankings when she had done something wrong. I have never had the ability to feel such things. Almost every time I hear the song I begin to cry.

A father plays a vital role in his daughter's life. Not having one in mine has deeply effected me, in more ways than one. It has caused me to be very insecure about the way I look, feel, and act. But it has also taught me to depend on one person: me.

I want to forgive my father, and maybe someday I will, but for now, he will just remain the man I call my daddy.