

BROTHER

I sit in a dark room with a large movie screen in front of me. I have in my hand a remote that has the power to let me see and relive the past, I pause. Finally I can see and become clear in my mind of the evolution of events that transpired in our lives that lead my beloved Brother to an unfulfilled, sadly tragic life and early death. I take a deep breath and begin to scroll.

I sequence the frames of my life like I am fast forwarding a movie not really knowing the scene I am looking for. I stop, I see my little Brother, he is sitting on the steps in front of our house longingly looking at the neighbor boy playing catch with his father. They see him and invite him over to play with them, but my Brother declines. He stands up. I see a spark of sadness in his eyes immediately replaced by an emotion I do not recognize or understand. He picks up a rock and throws it across the street for no reason then takes off running. He was 9.

I fast forward, I stop. I see my Brother getting ready. He seems upset. My mother walks into his room, he tells her he doesn't want to go to the shop with my dad, she looks unsure of what to do. Dad walks in and asks what is the hold up. My mother informs him that my Brother doesn't want to go. He gets angry and accuses my mother of babying him and of my Brother being a huevon. He forces my Brother to get up and go with him. My Brother goes with him, hiding the tears in his eyes. He was 10

Fast forward again. I see my Brother not happy. He is packing his bag to go on a hunting trip with my dad. I sure wished I could go to work with my dad and go on hunting trips with him and his friends. My dad is hardly home. I missed him. My Brother is lucky to be able to spend so much time with him. Funny, my Brother did not ever look happy. He was 11.

Fast forward, my heart starts to beat fast. This memory has haunted me my whole life. We moved into the heart of the barrio Lomas. I was happy and excited we moved there, all our friends lived there. My sister and I decided it was time to introduce our little Brother to the older homeboys, he needed to be protected. We were good friends with all of them, they would take care of our Brother. He gets jumped into the PeeWees. He is from Lomas now. He is 12.

Fast forward. Wow! My Brother had all the fun. He looks nervous, this time he is packing to go on a trip to Tijuana with my dad and his friends. He is 13.

I stop. I don't want to see anymore. I start to cry. I know how it all turns out. He never really had a chance. After that trip my Brother changed. He was now drinking and drugging out in the open. His naturally sweet demeanor towards girls changed. By the time he was 17 he had two children from two different girls, never having any long term relationship. The girls didn't care.

He was handsome and charming with his hazel green eyes, dark brown hair and light skin. He had a different girl every night. The sad thing was, he was never really happy. He always seemed lost, alone and sad.

I am sitting there alone with the remote in my hand, it feels like a burning iron, I drop it. My heart is filled with sadness. I start crying as I sit there in the dark movie room. I hear someone walking but it is dark, I can't make out who it is, his walk looks familiar. My heart jumps to my throat and starts beating fast and hard, it's him, it's my Brother. He walks over to sit next to me. I take a deep breath and turn to him, he immediately puts his arms around me and hugs me tightly. "Sister, don't cry", he says to me. I can't stop, I continue to cry. "Brother, how are you here?" I ask. "I came to talk to you. You need to understand my life, Sister. I know you hold guilt in your heart, you feel like you contributed to the way my life played out." He is looking at me with his beautiful eyes, the eyes that I loved and missed so much. "Yes, Brother, you are right, I do, if we had never introduced you to..." my Brother interrupts me. "Stop, Sister. That doesn't matter. If it had not been that day with you, it would have been the next day with someone else or the day after. I would have joined without you regardless." "I am sorry Brother, so sorry. I think of that day often and it breaks my heart every time." "I know you do, Sister. Please stop. You were both just children yourselves, you thought you were protecting me. It was not your responsibility to keep me safe, please, let it go now." My eyes fill with unshed tears, I blink and they fall. "Okay Brother I will try. Did you hate him? Did you hate our father?" My Brother gives me a slight smile. "Before I answer that, let me explain to you my perspective. When I was little I wanted Dad's attention, he had no time for me. When he decided to start taking me to the shop, I hated it. It was a 16 hour day and after they finished work they would just party. I was just 10. I had to wait around and watch dad drink, smoke weed, do drugs and have women go in and out of the shop. I hated it. I felt like I was cheating on mom. I endured it and even got used to it. Later on he started taking me on his hunting trips. That's when he started pushing me to drink with him and his friends. They all thought it was funny when I would pass out or get sick and start throwing up. He believed it was his responsibility to make me a man. He wanted me to be bien cabron y chingon, like he was. No son of his was going to be a Pinche maricon. He thought carrying a gun, drinking and whoring were what men did as long as they protected and provided for their family, it was their right. That's why you never knew the life he led, the life he made me live." My Brother gets a far off look. "You know, that when I was 13 he took me to Mexico with his friends and they laughed while a prostitute made a man out of me." He gives a sarcastic laugh. "I am so sorry Brother, you were just a boy, a child. And I was so envious that you got to spend so much time with him. I'm so sorry." There was a short pause. "After that Sister, I no longer waited for him to do all the things he taught me. I didn't need him anymore, I started doing them on my own with my friends." I look away, not wanting to see his face that once again is filled with sadness. "He got what he wanted, I became just like him, a cabron chingon, actually worse. Whatever Dad did I did bigger and I went further." "Yes, you did, Brother. All those years you spend in prison, you never really had a chance to live a normal happy life. When you left us that was what I mourned, most. All the things you didn't do. All the things you would never experience. It broke my heart. Tell me Brother, would you do things differently if you could, do it all again?" He turns and gives me a true smile, one that reaches his eyes. "No Sister, I would not do one thing differently." My eyes widen, I can't believe he is saying that he

