

A Case of Perspective

Bored. That was the most frequent emotion I felt when I was at school. I sighed and swung back on my chair. None of this mattered, not the boring lessons or the useless information that the teachers wanted to drill into us. My eyes darted around the room, wondering how everyone else could actually pay attention to this nonsense. Everyone else in the class seemed more interesting than the teacher. The teacher – who never bothered to empathise with their students, who blatantly refused to see things from our perspective.

The girl in front of me sat completely stone still. She was a pretty girl, or she would've been if she wasn't covered in bruises. "It's all the lacrosse," she claims, "you get loads of bruises." But I had no idea that she'd never picked up a lacrosse stick in her life. Things weren't so great at home. And by "not so great", I mean that instead of coming home to a warm dinner, she came home to a warm fist. She was such a carefree and happy girl, none of us ever even suspected anything. It most certainly would explain why she enjoyed school so much.

The boy to my right was probably the funniest person I had ever met. You would never have caught him without a laugh or a smile across his face. But that was when everyone else was around. I had no idea that when no one was around, the smile dropped. I had no idea that when he got home, he felt the world closing in on him and that he would fall asleep crying every night. Nor did I realise that this very evening, it would all get too much and he would take one too many sleeping pills. Of course, they'd work; he'd never wake up again.

The girl to my left didn't say very much. She got really high marks and everyone praised her for it, but she didn't say much about it. I had no idea that school was the last of her worries. Her entire family was stuck back in a country plagued with war and famine. I suppose wondering whether your family is dead or alive is more important than quadratic equations.

The boy at the front of the class always knew the answer. Seriously, we called him the human encyclopaedia. He seemed like a perfectly nice guy, but he never seemed to want to talk to us. He was always studying and reading – every parent's dream. I had no idea that his parents see him as pathetic and stupid. I had no idea that for every percent he got under a hundred, he was assaulted with a plethora of negative words. "Useless." "Disobedient." "Worthless." These words were indoctrinated into his very essence until they left knife marks on his soul. I had no idea that he was under so much pressure. I had no idea that love only came with an Oxford acceptance letter. And I thought I had it hard, if I try my hardest, that's good enough.

The bell rang and I swung forward on my chair.

"What did you get out of this lesson? You looked like you were day dreaming." My teacher asked me. I looked up.

"Perspective."

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