

# The Suitcase

Freedom...Home is a place where I can truly feel free. From a wealth of library books to a virtual science lab in the test kitchen, a home is where I can enjoy my mom's delicious cooking, my sister's loving arms, and my father's wisdom. Basically, I can just be me with the people I love, but what if I have to give up everything to move with a single suitcase?

That's exactly what my father did...As I attempt to empathize with his migration from China to America, I cannot imagine my four walls slowly vanishing away, but I'll try...My suitcase is the only object clutched in my hands. In the blink of an eye, my friends and relatives are gone, and I carry the weight of my unknown worries with me. All of my lifelong treasured nostalgic memories are in a suitcase, and I wholeheartedly regret leaving my precious stuffed panda, Yao Ming's basketball, and priceless photos of my family adorned in my bedroom behind. With a firmer grip, I clutch my suitcase and take my ultimate step on a plane toward Florida, hoping to reach my P.h.D. in American soil. Leaving my room for good feels like a death sentence, but I don't need to imagine leaving ever because my father has already immigrated so that I can live in the best place on earth called America!

After nearly twenty three hours on flight, the plane tires skid peacefully, and my excitement rises by the second, full of hope, of a prosperous new world. Four days later, I nestle in my dorm and taste the best thing on earth called In-&-Out Burger. I watch the WKMG-TV channel, but suddenly, I almost drop a fry because of the devastating news:

".... Hurricane Floyd is rapidly heading towards Florida, and many evacuations have been made. The local UCF is using their gym for safety. Make your way there immediately!"

After surviving through the hurricane, language barriers, and countless hardships, my dad's suitcase is a constant reminder of how far he has come. Basically, he has been juggling his marriage, his engineering career, and his two kids with all his might for many decades, but thanks to my father's effort of leaving the comfort of his room in China and squeezing his entire life in a suitcase, we are living the American dream. That same suitcase is now a symbol of how anyone can thrive in America like him.

Because America has truly been a land of opportunity for my father, I want to inspire all the immigrants and refugees so that they too can live in a home where they can reach their American dreams like him. As my father has proven, the immigrants' suitcases can slowly turn into furnitures, cars, and homes someday. Although it will be challenging at first, I hope my father's story will inspire many immigrants, because America is truly the land of the free!