Applying Entry-Level Software Engineer position at Microsoft

Self-Introduction (Tell a story about myself and to show them how appreciate I am for getting this opportunity):

I am not a regular college graduate as I have a very unusual background. I was born in rural Southern China in 90s when China strictly enforced One-Child policy. I was abandoned by my birth parents so they would have a chance to have a boy. My adopted father who was a single man saw me on the street and brought me home. He never held a steady job to support me and himself, so I was bounced around between his sisters' houses. My "cousin" mistreated me because I was sharing very few things that they had. I often would go hungry and got no thick coats and shoes in the winters.

When I was 17 years old, I decided to come to the United States to get away from my hard life. I did not speak any English at that time so the only place I could work was at Chinese restaurants. I used to work 13 hours every day for making a very little amount of money to support my adopted father and myself. I met some very nice customers who showed me that I could have a better life, so I decided to enroll a college when I was 21. I was struggling in ESL classes and had hard time to understand what my professors said in the classes but here I am, I am graduating this May within four years with GPA 3.7. I am willing to do whatever it takes me to become a successful person. I hope you can give me a chance to show you that I could be a very good employee.

Why do you want to work for us?

Microsoft is one of the greatest technology companies in the whole world. I believe it is every programmer's dream to become a part of your company. I believe there are many intelligent software engineers in Microsoft, and I think it will be a life-long effect in my career if I can get surrounded by the world's top programmers and engineers especially for my first job. I believe working in Microsoft can open many doors for my future and this could change my life forever.

What is your strength?

I have a very good sense of humor, so people are very enjoy working with me. I am taking my job seriously, but I could bring joys into work at the same time. I can get along with different types of people well. After working at restaurants so many years, it's a gift from being a waitress, we just know how to deal with people.

What is your weakness?

Although I have no problem communicating most of the time, however, as the fact of being a non-native English speaker, sometimes I can't understand when people are using some uncommonly used words. But I never afraid of asking questions, and I will ask you to say it in another way if I am not able to understand you. I will keep asking you no matter how many times rather than pretending I got it and making mistakes. And I also work as a part-time math tutor in a middle school just to practice my English communication skills.

Why do you think you are a good fit for this role?

I think I could be a good fit for this role not only because of my programming skills but very importantly, I am a very good student – I am a quick starter, I learn fast and I am able to self-study at materials. After I have done many projects outside of the school, I learn how to research my own and read the documentation of tools or programming languages that I need to learn. I am a very savvy person and I can get used to new things in a just couple of months.

Is anything you think you are unqualified with this position?

Yes. As a new college graduate, I am not able to describe myself as a professional programmer because of my lacking experience, So I want to find a job that can challenge me to my full potential in programming as well as mentoring me to become a professional programmer. And I will work very hard to become one. I am willing to spend extra time, stay up very late or even on weekends on learning things that I need to learn.

Tell us about one time you worked on a team.

Once when I went to an AI workshop. Our team had to design and build a project in 3 hours then present our robots in a museum the next day. But unfortunately, we realized our program had a bug and the whole thing crashed just half-hour before we had to present it. We quickly simplify our project and just having users interact with our robots instead of letting robots automatically doing a bunch of complex tasks since kids are the real majority of the public in that event. Our project turned out to be one of the most popular ones in the event. Kids were having a lot of fun with our robots. We were very proud.

Tell us one of your work that you most proud of.

my professor reached out to me last year for the internship opportunity on the backend development for his research team website. And it was no easy task for me at that time, especially I did not have any experience neither web development nor the tools they were using. I spend more than 50 hours a week while the contract was 20 hours. I did it, I managed to successfully implement all the majority backend for his website and eventually deployed it in one semester while I was a full-time student. I am very proud of myself for being approved by my professor and I made him not regret choosing me.

What do you see yourself in five years?

In five years, I want to able to be a project management and able to lead a team.