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ENG1101

UNIT 1: Educational Narrative Essay

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Fresa

My mother just received an email and was quick to call me over. “*Hijo*¹, come here,” she said. Her voice sounded surprised, but not in the wrong way. I walked down our hallway, wondering what she was calling me for. She showed me her phone which was always so bright that it blinded my eyes. The big 6.8-inch AMOLED display wasn’t enough for her. “Is this for real or is it a scam?” she questioned. As my eyes heal from the sun that was my mother’s phone, I saw that it was Apple offering a sale on MacBooks. Squinting, I responded, “Yeah this looks legit, it’s weird because they never usually do discounts.” She paused for a moment, then asked, “You want to go with me to the store to go and check it out?” I agreed and got in the car. That same day, I walked out of the store with a polished white bag with a silver Apple logo on the front. To me, this was expected, because my mother asked me what color I wanted a few weeks back.

As soon as I got home I facetimes my girlfriend while I unwrapped my gift. It was exciting for me because I have always wanted a MacBook. Sure I had the gaming pc that I had built with the help of my parents, but it wasn’t a MacBook. I wanted both. I told her what I got, and she was happy for me but in a somewhat confusing way. “Wait, why did you get it if you

¹ Hijo: this means “son” in Spanish.

already have a powerful pc?” she asked. “I wanted a MacBook because it looked nice, and it was on a discount,” I responded.

A few days passed and my phone unexpectedly broke. Unfortunately, I depend heavily on apps such as Google Calendar to keep myself organized, it was hard doing daily tasks without a functioning phone. My stepfather offered to get me the new iPhone 13 Pro for a very minimal down payment. This of course is a take-it-or-leave-it opportunity, so I accepted his offer because, why not? I told my girlfriend about my stepfather’s proposal, and her expression and tone of voice were nothing but a surprise. Her voice, almost as if she was scared to question, asked “Oh, that’s cool, but did you ask for the Pro?”

“Not at all, I actually asked for the lowest model but apparently I got a higher model.”

“But you really didn’t need it?”

“No, not at all but I am happy nonetheless.”

She went quiet. The silence almost made me feel like I’d committed a mistake of some sort as if an unresolved tension suddenly appeared from her end. I asked her why she went quiet.

“It’s just crazy to me how you get all this stuff without even asking for it.”

“Well, it’s not even that. It’s not that I begged for it. Not like I’m *fresa*²”

“Considering that you got two very expensive things in a matter of months, it’s just surprising to me.”

“Well yeah, but again it’s not like I’m spoiled or anything, I have a job after all. ”

She paused for a moment. Letting out a breath and then simply staying quiet. I asked her,

“What’s wrong?”

² Fresa: a term used by the Mexican community to culturally stereotype a person who comes from a well off family; people who are fresa are described as posh or snooty, with an airy voice of importance and a lack of understanding of real world issues.

“Let me ask you something, do you pay anything with the money you get from your job?”

“No, not really. An occasional food or gift for myself.”

“So no bills and not giving money to your parents?”

“Uh... no? What are you trying to get at?”

“So you just have a job because you basically want to?”

“If you want to put it that way, yes, but what is your point?”

“The thing is babe, you’re lucky some kids don’t have that choice. You never had to pay a bill.”

“I’ve paid the occasional Hulu, Netflix, you know, streaming services...”

She chuckled a little. It wasn’t an amused laugh though, that at least I picked up on.

“Since you think you know so much, I can show you I know as much as well. Matter of fact, I’ll list everything one person moving into an apartment must pay to survive.”

“Really?” She asked mirthfully. “Go for it.”

“Wifi bill, food, gas, electricity, water, transportation, subscriptions and that is really it.”

“Hmm...and that’s all?”

“Yeah.. that's really all... maybe...”

“Rent, love.”

Having this disheartening realization, I forgot the most important thing anyone needs to pay in order to live. Rent. Truly made me look somewhat stupid.

“Okay it's just one thing I forgot”

“Look babe I just want you to know that I am very happy for you, that the situation that you were put into was better than mine.”

“What do you mean?”

“You are a bit *fresa*, I mean you are getting all this stuff and I just want to say that usually, kids of our demographic don't really get that lucky. I see your situation compared to mine, and it is not all the same. I understand people get better chances in their lives and I am in no way hating on that fact, but I just think that it's a little unfair. Your parents came from a different country with nothing, no family, no connection, straight from the bottom. Like every immigrant trying to achieve the American dream while you are waiting for the newest tech on the street in your OWN room. What I think you have yet to realize is that you have the American dream already, and I am thankful that you do. I'm glad you got to be at home, on your bed in an online class during the pandemic, rather than slaving away at a register in a fast-food place, while in an online class, waiting for your check to help your parents out with rent.”

Listening to this. Being a Hispanic myself and being called *Fresa* by my own girlfriend is bad enough. I just couldn't believe she would go there but analyzing what she had said, I understood that there could be some truth in her words. As a very little kid, when my mother was just a single parent, when watching tv shows I always despised the rich, white snobby kid. This whole conversation was just painting me as what I once hated. Was there anything to save me from that path?

I thought to myself how different my life was compared to my girlfriend's. Yes, we were both from the same demographic, the same age, and the same level of intelligence. One of the things that attracted me to her was that we had a lot of similarities. Even so with all the similarities, our lives were much more different. I didn't feel like what was she saying to me was in any hurtful or jealous way, but I think it was rather enlightening. I didn't really know how other people like me had to live and in a way made me feel bad.

“Love, I didn’t know that...” I said very regretfully that I ever mentioned all the gifts I’d gotten.

“Listen, I don’t want you to feel bad for me. I am working my ass off as well as you are, to succeed. Get our college degree and feel the success, receive the rewards, and have the status of being up the ladder, and having stability. I am happy that you already have a head start but, in the end, I hope we both are all the way on the top.”

Considering what she had said, I admired the fire that she had in her, considering that it was 1 in the morning at this point. I was at the point of falling asleep.

“Also be on top of the ladder and give back,” she said proudly.

“How would you want to give back?” I was very intrigued, considering she was going to college to become a doctor.

“Well, every time I see people of our Hispanic background, I see a little girl translating everything for her mom.” She paused for a moment and responded. “What good is being on top of the ladder when you can’t give gold to those holding the ladder.”

Giving back. That is what I was missing. All my life having the life I was given, having stability. She was someone who wanted to achieve stability and goes as far as to give stability. I admire her and I want to start giving back. Having everything for yourself makes one lonely and solidified. Seeing the trees and plants growing around you makes you feel happy about your habitat. Going into the engineering and management field I haven't thought of ways to give back to my people.

“Thanks, love, I want to find a way to give back, To see all of the buildings and bridges grow around me,” I said with pride.

“That’s good, it's always good to look out for the people that give you the life that you have. Hey since you recently changed your mind about what degree you want, which is in construction management right? I realized a way you can give back.”

“How so?”

“You can try and sponsor undocumented immigrants.... Give them a chance to work and give them money to help them achieve the American Dream for themselves and family”

“That is true actually I might have the power to do that.”

“All I am going to say Matthew is... make me proud.”