**Hotdog Stand**

As I am walking alone through the chaotic and lit up Times Square with people of all forms and sizes buzzing around me, I feel an overwhelming desire to go home. The speedy banana colored taxis zoom down the crowded streets and honk at tourists taking in the beautiful scenery. 80% of the tourists or locals speak another language other than English and they have very eccentric tastes in style. A tall man in his mid 60’s standing beside me is wearing a turquoise headdress with what seems to be emu feathers coming out of it on top of his silver hair and a western bedazzled blouse. I am not sure how to absorb all of this commotion I am seeing or how to get to my important job interview with Chase bank. I just stand in the center of “The City that Never Sleeps,” and I realize how out of place a southern girl like me can feel.

Growing up in small town Thomaston, Georgia, where the biggest store is a Wal-Mart, New York City is a major difference for an outsider like me. I am familiar with saying hello to almost everyone I pass by, anyone willing to help out a neighbor in need, and small town gossip. New York is the complete opposite. I am completely beside myself and the tourists, businessmen, and fashionistas are too busy trying to get where they are going to notice that anyone needs help.

With people basically sprinting past me and taxis coming within inches of completely squishing me like a filthy roach, all I want to do is go back to my relaxing hotel room and take a nice, long nap and drift into a place that is familiar to me. Somewhere that is welcoming to me. A place I call home, where the tea is sweeter than your grandma and it is so quiet, you can hear ants crawling in the dewy grass.

The day before my job interview, I took a day to just roam around the city and calm my nerves. I took a walk through the immaculate Central Park. I laid out one of my favorite blankets on the big lawn and gazed at the white wisps streaking the sky. Being in Central Park, away from the hustle and bustle of city life made me reminisce about being home. I have only been in New York for two days but it feels like I have been here for weeks. Something caught my eye and it was a young female doing the same thing I was doing, just relaxing. I wondered if she had lived there all of her life or if she was just like me, trying to cope with my new surroundings. I worked up the nerve to go over and proceed to ask the girl if she was from New York. She said, “no, I moved here a couple of months ago to meet my boyfriend that I met on eHarmony.” At that moment I began questioning myself why I was here and why I was here for a job interview. Was it because I wanted to prove to others that I could do it? Or was it because I wanted to feel a sense of accomplishment? Just then, I realized that maybe it was easier for her to make the transition because she has someone in New York for her, and I am alone.

Meanwhile, I am almost late for my important job interview with Chase bank and I am not quite sure how to get a taxi, but then I remembered how Sarah Jessica Parker did it in “Sex and the City.” I walk quickly over to the edge of the sidewalk and hold my long fragile arm up. Within seconds a taxi slams on brakes where I am standing, splashing water up from a murky stagnant water puddle that has been sitting there for who knows how long. A dark puddle that is probably full of dirt, grease, and everything else that fills the crazy streets of New York City. I hop in and the driver, which seems to be from Israel or some unusual country other than the U.S., says in his strange accent, “where to ma’am?” I say, “54th and 22nd street please.”

The quiet taxi driver fervently swerves in and out of traffic like he is in a Fast and Furious movie. I am scared for my life. My knuckles are as white as meringue on a pumpkin pie from squeezing the side of the door so tight with actual fear of crashing into another taxi or pedestrian. Coming within inches of smothering bright yellow paint on a sparkly black Ferrari and squishing fearless pedestrians, my invisible brakes are not working. I mash them as hard as I can but the driver never stops as soon as I would prefer. Riding helplessly in the back of the small taxi made me realize someone like me does not belong anywhere near a big chaotic city like this. I just want to be back home where riding behind tractors carrying hay for miles is a normal thing.

All of a sudden the taxi driver stops and tells me a number. I am guessing that is the cost of the nerve racking ride, so I give him the money, and I quickly and eagerly get out.

Once again, I am put back in the commotion of the hectic streets of New York. I stand there looking lost and confused and gaze my tired eyes at the people speed walking past me. The rate they were moving made my small baby hairs, which always stick up from the humidity no matter how much White Rain I spray on them, blow in the wind. I pick up my bag from the filthy ground where millions of people of all colors and sizes have walked along leaving their grime that has fallen off from the bottom of their shoes.

Trying to find any sign of a Chase bank, all I can think about is the swarm of people and the horrid and sometimes sweet smells that fill my nose by every movement on the corner of 54th and 22nd street. I keep thinking to myself, how am I ever going to survive in a place like this?

Having to find where my interview was in the fast and non-stopping city of New York was like searching for a needle in a hay stack. I thought to myself, just give up and go home.

As I am searching for the Chase bank, I see a hotdog stand. I can’t help but walk over there because the smell reminded me so much of being home at a tailgate for the Upson Lee Knights football team.

The man running the hotdog stand had on khaki slacks that were one size too big, dark bags under his eyes, and it looked like he hadn’t shaved in days. His hot dog stand was probably his only income for his family, so I bought one. The stand only had three condiments to adorn my juicy hotdog, which were ketchup, mustard, and mayonnaise. Who puts mayo on their hotdog?

After I took that first bite of hotdog, I immediately went back to Halloween last year at my parent’s house. All of my family was there on the small cattle farm. Everyone was gathered around the feverous, crackling campfire listening to The Marshall Tucker Bands’ “Can’t You See.” There were hay rides through the woods and bobbing for apples. Everyone was having a blast. At that moment I knew I didn’t belong here so I skipped my interview and luckily I got the first flight home. Jimi Hendrix said it best when he said, “all I’m gonna do is just go on and do what I feel.” This quote consumed my thinking and I knew where I wanted to be and it was not in this fast paced city life. I wanted to be back home in Georgia smelling the pines and watching the sunsets with my family.

**Works Cited**

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