

Intelligent

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I realized I was different for the first time in the third grade. As I looked around the room, each kid sat quietly fulfilling their teachers request without restraint. Everyone was close to completion on their assignment while the only problem finished on my paper was where I filled out my name at the top. The clock ticked as the seconds before break were running out and later, the bell rang rewarding my classmates for the work they just finished. My friends walked by me happily as they talked about the excitement of recess all while I was stuck in my metal chair watching the children play as I tapped my pencil with rage.

“Mrs. Mason, may I please go to recess?” I asked.

“Well Macey, have you completed your assignment,?” responded the teacher.

“No not yet but I didn’t really understand the subtraction and the lesson was confusing,” I said.

“Well maybe if you paid attention it would make more sense,” Mrs. Mason scowled.

*Pay attention. The phrase echoed in my mind as I watched my best friend swing back and forth noticing how quickly she forgot about me entirely. Pay attention. Whatever that means Macey, it's what you have to do.*

I am much older now, sixteen to be exact. My crazy curls flopped in the wind as I drove to school while my music shook the streets. It was a Monday morning which meant that my coffee was extra strong and that I was running extra late. I quickly parked her car and ran into the

building breathing in the fresh air one last time. I took a seat in Mr. Stroman's class while the announcements were coming to an end.

“Macey, thanks for joining us today,” Mr. Stroman said as I took my seat, “Everyone please hand in your homework from the weekend and we will trade and grade,” he finished saying.

*Homework? We had homework? Shoot did I forget again I swear I wrote it down somewhere. Where’s my planner? Oh it’s in my backpack. Where’s my backpack? Shoot this is really bad. My week is off to a fantastic start. Should I tell him that I don’t have it or should I randomly become sick and have to leave just in time before I need to hand it in. Think Macey think.*

“Mr. Stroman I need to go my arm is really hurting right now. I think I broke it this weekend.” I said with slight hesitation.

“You think you broke your arm?” he asked very confused.

“Yes. I think I did I was playing just dance with my brother and well he danced very much so and I became injured and I must leave right now,” I said trying to sound somewhat emotional.

“Macey, I know you don’t have your homework so please stop trying to fake cry. I printed off this assignment that I’m going to have you do right now. It should be easy for you,” said Mr. Stroman.

*Easy. Another word that I never quite understood. Teachers put their assignments in front of me saying “it’s going to be easy Macey.” I never really knew if it was. I expected easy by now though, knowing that it would always come my way. I guess I wasn’t meant for difficult.*

Mr. Stroman walked over and handed me a packet. It was larger than I was expecting for being an *easy assignment*. As I flipped through it, I noticed it had little shapes on it with corresponding letters. I had never seen anything like it before.

“Macey, this is morse code. If you learn it in two weeks I’ll excuse all missing assignments from you in the gradebook and, if you don’t you’ll be where you are right now,” said Mr. Stroman.

“You want me to learn Morse Code in two weeks. Why?” I asked.

“I think it will be good for you. Besides when you learn it, you can teach me,” responded Mr. Stroman.

“You want me to teach you? I thought you said it this going to be easy,” I responded.

“It is. I think you can do it, unless you don’t want to and you can just keep your grade that you have right now?” asked Mr. Stroman.

I was never put in this position before, I either dealt with the zero or asked for extra credit.

Considering though, my grade was at a Titanic level of sinking, I knew that this was my only option. Besides, I’ve heard spies use Morse Code, which I could definitely add to my list of career options.

“Thank you Mr. Stroman. I won’t let you down.” I took the packet and proceeded to daydream the day away.

It was eight p.m. in my room. The sky was dark. My family was quiet. The only thing that was loud were my inner thoughts. Piles of laundry mocked me as they sat invading my carpet. The song playing on my speaker was calling me to go try to play it on our piano. But no.

Homework. I needed to do my homework. I opened Mr. Stroman's packet. Tapping my pencil, I started to read the introduction about this new language of symbols and lines. I looked at the dashes, and dots. I began to write the symbols with my music playing in the background. The length of a dot is one unit. A dash is three units. The space between words is seven units. It was almost like the melody playing in my room. It matched the counts of morse code. I stood up to my light switch and started performing the sheet music of this new language . I flipped my light off and on to the beat of morse code.

The next thing I knew it was eleven thirty p.m. My body was beginning to shut down as my mind was full with new information. I felt for the first time, in a very long time, that I understood. Something clicked. My brain was not opposed to learning. My brain knew how to learn. My brain needed to learn information in my own way. Something in me felt light. I felt good. I breathed deeply and crashed into sleep.

Mr. Stroman greeted the class. He started to instruct on the day's lesson. I needed to tell him that I finished the assignment he gave me before I forgot. I raised my hand.

"Mr. Stroman, sorry to interrupt, I just wanted to let you know that I finished," I said.

"Finished? Finished with what, Macey?" said Mr. Stroman.

"I finished the packet you gave me. I'm ready to teach it to you whenever you have time," I said.

I had never seen a human face display so many expressions within ten seconds. First was irritation, then confusion, then surprise, and last but not least, a small grin.

"WOW! Macey. That's incredible. How did you do it?" Mr. Stroman asked.

“Well, it was quite *easy*, just like you said it would be. It was almost like learning music, but instead of notes, it was vibration and light patterns,” I said.

“WOW, Macey,” a stunned Stroman responded.

From the back of the room, a hand went up. It was the *smartest* kid in the class.

“What are you talking about? This is not part of today’s lesson plan,” he quipped.

“Macey learned Morse Code,” replied Mr. Stroman.

“She learned Morse Code? When?” asked the boy irritably.

“Last night, I gave her the packet yesterday in class and she taught herself,” replied Mr. Stroman.

“You’re saying that Macey learned Morse Code in one night? It has taken me months and I still haven’t fully grasped it. That’s impossible, she must be lying, ” replied the boy,

“Well it's clearly not impossible, and Macey will prove that by presenting to the class right now,” Mr. Stroman announced as he pointed to me.

*You got this Macey. The length of a dot is one unit, a dash is three units, a space between words is seven units.* I looked out of the window and peered to the playground across the street where I noticed a little girl sitting alone. Her little blonde curls bounced as she jumped up and down. She looked up at me and smiled encouragingly. I peered back at my classmates with a new found calmness. I stood up, ready to present.