

1. She felt the ridges of the map she was carving and wondered if the storms below still whispered secrets to those who dared listen. Emma Jones, a world-renowned scientist turned cartographer, stared at the rain pounding the earth, tracing the edge of her badge. The words “You Can Do This!” etched into its surface brought a fleeting warmth—a gift from her young son, a beacon of hope amidst the relentless doubt cast by her family.

Her parents had never hidden their disappointment, their words like needles: a lawyer’s prestige, they argued, was the only path worthy of their family name. Yet here she was, shaping the contours of a map, a testament to the storms she charted and the freedom she craved.

The sharp ring of her phone shattered the quiet.

“Emma, enough with this cartography nonsense,” her mother’s clipped tone pierced through. “I heard about the interviews—real opportunities for a respectable career. When will you wake up and stop embarrassing us?”

Her thumb hovered, then hit “end call.” Silence reclaimed the room, but her mother’s voice lingered.

Her chisel struck the stubborn wood with renewed force, shaping the last curve of the map. Finished, she set it aside, her gaze distant. The weight of her choices pressed against her. The map before her symbolised a world she loved—but could it sustain the family she cherished? Or would abandoning it cost her soul the very storms she sought to escape?

2. In the soft glow of the alien sunset, the crowd gasped at the intricate sculpture, unaware it was created by the one thing they feared most. Sunlight glinted off its sharp edges, drawing a growing crowd who marveled at the alien design. Fiona, weaving through the sea of legs, finally reached the front, her heart racing as she gazed up at the statue.

Her eyes landed on a small engraving near the base: “Human Bait Number One.” Her breath caught in her throat. It wasn’t just art—it was a trap.

Panic surged through her, and she turned to push through the crowd, desperately searching for her parents. The weight of the revelation settled over her like a storm. She knew the danger, but what could she do with this knowledge? Should she shout, warn everyone? Or was it already too late?

She finally spotted her father. “Dad!” she gasped, grabbing his arm. “They’re coming. We need to leave, now.”

But as she spoke, the unmistakable sound of approaching ships filled the air. A fleet of UFOs loomed in the distance, descending rapidly toward the crowd.

Her father’s face twisted in fear. Fiona’s mind raced. She had to act fast—should she try to save her family and escape the danger, or warn the others, risking everything for strangers?

Q1. How has your family shaped the way you approach challenges in life? Can you give a specific example?

I fondly remember how my mother, as I struggled to continue playing the violin, urged me on. She described the importance of persisting and how it would shape my future. She explained that in both study and life, we will always face challenges, and deciding to overcome them can lead to better opportunities. Only by giving our best effort can we see true growth. Her lesson reinforced the value of perseverance and the importance of always striving to do my best, while reminding me that it’s okay to step back if I’ve truly tried my best.

Q2. What is one tradition or habit in your family that you cherish the most, and why?

One cherished family tradition is our weekly gratitude ritual. Each of us writes down 10 things we appreciate and then shares them aloud. This simple yet powerful habit fosters a deep sense of gratitude and perspective, strengthening our emotional well-being. It also brings us closer as a family, creating moments of connection and mutual understanding. Hearing what others value, whether big or small, is heartwarming and inspiring. This tradition has become a cornerstone of our family bond, reminding us to focus on the positives and support each other through life’s challenges.

Q3. Who in your family inspires you the most, and what lessons have you learned from them?

The person who inspires me the most is my mum, a senior data engineer manager. She has taught me that leadership is not about authority or power, but about responsibility. A good leader considers the growth of each team member and supports them in their development. She has shown me that when every team member is encouraged to contribute their best, the whole team grows stronger. Her approach to leadership has influenced me greatly and I strive to embody those principles by fostering a sense of collaboration and mutual growth in everything I do.