

Friendship Circle

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Course: English 101

Instructor: Mr. Sean Alan Marsh

Essay Type: Personal Letter

To My Dearest Friend,

As I sit alone in Friendship Circle, I am reminded of the countless hours we spent together at Audubon Park, where we often shared our dreams and thoughts with one another. We sometimes made friends with other people and their dogs, or we would sit blissfully, entwining the stems of bright, white clovers to wear as tiaras and jewelry. I remember how often we would start to laugh, unable to stop; our stomachs cramped as we gasped for breath, making us laugh even more helplessly. Other times, we would lie next to each other, silently appreciating each other's presence. But, that was before we got the nerve to pack our bags and make our dreams reality.

I face the outside world and let my legs daintily dangle over the edge of the wooden deck that I now sit upon; its interlocked planks encompass a massive oak tree. My arms are stretched out behind me with my back resting between them. My shoulders are shrugged and cradle my slightly-tilted head. As my eyes gaze out at the life that surrounds me, I can't help but imagine you here with me.

We'd lie side-by-side, hiding from the bright sky that dances in the twisted branches and olive green leaves above us, just as we used to do in the park back home. I can hear our childish laughter playing like a melody in my head. I close my eyes and try to smile so I can imagine it better. Instead, a burning sensation begins in the tip of my nose, spreads to my throat, and gives me chills throughout my body. It then travels to the corners of my eyes, where streams of bitter

salt begin to flow. Teardrops slide down my cheeks, and as if my lips were the gills of swimming fish, they seep through and caress my tongue. I let the tears sit for a while before my hand reaches up to wipe them away.

Then I notice the soft breeze and the murmur of voices passing by. I am comforted and a little less lonely now. The sound of a distant train whistles from an unknown direction, sounding much like the barges on the Mississippi River which once passed us as we sat in the park. The thought of traveling gives me the urge to visit you in New York, but then I realize how far apart we really are. Our distance makes my insides feel like the clusters of gray moss that hang from the trees, knotted and lifeless. I want so badly to feel whole again, for it all to fit together like the interlacing pieces of brown bark that cloak the tree. I wonder if the tree feels as perfect as it looks, but I doubt it does.

The oak compels me to climb its intricate and unique design. I crawl into the tree's heart from which the largest branches enthusiastically extend, and stand. Embraced by five limbs, my eyes follow their silhouettes, and I notice each arches triumphantly over the deck below me and rests on the surrounding ground. I imagine that these branches represent our biggest dreams that we are so eager to achieve. Like the branches of the tree, we will experience ups and downs throughout our journeys. The many knots and curves on the branches represent the things we will learn to grow through and the unexpected paths leading to unexpected places.

I imagine us as trees planted next to each other. We will constantly grow in different directions, we will change, and we will eventually find our directions in life; but, through it all, the branches of our beings will remain entangled with each other for eternity.

Mr. Marsh's Comments: *Alexandra is one of those rare students who has three things going for her. Firstly, she has writing skills. Secondly, she has the courage to write bravely. Finally, she possesses a "killer" work ethic typified by her many revisions. She is the kind of student that makes teaching a pleasure.*