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Makenzie Aragon

Mr. Anders

Period 3rd

December 15th, 2022

On the Pathway, Adjusting to Change

FN is a Sophomore at Lincoln Highschool. She is 16 years old and was born in Kenya. She came to America when she was a young girl and I wanted to know what those experiences have been like moving here from being raised in Kenya. I wanted to get to know more about the obstacles she has been through in her life to get to where she is now.

Me: *What's your name?*

F: My name is F, I'm sixteen and I'm a sophomore at Lincoln Highschool.

Me: *Tell me more about your name, where did it come from?*

F: So, my name where it came from it's actually a really funny story. So, my mom went to all the same hospitals for her pregnancy and it was always the same doctor. And she always really wanted a girl so when she went to the hospital and she was like "Okay this one's going to be a girl" but no one was believing her. The Doctor was telling her "no it's not going to be a girl, and you know when it comes out a boy I'm going to laugh at you."

I go along as she's telling this although I've heard this story before I still find it fascinating

F: When I did come out though she named me F because she had F that I was going to be a girl. And I'm guessing that doctor went home angry.

Me: *Yeah, he was probably mad that he was wrong*

F: Yeah!

Me: *Tell me what was it like in the place you lived in before you came to America, Where was it?*

F: Before I came to America I used to live in Kenya, Africa I don't quite remember everything but I do remember their school system was like a little bit behind. Because compared to over here the stuff I learned when I first came here was stuff I was gonna learn way later. We had to wear uniforms and specific hairstyles, shoes. It was very like Militaristic kind of because the teachers were allowed to hit you if they didn't like what you were doing and I didn't like that part.

Me: *How did that make you feel?*

F: I didn't enjoy it at all, I feel like there are other methods that help get your point across. Especially when you're teaching other than just hitting students. It just felt unfair. And painful.

Me: *I bet*

F: Well you're next

Me: *Oh okay that's not even funny *us getting a little of topic but then transitioning. Okay tell me what was it like transitioning from Kenya to coming into America.*

F: The transition was honestly a little bit difficult we didn't really have a stable home for a while and it was.. I actually didn't know recently that we were like homeless for a few months. And we would be just basically hopping from house to house to our friends house. So that part was really difficult not having a stable household or school. I've been to nine different school over the course of me only being here for around six years I think.

Hearing about this amazed me because this was something that I didn't know and I can't imagine what that must have been like but I know that it's a rough situation to deal with.

Me: *Woah*

F: Yea, Nine different schools it's crazy.

Me: *How old were you when you came here?*

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F: I think I was eight

Me: *Really, you were eight?*

F: Yeah I was eight

Me: *What grade were you in at the time?*

F: I was still in elementary I was actually I remember I had finished third grade. Oh yea, this is a very big part of it I had finished third grade in Kenya but they made me redo it here so now I'm a year older than everyone else in my class. *I remember after we met we were sharing when our birthdays were and F had told me her birthday was the 26th of August and it was very funny because mine is the 25th I also found out were both born in the same year as well but then it confused me why she was a grade below when were the same age. I never really knew the full reason for why other than she told me she had gotten held back.*

Me: *So you had to repeat a grade what was that like?*

F: Yeah but, It wasn't things that I knew Because I was in a new school system so it was basically just me learning new things.

Me: *how would you say life has been different since moving here at such a young age do you feel you've learned anything new?*

F: Yeah, I learned a lot of new stuff. I've learned a lot of political stuff I don't think I would be aware of if I was over there. Kenya is like a really oppressive place in my opinion. If I had grown up there I definitely feel like I would be way less understanding and open minded and I probably would not be as expressive of my identity. I also think that the negative impacts here is that there is a lot of racism especially since when I first moved here It was to the south to Georgia. So kind of experiencing those things as a kid and learning about it so rapidly when back in Kenya it really wasn't something that was talked about.

