

Christi Jones

Instructor's Name

ENGL 1013

Date

A Memorable Experience

During my early teens, I had a particular experience that taught me that, contrary to my childhood beliefs, I was not the center of the universe, or more specifically and vastly more important, that I was not the center of my father's world. This realization was a source of shock to me and caused me to rethink my entire concept of reality.

When I was thirteen years old, one of my favorite pastimes, as well as a favorite pastime of my brother, was skating or just socializing at the local skating rink. Every Friday night my daddy would loyally perform his fatherly duty and drop us off at the skating rink at approximately seven o'clock and return at precisely eleven to transport us safely back home.

My brother Bobby, who is a year and six months older than I and a grade higher in school, would immediately dump his awkward seventh-grade sister at the skate rental booth, preferring to spend his evening with his sophisticated eighth-grade friends. My very existence was questionable to him, unless, of course, I committed the unthinkable faux pas of speaking to him in public while he was in the superior presence of his suave adolescent friends. This horrendous act would most assuredly be followed by "the look" that spoke in volumes of torture and revenge. It did not take this little red-headed girl long to figure out that communicating with my older brother was not quite worth the trouble it caused me, and thus I avoided any such public acknowledgments.

Bobby and I developed, by mutual consent, an on-going plan to meet outside the rink a

few minutes before eleven. Timing was of great importance to us because although standing together for too long outside waiting for our dad was an embarrassment, it did not even compare to the juvenile humiliation that we experienced on the rare occasion that my father felt that we were taking too long and he decided to come inside the rink and get us.

One Friday night, to my surprise and chagrin, I suffered a humiliation of another kind because of my accidental breaching of our sacred agreement. This particular Friday night I was having difficulty undoing the double knots that my friend Wendy had worked so diligently tying for me. By the time I got my skates off and arrived panting and out of breath at our designated shadowy rendezvous, my brother was nowhere in sight. This did not particularly concern me, however, until the lights began to go out and the parking lot became an empty stretch of terror in my fevered imaginings. However, even in the wildest of these imaginings I never once considered the ludicrous idea that my father and brother had left without me.

I must have sat there on that cold, hard log with my back against the building, hugging myself, for thirty minutes before my father tore into the parking lot and screeched to a halt. Tears streaming down my face, I ran to him and said, "Daddy, where's Bobby?" When I was finally under semi-control of myself, good old Dad had to admit that Bobby was sitting safely at home with my mother and that I had been the only one forgotten.

I'll never forget the night that Dad forgot to pick me up at the skating rink. I knew then that I was not the center of my father's world.