

LOVE, DAD

by

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INT. ATTIC - DAY

Casey huffs as she trips over something in the attic.

CASEY

Why? Why at the back?

She rights herself and pushes on until she finds a larger file box in the back corner. On the top is written the current date.

CASEY (CONT.D)

Thanks. Great birthday present,
mom.

Still, she pulls open the top of the box.

She immediately slaps a hand over her mouth in surprise. Inside is a treasure trove of items. On top is a CD.

She digs through the rest of the box, finding baseball cards, an old and worn hat, a jersey with the name Price on it, and an old necklace with the initials NP.

She packs everything back into the box and starts to carry it out of the attic.

INT. CASEY'S ROOM - DAY

Casey's room is comfy and nice, with a large desk and a laptop sitting on it. The rest of the box is sitting on her bed.

She pops the CD into the disc drive of her computer. She opens the video player and an image of her father pops up.

She takes a sharp breath and presses play.

INT. VIDEO LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The room is severely outdated and old fashioned, as is NEIL (late 20s) who is dressed in an outdated fashion.

He sits in front of the camera, nervously staring into it. Then, he smiles and it lights up the whole screen. Neil is warm and welcoming.

NEIL

Hey kid, I hope this isn't as weird
for you as it is for me. I hope you
recognize who I am, I hope your mom
has shown you photos and told you
stories about me.

Neil chokes up for a moment.

NEIL (CONT.D)

I'm sorry that I never got to know you, or even meet you. But I want you to know that you are loved beyond anything you could ever imagine.

There's a beat of silence as he stares through the camera. But then he shakes his head.

NEIL (CONT.D)

It's crazy that I'll never get to know who you are, if you take after me or your mom, what your favourite colour will be, if you like sports, music, art... What sort of person you'll become.

(beat)

But enough of my pondering about you. Let me introduce myself. Hello, my name is Neil Price and--

He switches to a Darth Vader impression.

NEIL (CONT.D)

I'm your father.

He chuckles and drops the act.

NEIL (CONT.D)

I wonder if you've even seen Star Wars.

A pause, we hear Casey's disembodied laugh.

CASEY (V.O)

I have. I hate the prequels.

Neil smiles as if he heard her.

NEIL

Or even what some of your favourite movies are.

He pauses.

CASEY (V.O)

I really love Sci-fi. Aliens, robots, exploring the universe.

NEIL

Good choices. I guess... I don't know how old you'll be when you find this. Your mom promised not to give it to you until you're 18, so hopefully you're not too much younger than that.

Stops for a moment in thought, smiling to himself.

NEIL (CONT.D)

Eighteen. Wow. A young adult.
You'll be driving, going to prom.
Significant others. Hopefully, you
pick the right ones. If you're
anything like me you'll be fine,
but if you take after your mom...
She did choose me after all.

He grins at the camera, but slowly his smile fades.

NEIL (CONT.D)

I'm sorry I wasn't there to see you
grow up. It sucks knowing you had a
full life without me. But life
throws you curve balls sometimes
and you just have to roll with the
punches.

There's a noise off-screen that we can't see, but Neil seems
to track movement, left to right, for a moment before
turning back to the camera.

NEIL (CONT.D)

I'm assuming your mother raised you
right, she's a great woman and I'm
sure she raised you be anything you
wanted. I hope you didn't give her
too much trouble.

He tracks movement again, this time right to left.

NEIL (CONT.D)

That was her there, stumbling out
of bed to get water in the middle
of the night. She'd always kick me
in her sleep and blame it on you.

He laughs.

NEIL (CONT.D)

I thought this would feel weird,
sitting a room away from your
mother as she sleeps and talking to
you. But it feels nice. Natural. As
if I can actually hear you
responding.

He grins, leaning forward.

NEIL (CONT.D)

And in my mind, even find me funny
enough to laugh at.

He leans back into the couch.

NEIL (CONT.D)

I imagine you in a million different ways. It makes me wonder what college you got into or even if you went to college. I wouldn't judge you either way.

He pauses.

NEIL (CONT.D)

If you've got any brains, they're probably from your mom. She's amazing. I've never met a better or smarter person. But I've also never met you. You could be studying anything, Engineering, Computer Science, Political Science, Medicine, Literature.

He stops himself and focuses.

NEIL (CONT.D)

But I'm rambling. I just hope you know that I believe in you and your dreams for the future.

He gives a thumbs up to the camera.

NEIL (CONT.D)

Anyway, I wanted to make this for you. I wanted you to know what your father looked and sounded like and have some kind of weird digital connection with your father. Technology is crazy.

He waves an old outdated phone in front of the camera.

NEIL (CONT.D)

I can't imagine what it'll be like for you. I hope you can even open this ancient disc. To see your old man. I hope I've made you proud.

He starts to break down, breathing heavily and wiping at his eyes.

NEIL (CONT.D)

It's hitting me now how much I'll never know about you and how much that hurts.

A beat.

NEIL (CONT.D)

I know, deep in my soul that you'll do great things. That you're going to leave your spark on this world.

(MORE)

NEIL (CONT.D) (cont'd)
No matter what path in life you
take.

He stares down the camera intently.

NEIL (CONT.D)
Promise me, out loud. Go on, I'll
wait.

CASEY (V.O)
(crying)
I promise.

NEIL
Good. Thank you. Promise me that
whatever you choose to do just be
happy.

CASEY (V.O)
I will.

NEIL
Don't worry about the money, within
reason. Don't worry about what
other people think of you. And
don't worry about making me proud.
I already am. Focus on what makes
you happy.

He relaxes a bit.

NEIL (CONT.D)
And if you ever feel sad and need
your dad, just pop in this CD. I'll
always be here for you to casually
have a conversation and smile with.
Like right now, how are you doing?
How was your day?

Neil stares at the screen for a few seconds in silence,
nodding along to nothing. Casey doesn't respond, we can just
hear her crying.

NEIL
Well, that seems like a lot, but
just know, I love you and know that
your life will be everything you've
ever wanted it to be.

He gives a final wave and peace sign to the camera and the
video ends, freezing Neil in place.

INT. CASEY'S ROOM - DAY

Casey sobs, refusing to look away from the screen. After
several seconds of frozen silence, the video begins again.