

Dear Mom and Dad,

Time sure flies doesn't it? It's been practically a decade since I have returned to the states. All I had to do was to get on the plane and take off, but I'm sure for you it wasn't so easy. I wanted to start this letter with a note of gratitude; I am thankful that you sacrificed to give me an opportunity that you never had back home. I wonder how much you miss your homeland. I lived there as an infant and from those few years I got to experience our side of the family in China along with impressive feats of construction. Though I did not get to see something like the Great Wall (that was every kid's dream), I still got to see wonderful monuments, incredible roads on the side of the mountain, and magnificent statues that are all a testament to Chinese culture as well as the people of China. What was it like leaving all of that behind? Was it worth it in the end? I sure hope so because America does not have that history that goes that far back. Of course, this does not mean you forgot your homeland once you touched American soil but was it worth leaving behind what you knew?

I know that getting onto American soil wasn't the end of the struggles either as there are struggles of learning a new language and a whole host of other problems. Fitting into American society would indeed prove to be a struggle, thanks in large part due to stereotypes. Being the parents you are, you obviously hid those struggles from me which I am thankful for. Even though I do not know of the struggles, I know that you hid those details to spare the mind of a young child the cruel realities of the world. However, this doesn't mean that you can disregard my struggles in America.

Life is a massive game of chess. Everyone has their own individual boards, assets that they control. Some are born with more resources than others and some also spend their lives taking resources from others as well. Within this analogy, I maybe got like two rooks (my predisposition for mathematics and science) and maybe a few pawns (time, perseverance, and motivation). It's not a lot to work with but as a Chinese kid in America, what more can you ask for. That's all fine and dandy, but you tell me to make something out of my minimal resources all the time. Well, I can't learn from examples because you guys haven't been learning for a long while. It is a bit difficult to focus on my schooling when you guys

are running around like headless chickens chasing money or whatever you do in your free time. Overly demanding in academics while you yourself have nothing to show for either. Heck, I learned how to challenge myself from my sister. She was the one who took the first steps and taught me that learning can be used to help others. Where did this take me? Multivariable Calculus at the age of sixteen, two AP classes in eighth grade, in GW's Early College Program, and the list goes on. SOMEHOW, YOU still AREN'T satisfied.

That aside, the pieces I have been given are very linear; rooks and pawns move in a straight line. However, you want me to turn my rook into a queen to fit your idea of success? I have to laugh when I recall the time you scolded me for getting a 4 and 5 "out of 100" on my AP exams in eighth grade. Afterwards, you refused to apologize after learning about the AP grading scale from my sister because you wouldn't listen to my explanation since I'm "just a child". You lash out at things out of ignorance and refuse to acknowledge your fault. I compare this to a "queen" because you expect me to have the best ability in the entire game when I am given no resources to improve upon my current capabilities (I haven't lived long enough to get my pawn across the board either so there is that too).

All in all, who said school was easy? I would honestly pay out of my own pocket in the future to see you back in school. Not to spite you of course but to give you a different perspective. It is crazy to think that as the world acquires more and more information, the amount of information taught within school has to be condensed to allow for this same level of progression. My point is a lot has probably changed since you were in school, but you yourself refuse to put in the hard work to learn something else. You don't wanna do your own taxes or do the minimal work needed to learn how to do something correctly. Obviously, that is why I had to learn work ethic from my sister.

Speaking of my sister, when did she become my mom? Why is she doing all the paperwork even as a middle schooler? She even translates and gets screamed at by relatives to do the documentation stuff for her when she never even asked for it. Is this the result of being capable? If it is, I wouldn't want to be capable. The issue in this household is that if someone is capable, they eventually take on more and more duties within the house, but their treatment also gets worse over time. Through this process, my sister's

childhood was taken from her to make up for your incompetence. It might have not been completely your fault, but I kinda don't want to do good in school if I see how worry-free some people in this house lives. Play videogames all day every day, don't have to do homework, can be as loud as they want, have everything handed to them, eat what they want to eat, and the list continues. I wish I could live in bliss like that, but I know that if I do I will amount to nothing.

Ahh, life, the wonderful mystery. Everyone only gets one; you can't trade it like money. Yet at the same time, it is a currency. We spend our lives doing certain things that we want, but you have wanted to spend my life on the things you want. Told me to become a lawyer and a doctor on multiple occasions. To be honest, what drove me from considering those fields is the thought of working with people like you. You have to understand things don't work the way you want them to just because you expressed a dislike of the system; a lesson you have yet to learn. The system will not bow down to two angry Chinese seniors just because you guys made a tantrum about something at an insurance or doctor's office.

Oh the irony, now I'm the one lecturing you. Well, since I have the spotlight let me dabble a bit into what I actually want to do with my life. Remember Calculus, the class you called "calculator" and scolded me for getting a C in an "easy class"? That is the first step into becoming an engineer. Fitting right into the stereotypes, I know but the least I can do is give back after how much you wanted to take. Instead of hoarding pieces for myself, I want to use my board as a support for others. As an engineer, specifically a biomedical engineer, I can give back by working on a second chance for others. My main topic of interest will be to find a cure for cancer or work with genes. These areas are where I deem there to be much work to be done and interesting at the same time. Even if my efforts don't bear fruit, that's OK as long as I helped lay the groundwork in producing those breakthroughs.

Regarding things not related to my career, I might want to learn Chinese. Even though it may not come across that way, I do want to be able to speak fluently to lessen the language barrier between us. You might not have been the best parents in the world, but the sacrifices you've taken for me and the family is enough to show that you care. Sure, it might've come out the wrong way, but at the end of the day you still are my parents. I don't want to be controlled by you, but at the same time I do care about

you. I want to use my life as a support for others. While that may not have been what you had in mind for me, I will make it work. In this world of uncertainty, you can count on my ability to survive. I will make my own path and find my place in the world.

Your son,

Jackson Guo

12/18/2022

SWWHS