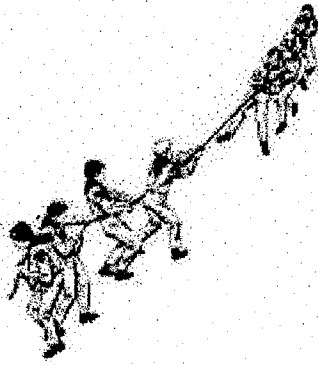


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The Game OF My Life



I never liked the game of Tug-of-War. It always seemed foolish to me when the teams were basically pulling each other down to gain more power. I didn't like it before, and I definitely don't like it now. Unfortunately, Tug-of-War has become the game of my life, and no longer something I can avoid at parties. I know it sounds odd, but it seems that everyone around me is in a big game of Tug-of-War, and I am the rope, right in the middle.

It all started a few weeks ago. It was free period at school, and I was sitting with my two best friends, Erica Smith and Amy Winters. Erica has dark brown hair, and the kind of friendliness and exoticness to her face that I know I can count on. She has been my friend for as long as I can remember, mainly because we took ballet together when we were little, and have continued being friends since. The funny thing is, we don't have anything in common, like her still being interested in ballet, and my lost interest. But I think that's what brings us together, because we always find each other

exciting. Amy is a whole different story. She is blonde and beautiful, and is the person I can count on for fun and support. We had just become friends in 5th grade, but our two years together have brought us unbelievably close. We are interested in a lot of the same things, but the biggest thing is volleyball. Amy and I have been on the All-Star Volleyball team for four years, and I think that's why we become such good friends. We both have each other's trust, and as my mom always says, trust is the foundation of any relationship.

So as we sat down at a table, Erica started talking about this semester-long project in Mr. Hansen's 7th grade Pre-Algebra class, and how we were allowed to pick our partners.

"Wait, how many people per project?" Amy asked.

"That's the problem," Erica said. "Two per project."

That was the beginning of a big game of Tug-of War. See, as best friends, we promised never to leave one of us out. But, now we would have to.

"So we have to separate?" I asked. I know it was a stupid question, but I had to say something.

Amy, Erica, and I all looked down at the table, and there was silence until the end-of-the-day bell rang.

When I got home, yet another game of Tug-of-War was being played.

“DON’T LIE TO ME!” my mom was yelling.

My dad gave her a nudge, and they both turned to face me.

“Hi honey,” my dad said.

My parents were in the middle of a separation, and were arguing a lot. See, my mom is the kind of person that everyone knows either because of her beauty or because of her creativity, care and kindness that goes into her store in New York City called Foxx’s. My dad’s the kind of guy that few people know, but the people that do love him. He is the average dad, working at a bank and going on business a lot. I think that they’re just going through a rough spot right now, cause they’re perfect for each other. But for now, I am trying to stay neutral in the whole thing, or I guess you could say, I’m in the knot of the rope. So I try to avoid the whole scene, and just say hi as I hurry to my room.

“Hi, I have a lot of homework, so I’m going to my room.”

Unfortunately, although I’m escaping one game of Tug-of-War, I am just entering another. Right in the hallway are my twin brother and sister, yelling, hitting, and screaming unintelligible words. They’re seven, and are

