

LACC Writing Contest (E.S.L.)

Short story 3rd place

Title : A page that began a book

Entrant : Yunmi Jo

A page that began a book

Jenni was sitting on the couch. Her room was almost empty because she didn't expect such a large room. She didn't even know what the meaning of Studio is. One good thing was a carpet. She had dreamt about living on the carpet room. She thought the air was so fresh because it was not humid, but in Korea, outside air is very humid in the middle of summer. She woke up late because of jet lag. She came to L.A just one weeks ago. When she woke up in the morning, she was wondering why sunshine was so harsh and suddenly she reminded here was America. She barely believed she wasn't in Korea anymore. Sitting on the couch, she turned on a Television. She wanted to find funny channel, but when she fiddled channels like Spelling bee, Ellen show, Doctor Phill... none of those seems interesting for her. 'I wish I could see some Korean drama.' She was taking language school and her language school was near her apartment. Waiting to go to the school, she got bored, but she had one question which was happened every morning. 'Should I walk today to school or take Uber?' She opened refrigerator because she felt hungry and also she remembered that she went to a market near her place. In the refrigerator, there was Kimchi, eggs, hamburger, and milk. She had no idea how to fill this huge refrigerator. Her favorite breakfast is Hamburger, any kind of hamburger. 'Oh, yesterday I bought hamburgers in

Costco.' She grabbed the big hamburger box tight. She had never seen those many hamburgers in her refrigerator before. 'Okay, lets put it in the microwave and...3min' The burger smell was just like steak! Cheese was so melting and rich flavor and when she bit one burger, it was so juicy with crispy romaine. Her eyes were closed and she remind conversations with her friends YeJi in Korea

"What kind of food you are going to have first in America, Jenni? I wish I could go with you."

"Of course, hamburger! Do you remember how many hamburger we ate in our youth?"

"I can guess ...around 400?"

"Kidding me! It was more that 1000 hamburgers! Ha ha"

She smiled and opened her eyes. 'I should call YeJi next week, she must be worrying me.' She saw her watch. 'I'd better go now!' She checked Uber price, but the price was higher than usual. So, she decided to walk.

She was walking on the street. The morning was fresh and the sunshine was warm. People looked busy, but She wasn't familiar this empty street compare to Korea. In Korea, when it was rush hour, the streets were packed with people, while LosAngeles people seem prefer to use cars. While walking, she could smell cannabis and it made her scared because she taught only some bad people can have drug or marijuana. Cannabis is actually illegal in Korea. One man passed her. Jenni was not familiar with foreigners because, in Korea, she was grown up in a rural and she hadn't interacted with foreigners. Whenever Americans passed her, she felt uncomfortable and struggled where should she see facing Americans. She taught it was silly 'Don't be acting weird. Let's just think here is Korea and I'm going market! Easy' There was one homeless man and his tent beside of street. Suddenly, he came out of the tent and looked her. Then he smiled and said to her

“Hello, Good morning!”

She was wondering this situation if it is normal morning greet or not. He was so tall with long beard and he looked like he hasn't taken shower for a long time. There were no other people around her and she was confused about what should she do. 'I can't handle this, I should have taken the Uber! What if he asks me to give money or What if...'. She felt scared and impulsively decided to turn around the corner without saying anything. 'Maybe I should say I can't speak English so that he can understand me'

“Sorry! Don't speak English!”

Then she ran away to the other corner. Her heart was still pounding heavily and she was as if short of breath. All of a sudden, she felt she was all alone in a vast strange land and also felt embarrassed because she was supposed to say that sorry, I can't speak english. She checked her phone to know where she was exactly, but, sadly, her phone was dead. She was supposed to buy a new 110v charger right away on online shop, but she had to wait for Amazon delivery until next week. It was coming from somewhere in America. It would never happen in Korea because Korean delivery service is so fast. Turing her face away from the phone, She looked at the empty road where she was standing like a skinny tree in the middle of a desert. She was thinking which way is best for this situation. 'I can go back home by my self!' So she kept walking.

She felt She was going in a wrong direction because if it was correct, she would have been home already. And the weather was getting hot. She had to fine some ways. Then she found a woman and the woman looked kind. 'She was wearing fur boots in summer, but here in America never judge people by looking their outside so she would be good person' Jenny rationalized.

“Excuse me?”

“Yes?”

“Do you know where is Whilshire street?”

“Oh I think you have lost your way! Whilshire street is very far from here! I think you should take a bus. If you don’t know where the bus station is, I will take you there”

Jenni suddenly felt lost because she couldn’t understand what the woman said. The woman definitely said in English, but the accent was so strong that she couldn’t understand. The lady smiled and Jenny was blind in her mind. Standing under the strong sun was so hot, Jenni wiped the sweat. ‘Let’s just say thank you and go, I think she pointed the way’

“Thank you!”

“Oh you know the staton! Okay then take care!” The lady said without pretension.

“Thank you!”

She kept walking toward the road where the lady pointed. She thought maybe she was wrong and misjudged people who tried to help her or just wanted to be a friend. Looking back I memory, she used to be optimistic and had an outgoing personality. She was always surrounded by friends or people, but after she came to America, things were changed. She hasn’t gone out often because she afraid of speaking English. And Using coins or putting tips are making her confused. Something came up to her mind. When she was in Korea, Her friends and her hung out until late night. One of her favorite restaurants opens 24 hours and to go to the restaurant, she had to take a bus with friends. They always giggled in the bus, actually, there was nothing special, but they were just happy. She had never felt walking on the street would be dangerous, but now, she felt exhausted and scared. She was only one person walking on the street. On her red chick, she could feel something warm water flowing, and it was her tears. ‘It’s okay. Don’t cry. I can find the way. I can go back. How long have I worked?’ Even though her chick was red like a tomatoes, she didn’t take a rest because she didn’t want to people to see her crying.

Few minutes later, keeping try not to think sad emotions, she could breath normally, and Then She looked around. There was a giant tree in front of her. She has never seen the giant tree. She sat under the tree. The wind dried up her tears and sweat. It was like the wind was saying that It's okay, you are doing good. On the large lawn, she didn't feel alone anymore. The harsh sun was gone and she could feel just warm sun under the tree. It was so beautiful.

“Hey Jenny! Where have you been?”

“Rosa? Are you Rosa? Why you are here?”

“That's what I want to ask to you! Today is our school field trip day and here's Griffith park!”

“Right! You are right!”

“We called you many time! We were supposed to meet at the school.”

“I'm sorry. Where's others?”

“There! Let's go”

“Let's run!”

Her face appeared big smile. 'I'm not a lone. I know It would be hard that living in a different country, but I can do it because I love America which is why I am here.' She felt heat beating fast because she didn't what will be happening tomorrow, but she knew she will love it.