

## Wolverine and Me

Wolverine, to most of you the word may bring to mind our rival college football team, the Michigan Wolverines. However, the wolverine I'm talking about is bad attitude, personified with the claws and super healing ability to back him up. For those of you who are in disbelief, please, let me continue. Yes, the wolverine of which I speak is the feral mutant of Marvel Comics' X-Men. He is one of the biggest things getting me through my parents divorce.

Divorce has become a regular occurrence in our country, a statistic instead of the tragedy it really is. Each divorce, I've been told, is the death of a family. I cannot think of a better way to put it. Divorce, like any death, is not easy. No matter how careful the parents are, divorce is not the way things are meant to be. In a divorce, the children are almost always forced to take a certain parents side, causing them to lose the other parent in some way. In my situation, I ended up losing my father.

He legally left my mother about a year ago. Shortly after, a friend of the family was in the process of leaving her husband and moved in with my dad, making it clear to many why the divorce ended up happening. She and dad were both on friendly terms with my mom for a while. Over time, however, dad grew bitter and my mom could do nothing right in his eyes. He made this painfully clear to us kids, especially my younger brother and I. I didn't agree with my dad, and because he realized this, he sometimes tested our relationship by getting very angry and taking it out on me. I tried my best to forgive and forget, to keep a respectful attitude toward him, but with each incident my respect for him was more and more a choice to be made instead of a natural feeling. My dad pushed me away, and even though I still see him now, there is a definite wall between us. Fathers, I cannot tell you how many times during this divorce I have just longed for my daddy's strong arms to embrace me, only to find he was occupied with his new love. Seldom do I, or my sisters get to sit next to or cuddle with him because the woman living with him never leaves his side. I did not realize how very much I needed my father until I lost him.

I discovered the X-men and Wolverine in particular at the theaters. His tough, never give up, feral qualities made him my favorite, but what I really liked was the tender heart he hid underneath. He was a loner, protector and fighter just like me. He fought with unmerciful rage but only in defense of those he loves and watches over. Through the X-Men he finds a family, one that loves him and silently watches over and protects him. Wolverine somehow replaced that sense of protection that I lost. I wanted to be like him, using his personality for strength. When my strength was gone I would curl up in his arms, hearing his rough but gentle voice saying, "It's all right darlin' everything's going to be alright." When my dad is angry with me I can feel his shielding presence, his warmth.

Kids in divorce situations may seem better off without one or the other parent, but this is only true if a parent is abusive. **Dads, don't ever think your little or big girl doesn't love or need you.** Mothers are an important part of a girl's life, but nothing can compare with a fathers' protective embrace. Every daughter needs her father more desperately that she or he realizes. Fathers, please don't make the mistake of thinking your daughter doesn't need you. In many ways, she needs you more than anyone else ever will.