Me: *Was it not as big of an issue there?*

F: Yeah, because there everybody's black. It is actually a little bit colorist you know because there's skin bleaching going on because we were colonized by Europe and I think some of their ideals stuck with us. So there is colorism there but I hadn't faced it at the time because I was so young. So when I came here it was just something that you know. I actually hadn't known about police brutality until recently unfortunately because I didn't know that was a thing and I wasn't aware of racism until I came here. So I think that was one negative impact but then again that also informed me.

Me: *Would you say it's been more eye opening?*

F: Yes, and definitely more educational

Me: *What are your goals here and what do you hope to achieve in the future?*

F: What I hope to achieve, well right now I'm really undecided about what I want to do so the first thing I really hope to achieve is finding something that is really meant for me and sticks with my beliefs and whatever makes me happy.

I asked this question of what she wants to do because I now know how her and her family has been through so much to get here I wanted to know what she hopes to benefit from being here.

I really want to travel in the future so I hope my job is gonna be travel based or I generate an income that would allow me to travel to a lot of places.

Me: *Where do you want to go?*

F: I want to go back home

After this we start talking about all the places we'd like to go and this just stuck out to me the most we continue to talk more about places we'd like to travel in the near future.

Me: *I'm also curious to know how has moving around a lot impacted you, because you've said you've been to nine different schools?*

F: Yes, it's been really hard to make friends and keep friends because every time I get close to people I have to leave. When I was living in Georgia I had a lot of good friends who I thought I was going to be friends with until high school and then I moved all the way to Washington which is such a drastic change. It was really hard to make friends at first. In

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Middle school when I came to Washington I was in federal way at first so I went to middle school there I was in 7th grade. And I thought I was going to go into Highschool having my friends from middle school because I didn't want to start out alone. But since covid hit I didn't get to see my friends as much anymore. And then in 9th grade I ended up moving to Tacoma.

Me: *Oh so that's when you came here?*

F: Yes and to make matters worse I went to school a month late.

I remember some of our conversations when we were first getting to know each other she told me she came into school a month late but I didn't know about any of the circumstances so this was me finding out that she had only moved here just last year.

Me: *oh I remember when you told me this but I didn't know you had just moved here.*

F: Yea, yea, yea my first semester was really sad because I would sit in the library by myself and eat lunch alone. Part of the reason I know Ms. Hill is because every Wednesday she would come sit with me and we'd just talk and I really, really appreciate her. And then, second semester is when I met musty people from tennis, Makenzie.

Me: woah okay but that was life changing though right?

F: Yea I really do appreciate our friendship lots because we really do complement each other's personalities very well. So my first semester was really boring because at lunch I didn't have anyone to eat with and in most of my classes id never had anyone to talk to. So when I'd go home id just felt so lonely cause id have no one to talk to and I would always express that to my mom. And she didn't really understand so it just felt like I was always alone. So when I joined Tennis in my second semester and started finally making friends my second semester was way less sad and now my sophomore year is going pretty good!

Me: *I'm really glad to hear that was there anything else you wanted to add?*

F: I was gonna say I had a really hard time making friends because I was like oh I'm going to leave anyways but then I eventually warmed up to the idea of making friends.

Me: *Although there has been many ups and downs so far and living here has been a challenge what have you been able to take away as a collective?*

F: That home isn't one single designated place it can be a series of things like people just whatever makes you feel most like you can be considered home. And also to never forget your roots because they are important no matter how long you've been away from them do not forget them because that is who you are and who you'll be.

After this interview I felt really honored that she felt comfortable to talk about her experiences of what it has been like as an immigrant navigating finding her place in her own home, school, and making friends along the way. Although we had only met during this year I've been able to gain so much knowledge of the kind of person she is and after this interview I feel like our bond is stronger than before. Our friendship is like the perfect definition of the right place and right time because during the time I could've really used an extra friend because of personal things I was dealing with at the time and I had no idea that during that time she also needed friends so things just worked out perfectly. And I'm so thankful to have such a great person in my life who is just so sweet and like a sister to me and also just one of the strongest people that I know.

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