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Threads of Sunshine

Growing up and becoming an adult is not always as fun as I thought it would be. It's stressful when situations don't go as expected, but sometimes all it takes is for me to step into my closet to find my light.

As a kid, every summer vacation consisted of traveling from California to Chihuahua to visit my grandparents. Our vacations were like two-month long family reunions. All of my aunts, uncles and cousins would travel back to our little hometown, and it seemed as though the entire town was related. Celebrations like weddings and birthdays were saved for summers. There was always something going on, and one of the most anticipated events was the county fair in a nearby city. There are two villages between my family's hometown and the city connected by a long, winding, narrow, single-lane road.

One year we waited to go to the fair until its last days to avoid the busy time. My mom rode in the passenger seat, and my uncle drove our station wagon. I was in the backseat between my grandma and cousin, while my little brother and other cousin rode in the trunk. I remember being so excited that I couldn't sit still. I leaned forward between the two front seats to reach the radio and change the station. My mom scolded me and told me to sit back. I sat down and tried to enjoy the clear view of the road. I could see we were leaving the first village

outside of town. We went over a couple speed bumps and sped up. Knowing we were close to halfway made me even more anxious.

Boom! Everything went black.

I woke up laying on the stick shift with my face under the radio. I didn't understand what happened, but the car had stopped. There was dust all around. The silence was interrupted by people's voices. I looked around and noticed my grandma and cousin passed out, and I began to cry. I tried to open the car door but couldn't. My right arm felt like it didn't have any strength.

Needless to say, we didn't make it to the fair. We had been hit by a semi-truck. We were all hurt except for my little brother and cousin. My mom and grandma were the ones hurt the worst and had to stay in the hospital. I had a broken arm and was released from the hospital a few days after observation. My dad had returned home to work, so my aunt picked me up. I didn't want to leave my mom but was lonely in a different ward.

Once we left the hospital my aunt decided to stop by the fair since we were in the city. The day was cloudy and looked as gloomy as I felt. The happy place I was excited about going to seemed to have a dark shadow cast over it. None of the rides were on, and vendors were packing up their merchandise. The only one left open was a t-shirt stand. My aunt walked me over and let me choose a shirt. I decided on a bright white cotton tee with a cute, strawberry-shortcake transfer and they personalized it with teal letters arched over the design which spelled out my name. Then we headed home.

I still have that shirt. Although now it's yellowed from age, it's the one good memory I have from that terrible incident. That shirt brought light to that dark memory. Even though we missed the fair the day we crashed, I still made it there, even if it was just to see it shut down. I realized there was still going to be another fair next year that I could enjoy with all of my family because everyone, gratefully, made a full recovery.

As old and worn out as the shirt is, it still carries a happy reminder to look at the brighter side of situations. Regardless of what accidents may derail my life, I'm grateful that my family survived, and I continue to have them to get me back on track. That is also why I love the quote "There is a light at the end of the tunnel." There have been many situations where I've had to force myself to push forward. Sometimes I struggle to get up and get through the day, but I step into my closet and see my strawberry-shortcake shirt hanging there and regain strength. I've even been desperate enough to squeeze into it at times and it always does the job: it brings sunshine back into my life.