**Prompt #1**

***Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.***

My privilege was something I had to reflect on when my mother’s, and our family’s, lives changed.

My mom is a very loving person. Ever since my siblings and I started going to school, she would always cook for us and bring us the food during lunch to make sure we got a healthy and warm meal. Not only that, she would always help us with our school work and communicate with teachers to help us improve. As a result, I became self-centered thinking she would do anything for me, and became furious if things didn't go my way. Everything I wanted should be completed regardless of whether my parents were tired or didn’t have the time. I thought that everyone had to treat me this way since my parents did so.

Everything changed before I could even realize it. My mom stopped cooking and bringing us food to school. She also stopped helping us with our school work. I was lost in disbelief; I didn’t think that my mother who loves cooking and accompanying me to school would stop doing these routines. Instead, she would always “travel” to China and say it’s “work” or family visit. Ever since, I started to rebel and throw temper tantrums just to possibly attract my parents’ attention, especially mom’s. The house would look like “kapal pecah”, shipwreck all the time. The mess, and the cold, unhappy aura of a house, they began chipping away at my family.

It was two years later when I found out the truth about why she stopped doing her routines that time: she had been diagnosed with cervical cancer and is still continuing her treatment.

“We decided to keep this from you so it wouldn’t worry too much,” my father said. “Now that you are more mature, it’s the right time to tell you.”

I felt immense guilt after hearing this news. During those hard times not only did I not help out, but I made it a living hell for them. I started to see things from a clearer lens on how this situation had massively affected my family. My father was stressed, my mom was unlively, the house was a mess, and the aura was depressing to say the least. I couldn’t take it anymore. I needed to replenish our family’s vigor.

I decided to at least help out the household and try to take on mom's role in the house: cooking, doing chores, and taking care of my siblings. At first, I was clueless. I messed up a lot. I would make burnt fried eggs, collect dust on one corner, and teach my siblings without patience. Although I was tired and stressed out during these times, I felt a sense of accomplishment when the house gradually seemed brighter as I improved doing house chores.

In the year 2018, my mom has recovered and the environment of the family has never been happier. My parents had mixed feelings though. They’re proud that I became more mature, but felt sorry that I had to mature at a young age where most people at that age were carefree. Looking back, I realized that I’ve grown up a lot. Due to mom’s absence, I took on all the responsibilities and pressure since I thought, as the eldest son, I must do anything to help the family. This allowed me to turn from a privileged and carefree child to a more responsible, independent, caring and overall more matured person. Most importantly, my growth as a person changed the atmosphere in the house, which set a better environment for my siblings and I to grow up in (instead of being childish, they also started to mature). I believe that my growth will be a constant advantage in my life; my independent character and responsibility could help me go through a lot of hardships. No matter what I face, I will find a way to overcome it by myself and at the same time be responsible to my family. After this event, I  learnt to be more empathetic towards a person since we don’t know what the person is going through or have gone through. Even though I have matured from before, I believe I still have room for improvement and I look forward to improving further in the future.