

**FEIGHBE SOLANO**

## **The New Girl**

Growing up with separated parents was “normal” for me. I have very few memories back from when my parents actually lived together, little moments or visuals that I can see in my mind but never a full story that I could tell. My dad moved back to his native country, Colombia, when I was around four years old so every summer my mom would send my older brother and I to him and for the two months of summer vacation that we had, it would be spent there. By the end of August or the first week of September my brother and I would say our goodbyes, board a plane back to New York and begin the school year at P.S 153. One summer in particular, things wouldn't go as they usually did.

During the summer of 2005 my mother surprisingly made the trip with us to Colombia, at the time I didn't think anything of it since I was a child, I even recall sitting in an interview room with my brother, mother, father, and another person who I now assume would be the school director. The kind lady would ask me and my brother various questions about our family and our interests, then would ask me to draw pictures for her. She was interviewing us to see if we would be a good match in her school. I was about the age of 8 during this time, I loved going to Colombia to visit my dad and I also loved living with my mother in New York where I had been raised my entire life and English was my first language, my Spanish on the other hand wasn't fluent and I had difficulty holding a full on conversation, but for some reason when my mom told me I'd be spending an entire year in Colombia going to school, making new friends, and being without her, I wasn't scared. I wasn't sad about not seeing my friends over in NY for a year or that I'd be in a completely different school atmosphere, my brother on the other hand was furious, since he was older and in his teenage years, spending time with his friends was everything

Carrie Hall 2/22/19 8:57 PM

**Comment:** This is a run-on sentence. Look up “comma splice” (which is a kind of a run-on) on the Purdue OWL.

Carrie Hall 2/22/19 8:57 PM

**Comment:** This is kind of a bombshell! At what point did you figure out you were going to stay there? How did you feel? I think you could spend more time in this moment.

Carrie Hall 2/22/19 8:58 PM

**Comment:** Spell it out in essays unless you have a particular reason not to.

to him so he didn't take things as lightly as I had. From one week to the next my mother boarded a plane back to New York and promised to call us everyday, I think this was the most painful part of this experience. Nonetheless the beginning of the school year approached and my dad drove us on our very first day.

Carrie Hall 2/22/19 8:59 PM

**Comment:** Can you show us a scene or some details of this moment when your mom tells you?

We had been accepted at a private school that specialized in teaching students English. Knowing how to speak two languages in Colombia was something very important whether it was French, English, or Mandarin, so private schools would specifically focus on one distinct language to teach students. I remember stepping out of the car and seeing my new school for the first time, and it looked absolutely nothing like how a school in New York would look. Before I could make into the principal's office I was approached by two girls who looked about my age, they asked if I was the new girl and immediately grabbed my hand to show me around. I was extremely surprised at this. When I compare my experience of studying in Colombia compared to New York one of the biggest distinctions is the students. In Colombia the girls were extremely nice, inviting, and social, meanwhile in NY it was more of a waiting game, the teacher would pair you up and that's who you were friends with. Aside from this within that one year my Spanish improved, I had learned to read and write in Spanish which has benefited me a lot now as an adult because in certain work settings it may be required to be bilingual or a big advantage compared to other candidates in job interviews.

Carrie Hall 2/22/19 8:59 PM

**Comment:** How DID it look?

Looking back at this experience, I wish I had studied more than one year in Colombia, because then I would have been able to continue perfecting my Spanish which is easier to do as a child. I'm thankful my parents had made that decision for me and I see it as more of an opportunity of growth that not all children experience, especially if they are born and raised in the United States. This has encouraged me to possibly even send my future children to study

abroad when they are young in order to experience the same opportunities and experiences that I had.

