

A Tale of Resilience and Generosity in the Time of COVID-19

Iris sat on her bed, twiddling her thumbs. Lying down with nothing to do, she sighed and began to think about what Coronavirus had been like for her. She looked across the hallway to her twin brother, listening to music and playing along to it on his guitar. *Adjusting to quarantine had been so easy for him*, she thought with envy. But then she realized, it was only easier for him being in quarantine because it was hard for him to be at school. She pushed her nutmeg hair out of her hazel eyes. In fact, she knew a lot of kids that are having a lot worse time in quarantine than herself. Her lab partner, Nathan, had two parents who were doctors and had to spend the majority of his time alone and watching after himself. Sami had a single mom and she was struggling to keep up with her job as a store clerk due to COVID-19. *But what could I, a young student, do to help?*

She thought of kids she didn't know, like kids her age from different backgrounds, in not okay households, or that couldn't afford good medical treatment if they did get the virus. The thoughts in her mind raced, but slowed as she looked around her room. She was lucky, she realized. Lucky to be able to keep up with schoolwork and be in a happy home. To be able to hear her brother play music. To be able to, when the quarantine ends, hang out with her friends, and call them if she gets lonely. To be able to sleep at night in a warm bed and not be affected by fears of COVID-19.

If I had a condition, she thought, *like Cystic Fibrosis, I wouldn't have been able to hang out with my friends when I did. If I was in a less nice neighborhood or had a less happy household, I could've been really depressed and might not be able to cope with quarantine.* She

turned her head to the window in her room. Across the street from her, she saw the empty park, with swings drifting back and forth in the slight wind. She remembered the days she'd played on them with her friends. *I was lucky to get that.* The girl turned her gaze to the bus stop that she stood by each morning for school. Memories came of the paper airplanes thrown around the school bus in elementary and middle school. *I was lucky to get that.* She pulled her eyes to her home. *I was lucky to grow up in a nice place like this.*

She ran down the stairs as her mom called her and the twin's names down for dinner. Her dad was playing with her eight-year-old sister. She looked at the food on her plate. *Mom and Dad made Mac and Cheese; I'm lucky to get to eat this.* She thanked her parents, but Iris didn't eat much. "I'm not hungry," were the words she said.

She grabbed a journal and wrote down what she had thought about before dinner. She wrote so much her hand hurt from a cramp later. She gathered her loose cents from her blue purse that she got on March 13th, her birthday, that year. She counted three hundred sixty-six thoughts from that day, from her opinions on having an eight-year-old little sister to what she was thinking before dinner. Her fingers went into the purse to pull out two-dollar coins, six quarters, a dime, and a penny. A penny for your thoughts, they always said. The coins jingled in her hands and she slipped them into a paper bag. A paper bag with big black writing on it. 'A penny for my thoughts'. She heard the coins collide with the others at the bottom of the bag.

Once I have saved a bag full of coins, she always thought, I'll buy some new headphones for my computer because my old ones were ripped, and the wires were showing. She'd thought of

something else to do with that money. She went over to her computer and typed the words she wanted in the search bar. Iris went through the bag and counted sixty dollars and seventy-three cents. After reading the address on the screen, she slipped them in multiple envelopes and got them ready to be mailed. She walked out the door and put them in the mailbox.

The next day, she watched as the mailman picked up the envelopes and drove away. *I wonder if that will make someone's day a bit brighter*; she thought with delight. She still had the tab open. A website depicting how to donate to those in need due to COVID-19.