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### The Dungeness Spit

Although we didn't intend on abandoning our mother without shoes on the cold sand of the strip of a sandbar, our adventure escalated as such. On an average sunny day on the Dungeness Spit along the Strait of Juan de Fuca in Washington's Puget Sound, the wind was blowing and the birds were chirping and just asking to be fed. Around 3:00 pm, my two sisters, my parents, my brother, and I began this adventure. It was a five-mile hike one-way on the narrow sandy spit with our intention of getting a tour of the lighthouse at the far end.

With the afternoon sun beating on us, we slowly strolled down the beach, relishing the views of the wildlife, the seaweed, and the prolific driftwood on the dunes; exploring what we could on the twenty-foot wide spit of sand and rocks. The beginning of our hike was exciting because many tourists had made small forts out of the driftwood (one even had a roof!), but as we made it farther down the spit, these monuments decreased as we realized we were going into no man's land where the average day hiker didn't venture.

Being a French horn player, I discovered I could design a rough horn out of the bull kelp that had washed onto the shore. The kelp is naturally hollow on the inside, and I could even make several pitches come out of it! As we continued along the spit, the brisk breeze blowing on our left side convinced some of us to move at a faster pace. While my siblings sped up the most, my Dad never changed his pace, and I continued at a slower pace with my Mother to keep her company. The sand blew on our legs until we all ended up taking our shoes off to walk in the salty water, being careful because it was mostly rocks outside of the surf. This was much more

pleasant and since I had tied my shoes onto my Mom's backpack along with hers, I volunteered to carry it for her, hoping we would be able to speed up.

However, after an hour of slow walking, my sisters were hardly in sight and I wanted to be sure and make it to the lighthouse, so I gave my farewell and decided to catch them. On my way, I passed up my Dad who had conveniently found a sturdy walking stick from the pile of driftwood and looked determined to reach the lighthouse. All four of us then decided to quicken the pace because we noticed that it was almost 5 pm and did not believe that either of our parents would ever make it.

Closer to 5:45, we finally reached the lighthouse and saw a sign that summed up what we were all feeling, and it couldn't have been more true. The sign had two directions on it; one read "serenity here," pointing towards the lighthouse, and the other read, "reality this way" and pointed back towards the path. With dismay, we realized that we needed to walk back another 5 miles. Because we had come all that way for our lighthouse tour, we eagerly approached the lighthouse. However, to our disappointment, all the doors were locked and another sign indicated the tour hours were from 10:00 am to 5:30 pm. We had hiked all this way to be 15 minutes late! At the height of our despair, a man approached us and told us we still deserved a tour even though we were late and sent for his son to show us around. From the top of the lighthouse, we saw something that caught us all by surprise. Another man was walking towards the lighthouse; this man was our Dad!

After seeing the bay in the distance lapping against the long curved path of sand and driftwood, all four of us raced down the five flights of loud metal stairs to congratulate him for making it all the way. As we were talking, our tour guide spotted us and realized that he'd give another tour for my Dad. The lighthouse keepers suggested that we should leave soon because

the spit normally gets covered with water as the tide comes ashore. Of course, this worried us and we all left quickly.

As we left, we spotted a huge cruise ship in the distance of the bay, gently going across the multi-colored sunset. We realized how far from land we actually were on this spit and decided to hurry on this narrowing sandbar. The rapidly dropping temperature and stronger winds, now on our right side, helped urge us on at a brisk pace. We knew this was going to be a long trip back as our path was narrowing to less than 15 feet. We stopped to put our shoes back on because the water and air were too cold and this would enable us to better navigate the rocky pebbles, and my Dad inquired why I had an extra pair of shoes hanging off my backpack. That was when we all realized that all our now missing mother had was a windbreaker and her camera and she didn't have shoes, food, a towel, money, or car keys. With that in mind, we continued our journey back in below 50 degree weather, strong wind, and most of us without jackets; but we did all have our shoes. As the day pushed to night, the seagulls began to land for their night's rest on the spit, further narrowing our path, even as we were still on the move.

Once we reached the abandoned beach near our starting point, we began our search for our Mom. After we found her, we wished we hadn't as she was not happy. We finished our last 1/8 mile back to our car through the woods near the beach. This was a remarkable adventure that I and everyone in my family will never forget, even if some might want to.