

THE UNEXPECTED FRIENDSHIP

Cars of different colors—primarily monochromatic look black and white—buzzed by in a crowded, newly paved street. Children met one another with grins that met from ear to ear. Parents held the hands of these five to seven-year-old offspring as they walked them to their assigned classrooms. Tuesday, September 6, 2000 was the first day of school, but more specific, kindergarten. The sheer thought pulsed through my five-year-old brain likewise, I was entirely nervous. As a result, my hands were shaking, heart was accelerating, mind was racing, and breath was staggered. Yet, all of that uneasiness seemed to dissipate when I met the person who changed my life.

I was the “Fresh-Off-The-Boat,” five-year-old, Brazilian girl who barely spoke any English. My grandma, sixty-one and five feet tall at the time, had dropped me off in a light blue Winnie the Pooh stroller. “Mattie Lou Maxwell School: Starts September 6” read the tall and bright yellow bulletin board. I was modeling a zebra-print mini-backpack which could only hold my lunch and a box of Crayola® crayons. I walked over to room three, a fifteen feet tall building with bland white paint, weather-worn sky-blue railings, and similarly blue wooden door.

I took as deep a breath as my lungs were able to hold, exhaled slowly, and turned the silver spray painted copper knob. Inside, I found at least twenty other kindergarteners either sitting calmly and neatly or crying, begging their mothers not to leave their side. Since it was the first day of school, we were allowed to sit anywhere we pleased, thus I humbly walked over to the back of the classroom and sat down on the green-colored column of the multi-colored rug. Kaitlin, another five-year-old American girl with dirty-blonde hair and misty blue-gray eyes sat down to the right of me in the blue-colored column.

Kaitlin was quite the social butterfly, even at her young age. As a result, I was a bit intimidated, mainly because I am such a reserved person. However, I was able to mutter out some sort of inherent English. Being two toddlers, we were somehow able to understand and communicate with each other; it was quite off. The class bell had rung and Mrs. Maffetory proceeded to ask, “Are you done yet?” Not knowing sarcasm then Kaitlin continued until she was completely finished. The teacher started the day’s lesson which basically consisted of the American alphabet.

I had gotten more and more nauseous as the seconds, then minutes ticked by torpidly. I felt the revolting stomach acid creep up my baby esophagus. I struggled to keep it down, but despite my efforts, the acid got the better of me. I threw up onto the yellow-colored squared aside me. Kaitlin was the first to notice my “deed.” She meekly rose her pale hands, said, “Teacher, she threw up,” and pointed her finger towards me, then towards the mess, all curious eyes turned to face.

Mrs. Maffetory asked the children to scoot away from the vomit, then quickly rushed to her cherry-wood desk. She got out two rubber gloves and a plastic bag. Some of the kindergartners were squinting their eyes as if they were trying to identify something in the distance and plugged their nose. Most had their eyes fixated on Mrs. Maffetory as she cleaned the vomit up the rest were looking away and curled up into what looked like a semi-fetal position. The teacher had finally finished her cleaning, threw away the plastic bag, bag and then sprayed a cinnamon air fragrance around the room. The stink lingered for a few minutes until it finally dispersed.

The class continued, and when recess came around, Kaitlin was again the first (and only one) to talk to me. This event is still important to me today because that is when I first met the person who was yet to become, and still is my best friend. Event after that slightly disgusting encounter, she still talked to me. I admit, I am still embarrassed, but when Kaitlin recalls this story, I can just laugh along.

Figure 2.8 A Draft of Gabrielle’s Watermark Event Essay

taker as to his or her personality type. According to this survey, we all fall under a specific temperament—“a configuration of observable personality traits, such as habits of communication, patterns of action, and sets of characteristic attitudes, values, and talents” (“Overview” 2011). This temperament “also encompasses personal needs, the kinds of contributions that individuals make in the workplace, and the roles they play in society”