

Kayak Tip-Over

Cold waves lap at my back. The wind roars. The capsized kayak bobs crazily like a runner's short ponytail. My arms and legs tingle with the thought of an underwater creature dragging me down into the watery depths.

"This is just like T.V.," I think as I anticipate a shark jumping out from the water and eating us. I shiver involuntarily.

"Help!" I cry, small-voiced.

Earlier, that day had started out like any old vacation. The weather was warm, and there was a pleasant breeze licking at the waves in the lagoon. My mom's book club invited my brother, sister, mom, and me, along with two other families, to a beach house. The house was on a tranquil lagoon with rippling water. No one else was in the water that day. The house had kayaks, body boards, and a paddle boat! Perfect for us kids! All was going well until the two boys got bored.

The boys were evidently going to go crazy if they didn't do something soon. They had been lying in the sun for too long, and they were swiftly accumulating girly tans. Suddenly, Josh had a marvelous idea! Why didn't they let one floaty go drifting downstream and then go chasing it in the paddle boat?! The idea was perfect. There was only one catch: the pleasant breeze that had been blowing gently was now a gushing whirlwind of energy, and the floaty was rapidly growing smaller and smaller, with the boys close in tow.

"Tino! Joshua!" Madison, Ana, and I screamed and yelled, but it was to no avail.

"JOSHUA BURCH! COME BACK HERE!" Madison hollered. Our mothers came up behind us.

"Looks like they're going to need a rescue team," Madison's mom said. We looked at her for a second, and then jumped into action. Ana manned the one-person kayak while Madison and I took the two-seater. We pushed off, soldiers on a mission!

Ana reached Tino and Josh before Madison and I did. The situation was worse than we had thought. Tino and Josh were flailing about in the water. In trying to reach the floaty, they had fallen out of the paddle boat. Ana had tied the kayak and paddle boat together, hoping to give it a tow because the current was too strong to paddle the boat back. The boys were still in the water, unable to get in the boat. Ana, realizing her plan wasn't working, untied the kayak. Finally, Josh managed to get in the paddle boat, leaving Tino to fend for himself.

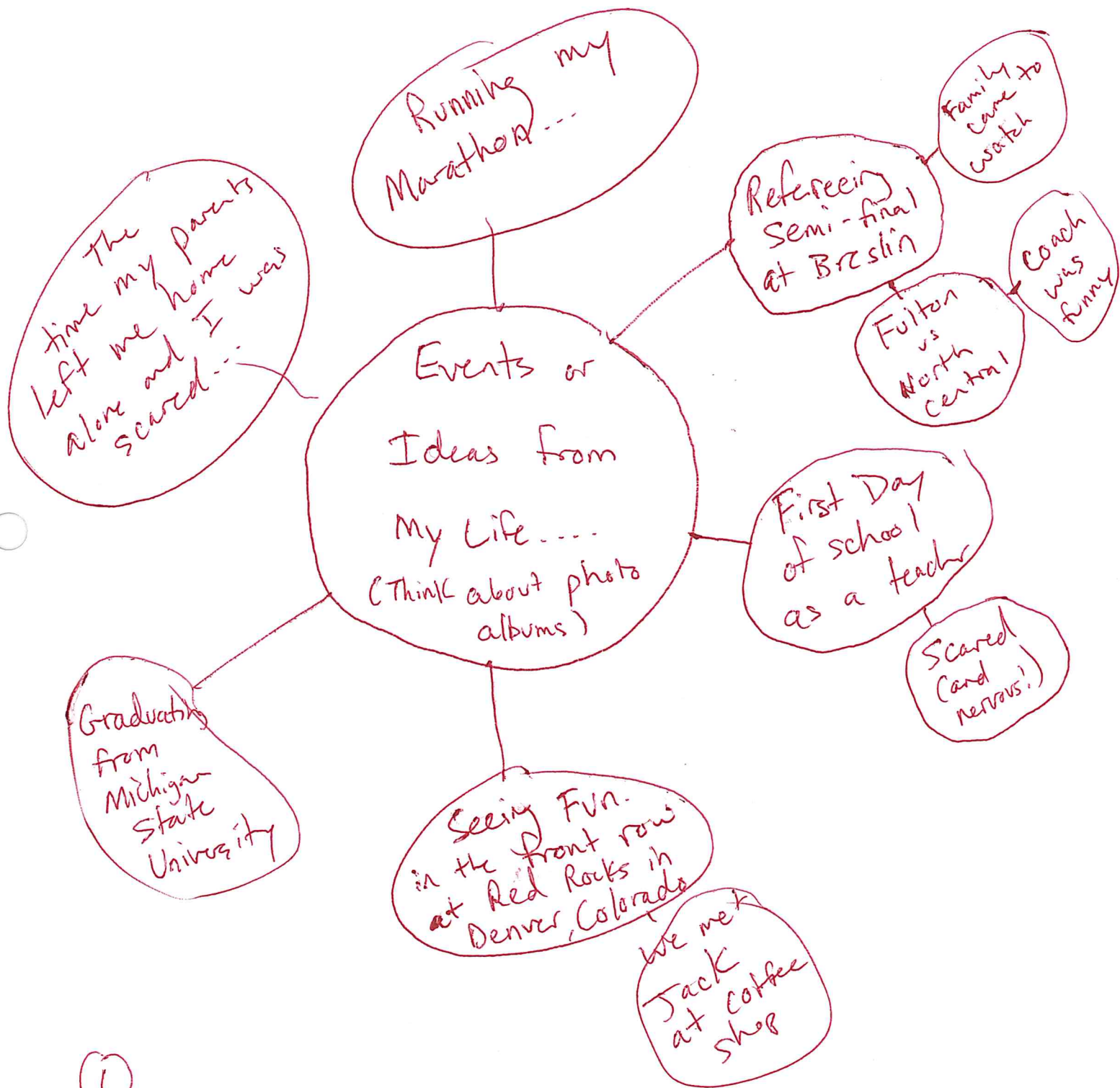
Meanwhile, Madison and I struggled with our kayak. We had moved away from the others and into the middle of the lagoon. Seeing Tino swimming towards us, we made room for him on board. He reached us and heaved himself on. I threw my weight on the opposite end so we wouldn't capsize. Madison and Tino sat with their legs dangling, resting. I knew they shouldn't do that, but before I could warn them, we tipped over, and we all went spilling into the lagoon!

The cold water hit me like a wall. I surfaced, sputtering water. I prayed to God, thanking Him that we had life jackets. My first concern was that we had to right the kayak. Unfortunately, this was easier said than done. After our fifth try, the kayak reluctantly flipped over with a loud squelching sound. I felt as if we should get a gold medal for that! All I wanted to do was get out of there, but the lagoon wasn't finished with us. Our paddles had floated away! Luckily, Ana, the hero of the day, brought the paddles to us. Thank you, Ana!

During that time, Ophie, Josh and Madison's mom, arrived to help. She joined Josh on the paddle boat, relieved Tino from us, and took him to shore. Madison and I managed to arrive at the shore safely without any more tip-overs. Hip, hip, hooray! I watched Ana battle her way home and thought it would have gone much differently if she hadn't been there. I looked back at my friends, then at the water, and I knew this wouldn't keep us out of the water. No way!

The whole experience helped me learn that you have to be calm in scary situations even if you aren't calm at heart. Things look much worse when you're scared, so sometimes you just need to pause, take a deep breath, and I promise things will look much brighter! My advice to kids like me would be to listen to your parents when they insist upon wearing life jackets. Those jackets really do live up to their name. They can save lives. They helped save mine!

Mr. Parks Personal Narrative Brainstorm



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