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ENC 1101

Hectic

There once was a boy by the name of Juan who lived in a place where there were more cactuses than people. Juan was about five feet tall, with a smile the lit up any room that he would walk into. He also had a very loving family that supported him in every way possible. Actually, Juan was a genius when it came to science, and he was determined to become an astronaut. He had a perfect life, the care free life that all kids have. However, things completely changed when he was old enough to attend middle school.

Juan walked into his school with a blue shirt with Jupiter on it, and the same big smile that usually brightened people's day, but this time it was different. Nobody seemed to notice his smile; in fact, nobody seemed to notice he was there at all. Juan spent most of the day alone until lunch came around when he was invited to sit at a lunch table with other kids. They didn't look like him, but it wasn't a problem to Juan. These people seemed to like him. Shortly after Juan took a seat a boy by the name of Scott called Juan an alien, and poured his milk on him. Soon everyone began calling him names and throwing bananas, mashed potatoes, and sandwiches his way. Juan ran and hid in a closet that smelled like dirty mop and Windex, but he much rather smell this than the stench of potatoes up his nostrils.

To his surprise, there was someone else hiding in the closet. It was a girl with long black hair, hazel eyes, and light brown skin that matched Juan's. He anxiously wondered what she was doing there sitting in the corner all alone, eating home cooked rice and beans. He asked her name, and with no hesitation she answered "Caridad". Juan thought this was a beautiful name, seeing that his grandma shared that name. Caridad told Juan that she transferred from another

school in town, and that she was new. He asked her why she was eating in the closet, and she told him that she always ate there because she was never accepted at anybody's table. Juan sighed, and nodded in agreement. They sat there and ate the rest of their lunch wondering why nobody wanted to be their friends.

When Juan walked into his beautifully decorated house he rushed to his mom to tell her about school. First he told her about Caridad and how beautiful and smart she was. Then he informed her of the bad day he had, and how nobody wanted him to eat with them. She rubbed his head and told him that things would get better. Juan sure hoped so. He then went into his light blue painted room with hand drawn pictures of planets, stars, and spaceships. He took out a paper towel roll that he turned into a telescope, and pretended to look at the planets from his bed. However, he quickly became sidetracked and started thinking about his day. After much brainstorming he pinpointed the problem. The kids at school didn't like him because he was a science geek, no wonder why they called him an alien. Juan put all his shirts that had anything to do with science in a box, and threw his telescope away. He would hide the fact the he loved science from his peers.

Juan woke up early the next day, brushed his teeth, and threw on a brand new plain red t-shirt. It was the beginning of a new day, and he was determined to make the best of it. He walked towards his bus stop alone because nobody offered to walk with him, but he didn't mind this: walking alone gave him more time to think about how he is going to approach his peers. He waited for the bus patiently along with the others, but was pushed to the back of the line when it finally arrived. Everyone seemed to walk in with no worry at all, but as Juan approached the door he was startled, causing him to jump back and fall on the thick patch of grass that broke his fall. He quickly jumped up and boarded the bus, trying to stay away from the driver who seemed

to have been a giant elephant. As they drew near the school some kind of commotion could be seen through the windows. To his surprise several donkeys held signs that were unreadable through the lightly tinted windows and yelled out things that were incomprehensible through the chatter of the students.

The kids were dropped off in the back of the school in order to bypass the crowds who flooded the front. However, this did not stop the others from yelling “elephants are better than donkeys”, which gave Juan a sense of security to know that he was not the only one seeing this although he didn’t understand what the kids meant with the chant. During most the school day Juan was surprised to see all of the grownups transformed into either an elephant or a donkey. When he got to the cafeteria he quickly rushed to the closet knowing that Caridad would be in there eating her lunch. Juan could smell the strong smell of a chicken burrito through the cracks of the door, which made him feel at home. Just as he guessed, Caridad was in the far corner eating a burrito with a book in one hand. She greeted him and offered him half of her lunch. So they sat there in a dirty mop closet enjoying what they considered to be the best time of the day.

