Grandpa Essay, Research Paper

I knew him as PaPa–not Grandad, Pops, or Grandpa, but Papa. As a little boy, he was the giant at the top of Jack’s beanstalk, Poppa Bear of the three bears, and the Genie in Aladdin’s magic lamp. He was my hero, my friend, and teacher of life. Once when I was little, he saved me from drowning in the ocean. I’ll never forget the feeling I had when he grabbed me by the back of the bathing suit, and pulled me out of the water like a dead cat. Now that he’s gone, I wish I could think about him more than I do.

He stood about 6 feet tall; grayish brown thinning hair the color of sun bleached bark encircled the top of his head like the crown of Caesar. On the top of his tanned head, a small bald spot began to peek through his thinning hair as he got older. His receding hairline gave way to slightly neatened eyebrows the same color of his hair. His eyes were the color of worn, dark brown leather, polished for a soft look. Perched on his German nose were wire gold-rimmed glasses. The thin gold frames reflected the sunlight whenever he turned his head, creating a glow around his head very much like a halo. He had yellow teeth that resulted from excess candy, cigars, and too many cavities. Surrounding them were thin German lips always set in a smile to make his dimples stand out even more than they already did. They weren’t just dimples, but dimples that could engulf grapefruits. A small chin and ears gave him a completed look: round and happy, not revealing much of what was inside.

He had the body of a football player: wide shoulders, broad chest, and slightly plump build for a old man. Strong thighs connected his torso to the rest of his body, the pieces fitting together like a jigsaw puzzle. At the end of his mile-long body, were two big feet easily proportioned with the rest of his body. Altogether, he was a giant of a man. His tall dark features never gave way to the pain that was set inside.

He was a man besieged by internal conflict. On the inside he was unsettled, not disturbed, but unsettled. Many things troubled him: his family, work, and other things he never told me about. Sometimes he would seem fine and other times he just seemed to float near the deep end. He had a strange way of doing things. When he showed me love, it was the highlight of a weekend, always calling and asking if I could come out and play that was the greatest. He wasn’t always nice, though. He had a very bad temper. He’d never hit me. He loved me too much, but he’d yell. Whenever things didn’t go his way, he’d yell. Sometimes he’d get mad for petty reason, yell, and not call me for days. When he would call, he would be sarcastic and distant, almost mean. That’s just the way he was.

He had more good qualities than bad. Whenever we would do something together, we always laughed. More times were spent together laughing than anything else. He had the greatest laugh. It was a hearty chuckle, and if you got him going really good, no sound would come out, only air. I’ll always remember the laugh, the way his dimples danced and stretched across his face. It was great to see him laugh. His eyes usually filled with tears of laughter and poured down his face in a wave of endless hysteria.

Papa was always the practical joker. Constant tricks were always being played on my brother and me. His mind was always working towards evil tricks that he thought were hysterical, usually “trap-the-victim-then-tickle-to-death” was his favorite game. I was always the victim: he could never really catch my brother. I’d scream and scream, laughing between gasps of air, but those dimples would dance, and he’d continue to tickle. It was practically a ritual; no visit with Papa was complete without a round of tickle torture.

He was always doing crazy things: dancing on bars, embarrassing people in public, and speaking in his bold way. I guess, though, I’ll always remember his dimples. They will always remind me of the days when we’d watch football together and “tickle the victim” would begin. Whenever I can’t remember what he looks like, I picture the dimples, and the face fills itself in.