

I Had to Do It

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My childhood was the best time of my life because I spent unforgettable moments with my family. The most beautiful of all is that I have wonderful grandparents, and that even though one of them is no longer with me, I know he takes care of me from heaven.

When I was 15 years old, I decided to come to the United States, because of the problems in my country and because I wished to have a better life. On the way, I suffered a lot. I never imagined it would be so hard. I walked a lot, almost didn't eat, and suffered cold. I slept in the mountains, drank water from a puddle, which disgusted me, but if I wanted to quench my thirst, I had to do it. The only thing that gave me strength was the thought that soon I'd be with my mother. It had been 12 years of not seeing her and not being able to give her a hug.

But once I crossed, I had to turn myself in to the border patrol. Thank God, there they took care of me, gave me food. Later, in a shelter, I made many friends. That's where they gave me the news that they were going to send me to where my mother was. Excitedly, I simply thanked God.

When I first arrived here, I felt lonely because I missed my grandparents, and I wasn't accustomed to living in another country. Sometimes I would feel sad because I couldn't communicate with other people. They would talk to me, but I couldn't understand them.

When I first arrived, everything was calm. A month after my arrival, my stepfather, my mother's husband, began to act differently, in a way that I

did not like. When I began school, he started to tell me that his children with my mom were better than me because they were American and could speak English. He also told my mom that I did not love her, that I was a bad daughter, and that she should just send me to a shelter. There were times when he threatened me.

This made me very sad. My classmates would ask me what was wrong because they would see me cry, and sometimes I wouldn't eat a thing. I felt an immense sadness in my chest knowing I had suffered so much just to get to this country, only to have to endure the shouts and insults from my stepfather and fights with my mother. I endured all of this with a lot of pain.

Within a year, I received the hardest news of my life. My grandfather, the person whom I'd lived with my entire childhood, had passed away. For me, he was not simply my grandfather, he was a father.

I felt my soul fade bit by bit.



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