Once Juan gathered up enough courage, he asked Caridad if she too saw how all the teachers and adults have turned into animals. She answered yes, and continued on to explain what she understood of the whole thing. She said that she saw on TV an enormous dragon by the name of Cracy who was said to rule the whole land where they lived. She said that the people selected a loyal man to rule over them, but that when this man gathered up too much power he transformed into a dragon. Still Juan was eager to know more, especially why adults where the only ones to transform, and why kids were spared. Caridad informed him that her mom told her something like this would happen soon, and that kids will stay the same because they are not at an age where they could make decisions. This was an interesting subject for Juan, and just as he

was going to ask another question the loud, annoying bell interrupted him. It was time for them to proceed on to their next class.

Juan slowly walked to his next class thinking about everything that Caridad had told him. He walked in and took a seat in the only empty chair left, all the way in the back of the room. His teacher had assigned him the wobbly, vandalized desk which he had to keep still by placing his books under one of the legs. He looked up at Mr. Smith and wondered why all but one of his teachers were elephants. His second period teacher, Mrs. Caballero, was his favorite teacher. She sat him up front with the rest of the kids, and didn't allow anyone to sit in the broken desks that decorated the back of the room. However, she was a donkey. This didn't seem to make much sense to Juan, so he longed to go home and ask the one person he trusts to be truthful to him: his mother.

The deafening bell rang once again dismissing the students from school. As Juan walked out of school he looked around at his peers, and saw some of them also transforming into animals. He was frightened by this sight and decided to walk home, where he will be away from them. His house was kind of far but this didn't matter to him, he liked the fresh air that arose practically from nowhere at this time of day. As he neared his house he was stopped by a small green lady who seemed to be in a rush. However, this was no ordinary lady. She had wings, and she was about one eighth of Juan's height. He wasn't scared of her though, she was the closest to human he has seen all day.

This little woman kindly introduced herself, stating that her name was fairy Igualdad and that she was specifically sent to find him, that he was the one who would save the land. She told him that things like this happened all the time, but never to this extent. Juan not exactly

comprehending what she was telling him asked why this was happening. She told him that ever since the land was created there had always been people who didn't get along with each other, but that recently things have been getting out of hand and that kids are now being influenced by all of this. He seemed to have understood this, and offered to help her with anything she needed. The fairy thanked him and flew away, disappearing into the empty space in front of him. Juan quickly rushed home.

Juan ran through the front door, not paying attention to the strong smell of fried plantains and chicken. He decided not to tell his mom of this rare encounter, knowing that she will think he has gone crazy. Instead he sat at his desk and began to write in his journal. He is confused as to why he got the sudden urge to write, since he hated writing, but he continued. After writing what seemed like a novel to him, he lied in bed anxiously wanting tomorrow to come.

The next day Juan arose with a random smile on his face. He decided to skip breakfast today and he quickly bolted down the hall, almost forgetting to kiss his mother goodbye. He walked towards the bus stop, wearing a bright red shirt with Mars adorning the front. As he looked around he was not surprised to see that the students had also turned into animals because the fairy had warned him of this. Regardless of the others' rude attitudes towards him, Juan kept the smile on his face going strong especially because lunch was only five minutes away. He confidently walked into the cafeteria forgetting to go into the closet where he and Caridad ate lunch. Instead he stood on a table and demanded for the students to be quiet and to listen to him. Surprisingly the spotlight didn't bother him and he went on to recite the speech that he had written the night before. Titled "This is Hectic", he believed that it was the perfect speech to address his peers.

He spoke about their differences, and how they should embrace them. And that accepting other people allowed for peace of the land. This seemed to have worked since everyone listening to him was slowly transforming back to the person they were before all of this. Still, Juan was not convinced that he completely accomplished what fairy Igualdad wanted him to. Then through the corner of his eye he saw Caridad crack open the closet door, and slowly walk towards a table where several girls sat. These girls accepted her as one of their own. That was when Juan fully understood that he had made a difference.