

A Fight For Love

He has always fought for what he loves. He knows that no one will ever be able to tell him what he can and can't do. Even when he was an infant, born 2 months premature, only 4 pounds with undeveloped lungs, he pushed through for his life. But, unfortunately, he was also born with Perthes disease, where his hip joint began to erode and his left leg ended up shorter than his right. He had to stay on crutches for 2 years, he couldn't run or jump for even longer, and was also told by his doctors that he would never be able to play any contact sports. This completely changed his life, but allowed him to really appreciate his love for academics, athletics, and, most of all, me. My brother, Will, always makes sure that I know how much he loves me, just as much as I love him.

I remember when I was about 8 years old and we lived in Groton, CT. He was only about 2 years older than me, so we were almost always hanging out and playing with each other. On rainy days or early mornings, I would walk into his room to play Batman with him. Of course, there were times when he would want to play transformers while I wanted to play with his Beyblades, but we never fought for long.

One day, somewhere in between summer and autumn, we decided to go play outside of our backyard in the playground. I saw Will go to meet up with Jalen and I assumed that his younger sister, Keeley, was probably busy and couldn't come to play with me. When I saw Jalen help Will carry his crutches up to the slide, I started to just wander around and wait for one of my other friends to show up.

After about 10 minutes of waiting, I was about to just give up and walk back home, until I saw Brandon show up. *Oh, brother*, I thought to myself. Brandon was never a fun person to be around. He always pushed people around and acted like he was so much older, even though he was only 11. But I guess you never know what is going on in other people's heads.

"Hey, what are you doing, Stupid? Where are your friends? Oh, yeah, I forgot, you don't have any!" Brandon chuckled.

I sat there for a moment, trying to think of a good comeback to his insult. Of course, I was only in 2nd grade, so the best I could think of was a pathetic, "Why are you so mean to me all the time?"

"Because I can be! Boy, you're such a loser!" He answered. Again, I sat there, trying to think of what I should say. Our eyes were locked. His eyebrows were curved downward as if to tell me I had no chance of standing up to him. My mouth moved, but no words came out. My mind started to go blank.

I heard footsteps behind me but refused to look back. I knew that even if I couldn't change Brandon, I could still make him go away. I continued to look straight into his eyes, no matter how awkward it was knowing that I was probably losing.

"Hey, Brandon! You can't talk to her like that!" *Wait, that voice sounded really familiar.* I turned around, officially losing the "stare-off," only to see Will behind me.

"Sure I can! What are you gonna do about it? Call your mommy to come and yell at me?" Brandon said. Will rolled his eyes but continued to stand firm and tall. "I'll tell you what, Willy."

“Don’t call me that!” My brother interrupted.

“Whatever. I will race you from the far end of the playground all the way to the other side.” I watched Brandon slowly move his finger a full 180 degrees. “If you win, maybe I’ll just ignore your little sister. And if I win, I can do and say whatever I want without you butting in!”

“Sure,” Will said confidently, and then stood up a little bit taller.

I sat on a bench, one with a good view of the whole playground. Will, who was still on his crutches, stood by Brandon to get ready to start the race. Other kids from the neighborhood started to gather around as well. Jalen stood towards the side and held his arm out in front of Will and Brandon.

“On your mark!.... Get set!.....” Jalen yelled, “Go!!”

Brandon got a bit of a head start. Will, with a determined face, caught up to his speed. About half of the way through, Will started to take the lead. *Almost there*, I thought. All of the other kids and I started to cheer as Will got closer to the end of the playground.

Brandon’s eyebrows started to curl downward as he started to get frustrated. He extended his arm straight in front of him, starting to catch up to Will. All of a sudden, Brandon leaped towards him, grabbing Will’s shirt and pulling him to the ground. Will lay down in shock, looking for his crutches, of which had flown a couple of feet out of his reach. Brandon was quick to get up though, and jogged towards the end of the playground, expecting for himself to finally win the race.

Most of the kids started to “boo” at Brandon, but Jalen and I quickly helped Will get up and handed him his crutches. He grunted as he started to slowly stand up. But his determination never left his face.

He then moved his crutches back and forth so fast that he started to pass Brandon. Officially winning the race, Will looked back at us with pride. The crowd of us kids- and even some adults- cheered for my brother. Brandon, realizing that he should not have tried to cheat, walked home without taking a look back. After this day, he never showed his face at the playground again, leaving us at peace.

Now, just as a freshman in high school, Will can not only run and jump, but has received a varsity letter for football, hit 7 “out-of-the-park” home runs in baseball, and achieved straight As in school. However, most importantly, he has learned that it’s not always easy to fight for love. He had always loved exercising and sports, but it took years of him repeatedly asking his doctors when he could ever start playing football. In fact, last year, in eighth grade, was his first year of playing. His grades are also extremely important to him, so he can make a better future for himself, which is why he is always staying up late and waking up early to study for school. But he also loves me, and he has fought for me countless times in such a variety of different ways. Love doesn’t just occur between two strangers, a love story can happen anywhere, even between siblings.