

Sincerely, Kabir

Dear Diary,

I had quite an interesting day at school today.

As has been the case for the other two days of school that have happened so far, I started the day in Mrs. Peterson's art class. I know I said this yesterday (and the day before), but Mrs. Peterson acts like she's got a rock glued to the bottom of her shoe. While I've only been here for about three weeks, I've yet to see Mrs. Peterson express a positive emotion or make a comment that isn't backhanded.

Her negativity puts everyone else on edge too, as no one seemed to be happy about being in an art class, if you could believe such a thing.

Anywhoo, I took my usual seat, but something was different today. Not with my seat, no. The horrible navy-blue chair that looked and felt older than my Dadu's house was as unchanging as the seasons in Florida. The seat next to me, however, was a different story.

For the first time all year, there was a person in the seat next to me. He makes snow look dark with how pale he was. He wore a grey shirt, black cargo pants, and had a thick pair of glasses with grey frames to go with his somehow greyer eyes. Most striking was his hair, which was almost blinding to look at with how white it was. He didn't seem to understand how to smile, having an impressively neutral expression, outside of his eyes seeming a bit unfocused.

He was doodling in his sketchbook, drawing what looked like an original character. I didn't look at his sketchbook for too long since it's rude to look at someone's sketchbook without them knowing. I looked away a little too late, however, since he noticed and used his right arm to block my view.

Mrs. Peterson took role with her usual nasty expression, which somehow got even nastier when she got to the kid next to me. "I thought this was supposed to be a higher-level art class. Looks like they'll just let anyone in nowadays." She then moved on with the rest of role. The kid didn't even look up from his sketchbook. His expression didn't even tense up slightly.

We were supposed to start self-portraits, but in the half hour Mrs. Peterson took to "teach" us proportion (she just put on a video that looked like it was made in 2005), the kid next to me had already finished his proportion guides and had started the line art. His speed was both inspiring and a little frightening.

Even in my next class (history), this kid's speed and his low number of cares given intrigued me, to the point where I tuned out the lecture on the Mayflower that we'd all heard since 1<sup>st</sup> grade. No real loss, since I remember most of it. The teacher didn't even notice that I wasn't paying attention to him.

After another hour of lecture, I was freed from the shackles of an uninformative and boring history class and sent to the blissful area known as: Lunch. I waited roughly 15 minutes out of the half hour we get for lunch in the lunch line, took what looked like and A.I. attempt to replicate something edible, and started searching for a table with people who didn't make me want to rip my hair out.

So many of the kids here are either extremely loud and obnoxious, or they make rude remarks about you and spread rumors about you behind your back. Even the friendlier people don't seem to let you in very much, letting you talk to them, but never letting you in. You'd never feel as though they were truly your friend and that you could count on them to try and save you if things got tough.

I found the kid from art class. He had his sketchbook out and was continuing to doodle, oblivious of the chaos of the lunchroom.

"Is this seat taken?" I asked "No, you can sit here if you want." He responded whilst continuing to doodle.

"I don't think anyone else has ever bothered to sit with me..." He brought up. "Really? I don't get it. You seem like a cool person."

"Thanks. It's probably because I look like a freak that does it. I think it fries people's brains that I don't catch fire in direct sunlight." He sighed.

"Hey, don't sweat it. You aren't the only one who people give funny glances to. Why, if I had a nickel for every time someone told me that I speak very good English, I could attend a private school!"

I realized I forgot to introduce myself. "My name is Kabir. I feel like I should remember your name, but it usually takes me a few tries to remember names."

"I'm Alex."

We got to talking, and inevitably landed on the topic of the rock in Mrs. Peterson's shoe.

"She hates children in general, but hates me the most because she's my great aunt. She's also SUPER jealous of my grandmother." He said bitterly. No one in his family likes her either. She apparently just refuses to move on.

While we didn't get to talk for super long, the conversation did brighten up my day considerably, and his too, since he actually smiled.

The rest of the day was uneventful, with someone getting sent to the principal's office for calling the math teacher a slur, but outside of that, business as usual.

"Ding Ding Ding Ding Ding!" The bell rings.

All the students rush out like a mudslide, so, to capitalize on this, I wait for a few minutes before leaving so that the traffic is lessened. It'd take me three minutes to leave anyway, so why bother getting stuck in the collective?

On my way out, I saw Alex out of the corner of my eye, waiting on the turf around the school for his parents to pick him up. I practically ran to him, because I had to ask him something swiftly before boarding the bus.

"Hey Alex, could you tell me your phone number real quick?"

"Sure one sec."

I blinked and the next moment was him handing me a paper with his phone number and full name.

"Call me when you get home, okay?"

I thanked him and then took the bus home, and here I am now, writing to you.

I can't wait for his call.

Maybe ninth grade won't be so bad after all...

Sincerely,

Kabir.