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THE NEED TO BE INSPIRED

Jessica Curlett

It is like opening my eyes for the first time as I step off the plane and new sights greet me like a warm breeze of air. This is the Golden State. The State people think of when “the land of opportunity” runs through one’s mind; home to both the red wood forests, and Tinsel town. A vivacious circle of constantly flowing possibility and I was now a part of it. I looked around at all the people hurrying through the airport with me; trying to decipher who was here to be famous, make it big, and who was here to get away from a life they were leaving behind. In my case, I was looking to find inspiration. In whatever form that inspiration wanted to present itself to me.

As I made it to baggage claim and waited for the turnstile to start, the reality of my situation struck me. Here I was 3,000 miles away from home, newly turned 18, and given the liberty to travel to Dominican University of California on my own. For some reason however, perhaps all the excitement running through my body, I was not as nervous as one would expect. There was such a calming feeling to this place already, but still no concrete inspiration.

ERRRR! The turnstile buzzer sounded and 15 minutes later I had my two 50 pound pieces of luggage with me; one without working wheels, and the other the size of a body bag. That, added to the two full carry-ons I was allowed to bring on the flight, gave me the feeling of an over-packed mule utilized for long distance travel. I’m sure at the sight of me many people would have offered to help, but I was on a mission and hurried as quickly as I could for the exit doors. I had to make it out front to find the “rainbow bus” that was going to get me to school. However, I didn’t know what the time was presently and I didn’t know where the stop for the bus was located either. I needed to catch the next possible Marin Airporter bus since I was already late to my Freshman Orientation.

As I moved my luggage bags anyway possible to get outside to my stop, a bus hurried past the exit door of SFO, and I began to run after it. I’m sure I looked ridiculous but at that moment I didn’t care. I ran for the platform and joined several other people rushing to get on that bus. When the man got off however, he assured us that although this bus was stopping at the “Marin Airporter” sign, it was not the bus we needed and that one would be along shortly. This was a chance for me to catch my breath. As I waited I thought to myself, maybe how crazy I just looked will be inspiration for a story one day. I peered through my peripherals at all the people standing around and I noticed a girl about my age waiting behind me with her mother. Through my apt deductive reasoning, heightened from years of watching too much Law & Order, I surmised that the luggage bag, laptop case, and comforter, evident on the young girl’s person, were items of a student headed to school.

My heart jumped with joy. If nothing else, this girl and her mother could give me a better idea of where I’m going. I turned around before I could convince myself not to and struck up a conversation.

“Are you guys from around here?”

“No” The two woman answered with a smirk that seemed to suggest that home for them was very far away. Another possible similarity.

“Oh. Ok. I’m not either, I’m just headed to school out here.”

“Which one?” The young girl questioned.

“Dominican University of California. It’s this small...”

“Me too.” The young girl interjected.

Fireworks began shooting off inside me as I realized that, although I could complete this journey on my own, I was very nervous, and so God had sent me someone so that I wouldn’t have to make the trip alone.

“My name’s Jessica”

“Mine’s Kaylee”

“I’m Ms. H. I’m Kaylee’s mother. Did your parents come out here with you?”

“Unfortunately, no. I’m number seven out of a large family of nine children so my parents couldn’t really come out with me and leave everything else behind to get me settled in.

“Oh wow. So you flew out here by yourself?” Kaylee inquired.

“Yeah. But it really was not a big deal. My parents made sure I was all set with everything before I left. They felt bad for not being able to come with, but I told them I’d be fine doing it myself.” I answered with a smile.

“Well call your Mamma and let her know that you’re being looked after out here too. I know how stressed I would be, so please tell her that you have a California mother now, who is going to make sure you get settled in safely.” Ms. H stated warmly. As she finished speaking the Airporter pulled up behind us.

“That’s very sweet of you. I’ll call her and let her know right now.” I replied with a chuckle.

We took seats on the bus next to each other and Kaylee, Ms. H, and I took pictures like true tourists as we all bused through beautiful northern California. It was the first time any of us had been here and so after a while of gazing out of the windows of the Marin Airporter, our jaws began to hurt from all the gaping. I had never seen so colorful a place as San Francisco, with its diverse, transitioning beauty in so close a space. The fog was lifting as we emerged from the city and so the water and buildings could be seen perfectly.

The image that will forever stick with me however, is the sight of the Golden Gate Bridge; with its towering pillars emerging from the surrounding mountains, and its reddish, orange color, beautifully contrasting with the deep blue water underneath. The sheer grandiosity of the bridge alone was astounding; the location was just an added bonus.