
Onions: College Admission Essay Sample

I watched my mother raise the hand that held the knife to wipe the tears falling down her cheek. "It's just the onions," she said, and then she continued chopping. Though I was only at the tender age of seven, I already knew better.

I am a hybrid of the Japanese and Filipino; however, for the most part I would call myself pinay. I was born and raised by my Filipina mother in the Philippines, the Third World country I call home. At seven years old, it came as a shock to me that I had to move to Japan. That undiscovered half of myself was finally going to be "unraveled." Needless to say, calling it "unraveling" -- much like how a child tenderly untangles the ribbon of a present, gently picking at the taped edges of the wrapper to finally reveal an innocent porcelain doll -- was a bit of an understatement. My change of address was a ticking time bomb of culture shock wrapped deviously in origami paper.

Somewhat predictably, it exploded in my face upon my arrival. To put it simply, I didn't fit in. I struggled through a year in a local Japanese school with merely three words of *nihongo* to communicate with -- although I did learn one more word from my classmates: *gaijin*. One day, my mom decided to cook *sinigang* soup on a cold night during my very first white winter. As she chopped a piece of onion to put in the pot of boiling water, the aroma of the mixed herbs and tomatoes filled the room; I remembered the times my mother used to cook the same dish during typhoon season back in Manila. I was awakened from my flashback by my mother's sniffing. Tears were running down her cheeks. Was she crying?

"It's just the onions," she said.

I hadn't realized that it wasn't just me who was struggling to find an identity in the midst of an unfamiliar city. Homesickness is contagious. I took my mother's trembling, overworked hand and clasped it in mine. We stood there in the kitchen, sharing the tears that reminded us that we were hurting, but also that we weren't hurting alone. It was then I understood that the unspoken bond between mother and daughter is unbreakable. The next morning, I woke up thinking that I don't need to craft a new identity to adapt to where I was. I was my mother's daughter, and I could be whoever I wanted to be. Home is simply where the heart is.

My mother has always been good at putting up a front; her family has given her the name, "the warrior." She has lived a life full of obstacles and hardships, but through it all she has triumphed and become the admirable woman she is today. She started working when she was eight years old; in the household of a drunkard father and an unaffectionate mother, she took on a paternal

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)

role to provide for her other siblings. The calluses and protruding veins on her hands now are just the remnants of her daily childhood life. Instead of learning the alphabet or playing with dolls, she used to clean her neighbor's apartment for 50 pesos. When she took breaks from scrubbing the furniture or sweeping the floor, my mother used to enter the kitchen -- not to sneak bites of whatever was in the fridge when no one was home, but rather to look through the shelf of recipe books. There she would take herself through an imaginary culinary journey, flipping the pages and imagining the food she saw in the pictures being swallowed and digested inside her body.

To this day, that image of her wishful thinking reminds me of how fortunate I am to enjoy the luxury of having those meals presented to me every day, especially when they are made by mother's own hands. The values that my mother has taught me -- not by mere words, but rather by her constant living example -- have shaped the person I am today and the person I will be tomorrow. I learned from her that success should never be bestowed on a silver platter. Rather, success comes from hard work. It's never just luck. It's never just a large inheritance from wealthy parents.

It's never just the onions.

Need help with the assignment?

Our professionals are ready to assist with any writing!

[GET HELP](#)