



Photo illustration by
Sydney Jackson & Brody Carlson

dear, LITTLE ME

DESIGN BY
DANIE EAVES

Hey, kiddo!

It's been 13 years now. We finally made it to 18. I wanted to write this because when we were young, we always would tell Dad about how we wanted to be a boy, cut our hair and go by the name Alex. Well, guess what? We stopped thinking about how Mom would feel, and we have never been this happy about being ourselves. We didn't deserve to be shut down every time we wanted to wear more masculine clothes. We didn't deserve that.

We also like girls — apparently, everyone knew, including Mom. When we told Dad, he straight up said, "Oh, I've known for a while." So that's cool, I guess.

Our relationship with Dad has gotten better. I know you're still scared to talk to him about things, but he started working on controlling his anger. He actually listens instead of yelling. Is he still disappointed in us? Yes, but he has always just wanted the best for us, and same with Mom. He may not have been there mentally, but he is there now. With Mom, it was hard; our relationship was really rocky, but we eventually got to an OK spot. Still, you will start to think everyone secretly hates you and is out to get you. You will also hate talking about your past because of how often you have been hurt by the people you thought you could trust.

We also lost the one thing we could do to escape everything: soccer. We are no longer allowed to play our favorite sport. We got injured so many times: a knee contusion, a broken ankle and torn ligament, and finally tearing our ACL, MCL and meniscus — twice. We didn't even get to play our very last game.

One good thing is that Big Time Rush is still together, and we got to touch James Maslow's hand and get a photo with him. We also talked to Carlos Penavega. (By the way, you now think Logan is your favorite instead of Kendall.) But, we lost Daisy, our sweet boxer. She died because of a heart tumor, and it was really hard for us because no one told us until the next

night right before bed. You were angry because you felt like you should've been told right away. Duke, our sweet boy, left us in July 2022 due to heart failure. This time we got to be there, but the call from our mom asking if we wanted to be there when we put him down was the hardest thing. He passed away in your arms at 2 in the morning with his head on your legs. We took a different route home because we didn't want our parents to see us cry.

We got surgery on March 10, 2022, for our knee, but on March 17, our first love broke up with us while on bed rest. You were together for three years; it hurt so much. Looking back on it, that relationship was super toxic, but we never felt more alone than in that moment. It got so bad that we started to think that suicide was the best option. We never did, of course, because we realized that we had too many people who needed us. Looking back, it was best that we left that relationship. It was slowly killing us.

Finally, we have a best friend. Her name is Jordyn, and we are so happy that we have her in our life. Even though you question how many brain cells you both have combined, you wouldn't trade her for anything. She is supportive, caring and always there for us. We have lost a lot of friends, but we finally found some who care about us. They are so patient, and they listen no matter what. They saved our life, and they continue to do so every day.

I'm not sure how proud you will be of where we are at in our life right now, but I hope you don't give up. Life isn't supposed to be easy. It's hard and it's tired, but it's worth not giving up. It will get better. and it will get better. It's not worth it, it always gets better, life isn't supposed to be so easy. Even when we're hanging on by a thread, know that it'll be worth it in the end.

Love you, kid,
Alex Young