

Miranda Pace-England

Professor Wood

English 1301

October 8, 2012

The Hand-Me-Downs

It was my junior year of high school. The Missouri wrestling season had just ended, but I was not yet finished with my season. I had my National Title to win, and my shoes and I had just arrived. I walked through the sliding glass doors to the Oklahoma City University gym, and my shoes were hanging anxiously from my bag. I could feel the heat of a bunch of eyes staring down at me from up in the stadium. I was definitely a threat to most of the girls wrestling today. I had already weighed in at 114 pounds, which would put me in the hardest weight class for 2010.

As the tournament started, I breezed through my first three opponents with no problem. Next up was my semi-finals match, and it wasn't going as planned. I was destroying the girl from Texas when I landed wrong on my foot. I could feel that something was not only wrong with me, but also my shoes. I was lying on the mat in pain waiting for my coach to come see what was wrong when my mind soared back to the particular moment when my dad gave me the shoes I was wearing.

My medium-sized dad with his unforgettable red mustache and grey hair, pulled out some wrinkled black wrestling shoes from the very back of his closet. As he pulled them out, I remember thinking to myself I'm not sure about these. I peeked into them, and there was an ugly olive green on the inside. I turned them over and on the bottom there were straight non-slick lines which would be smoothed out as time went on. They also were marked with some very familiar stitching that spelt out a well-known sports gear company, Asics. It was sown into the

back of the shoes but was now coming unraveled. I was about to tell my dad these would work for now when he started up with the history behind the shoes.

He told me that these ugly worn-in shoes were once the shoes that he coached and taught me how to wrestle in. For good luck when I was little he would wear the shoes to my match while I was wrestling. He also wore these shoes when he taught me how to do my early favorite moves: cement-mixer and Japanese whizzer. He shared with me that my older sister had also worn these shoes, and she ended up becoming the first female wrestler in the state of Missouri to make it to a boys wrestling state tournament. Since these shoes had so much history in our family, he decided to call them “The Lucky Ones.” As my dad talked about these shoes, my mind changed. The shoes had so much meaning to them, and I wanted to be a part of that. This wasn’t just a pair of shoes: this was history in the making.

I never knew that all the things my dad taught me would be so important in my life. He always told me that no matter what, if I kept working toward my goals that I would reach them. “It might not be this month or even this year, but you can succeed if you really want to,” he exclaimed. I knew one day I would be in a situation where I would be close enough to succeed in my goals, but all I would need is a push in that direction. Hearing my dad’s voice in my head was all that I would need.

The whistle blew and my mind jolted back to reality. The match was finally over, and without a doubt I had won. As I limped over to the coach in my corner, I realized there was an unwanted hole where I could now see my toes. I pulled off my shoes and knew that my foot being black and blue from my ankle to my toes most likely meant I had broken it. I told him I was hurt and in a lot of pain, and he calmly looked me straight in the eyes and said, “You made it to the finals at a National Tournament. This is what you’ve always dreamed of.” Then he quietly

walked away, and left me there to soak it in. At that moment, I knew I couldn't give up.

Everything I'd ever worked for was right in front of me. The two-a-day workouts five days a week lead me to this moment. The last eleven years of wrestling wasn't for nothing. We decided it was time to do something with my foot. My dad sat me down and we taped it up for support, and now it was all up to me and my lucky ones.

The match started, and not one soul could tell I was injured. I had to believe in myself and my shoes. They made me fast and light on my feet, and I couldn't even tell that there was a hole in them. Time flew by, and the two minute periods seemed to only last a few seconds. I was up three to nothing and it was already the last period. All I had to do was keep my lead, and I would win my very first National Title. I could hear my dad's voice in my head, "You can do this. How bad do you really want to win?" As I was listening, I could feel the soft mat beneath my toes, and it sent cold chills up my spine. I really wanted this. Finally, the sound of the clock rang, and I knew I had won.

I got up from the mat, and shook the other girl's hand. As I sprinted toward my coach I yelled to him, "We did it! They really are lucky." I got to my corner, and jumped as high as I could, and wrapped my arms around his neck. As a tear dropped onto my shoulder, I could tell that he was proud of me. After all, he wasn't just my coach; he was my dad.