

A New Beginning

South Cove. What do people think about when they hear these two letter words? It is a place where they go to when they have a dentist appointment, or an eye appointment, but that is beside the point. A majority of the people go there to get their teeth washed and cavities filled in, all that jazz. The dentists there does a great job cleaning everyone's teeth, well, most of the times anyways. I had one or two bad experiences when I was there, but the dentist was probably just trying to do her job, so I could not blame her. As a little kid, when my parents took me to the dentist, I felt the same feeling I did when I was taken to the doctor—the same tensed up body and knotted stomach feeling. As I grew up, I thought, “why do I even need to go to the dentist? I can take care of myself.” Reflecting back on that, it was immature of me to have those kind of thoughts because the dentists were only trying to take care of my teeth for me when I probably was not even doing a good job of caring for it myself. And that makes me feel a certain type of way. It makes me feel sad that dentists are underappreciated by children like myself. At the same time, it also makes me feel angry with myself by taking them for granted and not appreciating them a bit more by showing them the respect they deserve.

My mom, Yan Qin Su (most often referred to as Nina), is a dental assistant at South Cove. Some of you probably know her, but others probably do not; however, that does not matter. As long as I know her for the work she has accomplished, nothing else should matter, but this was not the way I used to think. For many years, I took my mother's warnings and tips about what to do with my teeth for granted. I did not care about what she had to say and I always scolded her in Chinese saying, “I will not have cavities! I can take care of my own teeth!” Boy, was I wrong because I did have cavities and it was all due to me not listening to my mother's advice! Despite how I treat her, every time I had to go to South Cove for a dentist appointment, my mother would tell everyone who was there that I was her daughter. At that time, I thought it was completely embarrassing to be shown off by my mother like that, but now I know the true meaning behind her actions. It was not to embarrass me after all, but rather, it her way of expressing how proud she was to have a daughter like me. For the longest time, I found her expression of love to be unnecessary, but now I understand that it is every child's parents' way of showing how much they truly care for us. Every time I enter South Cove now, people would ask my mother if I am her daughter and she would proudly and shamelessly answer, “Yes. She's the eldest of my children.” I get really shy when my mother says it like she has nothing to hide, but inside my heart, I feel extremely happy and glad that she is my mother.

Along the way, my mother worked together with many of her colleagues and those colleagues became her friends for many years. Even today, she is still friends with most of them, but she also stays in contact with those who left South Cove. Our family became really close to some of her colleagues' family, which is a really nice thing because most of her colleagues also have kids, so my siblings became friends with their kids. Our families became really close to theirs to the point that if one of their kids had a birthday party, we would be invited to it and if my siblings had a birthday party, we would invite them, so it's a win-win for all. However, one downfall to this is me. I am seventeen years old, so I am neither a kid nor an adult. The thing

with that is, I am the middle ground and there are no kids my age to bond with. I am not young enough to join the kids' friend groups and I am not old enough to hang around the adults, so I am stuck. Therefore, every time I attend one of my mother's colleagues' parties or events, I am always by myself, thus I stopped going with my mother to those events because I did not want to be alone. Now, I stay at home all the time, investing my time into video games and meeting a lot of online friends. My mother and my siblings are happy when attending the events because my mother gets to hang around her colleagues and my siblings get to play with their friends, so why should I take away their happiness? As long as they are happy and having fun, I will be too. Maybe not with them, but I will still be happy, knowing that they are happy.

Remember when I started by saying South Cove was a place for people to see either the dentist, orthodontist, or optometrist? Well, that definition has been changed. South Cove is a community and it is one of the best communities I have been a part of. South Cove brings people of different generations together in order to develop a sense of familiarity, friendliness, but most importantly, to create a family. It brought my mother closer to her colleagues, my siblings closer to their friends, and me? It brought me closer to my community. In the end, a single place brought us all together, gave us all new beginnings in order to create a new story. And probably one of the best stories.