would not do things differently, why? With a raised voice I ask, "WHY? Why Brother, I can't believe you are saying that." He turned and took both my hands in his. With a sincere look on his face he looked at me right in my eyes and said to me; "Sister, I did many awful things in my life. You know what I am talking about, I shared some of those appalling deeds with you. They were too horrific and heavy for the mortal me to carry. I thought I would be condemned to hell. As I was laying there dying, leaving my body, my soul felt the sorrow and pain for all the dreadful deeds that I had fulfilled. I saw the truth and burden of them in the final seconds of my last breath, then, all of a sudden, the heaviness turned to light and then illumination. At that moment I knew. I knew that God and the Infinite Universe were perfect. Everything fell into place. Everything was exactly as it should have been. Sister, even though it is hard to comprehend, I know that you will understand what I am about to tell you. Please do not feel sorrow and sadness for my lost life, that life is the life that I was meant to live. I agreed on it eons ago for all our sakes, for, we are all one with the divine. Every action each of us takes affects everyone around us. Because I lived the life I lived, my son is who he is, because I lived the life I lived, my daughters are who they are and because I lived the life I lived, you Sister, are who you are. We all have our roles to play in this life towards our spiritual evolution. Sometimes our role seems tragic, but it is not. So the answer is NO, I would not take back one single thing, and no I do not hate our father, for he gave me a gift, that I in return gave to you. The divine is perfection Sister, even if you can not see it right now. I came to you at this time to ease the pain and guilt you feel, it no longer benefits you in this life. Let go Sister, be free, be happy. Write with all your heart and teach those that seek your help. Fulfill your destiny as I fulfilled mine." With that he put his right hand on my cheek and kissed my other cheek with a heartfelt kiss that felt tingly like a kiss of an Angel and he disappeared. I felt bereft and alone.

I cried until sleep claimed me. The next morning I woke up sitting on the lazy boy chair. I felt confused but somehow more lighthearted. I sat up and looked around, I felt like I had forgotten something. Then it all came flooding back to me. Everything I saw on the TV and everything my brother said to me. Was it a dream? It didn't seem like a dream but it must have been. I get up and my foot hits the remote that must have fallen out of my hand last night. I bend down to pick it up and I see something right under the chair, I pick it up and it is a picture of my Brother. One of the few pictures where he looks genuinely happy, I had not seen this picture in years, where did it come from. I picked it up and put it on my Heart, I sat back down and closed my eyes. "Thank you Brother. I love you dearly with all my heart. Thank you for helping me become who I was meant to be." I pause a minute, I take out a pen and paper and begin to write.

The End