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CRW 203 001

11/19/2022

Jordan Walker

Writing Assignment #5 Revised

“It’s official, I am DEFINITELY not in Charlotte anymore...” said Marcus Devreux.

Marcus Devreux was a stranger in a strange land, that was for sure. He was in the city of Yokohama, in the Prefecture of Kanagawa, in the country of Japan. The reason why Marcus said what he said was because he did not grow up in Japan. He actually grew up in the city of Charlotte, in the State of North Carolina, in the country of the United States of America. So you’re probably asking yourself: Why was Marcus Devreux all the way in Japan?

Well, of all the places for Marcus to go, Japan (specifically Fujikawa University in Yokohama) was the most enticing to him for his college’s student exchange program. It was completely different from countries like France, Germany, Serbia, and Poland. Plus Marcus was a huge anime and manga fan, so naturally, he was instantly drawn to Fujikawa University when he saw its name on the program’s listing.

Whilst anime and manga had exposed Marcus a bit to Japanese culture, it would only be after applying for the exchange program, researching Japanese culture and customs, and actually living in Japan for 3 days, that Marcus realized how much Japan differed from America.

Japan and America ought to be night and day with how different they are. America is a federal presidential republic located in North America. On the contrary, Japan is a constitutional monarchy located in Northeastern Asia. Americans mostly follow Christianity, while Japan mainly follows Buddhism and Shintoism. Japan’s National language is Japanese, while

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America's national language is American English (Yes, American English exists. You don't really hear Americans saying "Top of the mornin to ya!" to random strangers).

As mentioned earlier, it had been only 3 days since Marcus came to Japan, and in those first 3 days, things were not going so well. First, Marcus had to deal with jet lag. Japan was basically halfway across the world, so its time zone was practically the opposite of Eastern Standard Time back in North Carolina. When it was morning in America, it was night in Japan. Marcus had to drastically adjust his sleep schedule and since his classes at Fujikawa University started in only a couple days, he had to do it fast.

Next, Marcus had to pay an arm and a leg for a Yokohama train pass. Marcus loved Japanese trains, but he soon began to hate them due to how expensive they were. As it turns out, a monthly Yokohama train pass costs 20433.00 yen or 150 dollars. That was basically a month of Marcus's salary down the drain (he got money from his parents every month).

Furthermore, on the day classes finally started, Marcus was almost late. Marcus overslept, and when he realized this, he did what anyone would naturally do, and freaked out. He rushed to get everything he needed ready for the school day that morning, and then he had to run (Yes, run. Marcus wanted to rent a bicycle, but the train pass pretty much bankrupted him) to the train station. The train he wanted to get on had already left, so then he had to wait on the next one.

After he got off, Marcus actually had to find the university because in those 3 days, he had not bothered to look up Fujikawa University's actual address. All he knew was that he was in

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the correct area of the city. Marcus managed to snatch a map from the station about his section of Yokohama, but it ended up being next to impossible to read, so he had to ask random passersby for directions. Said passersby weren't the best at giving directions, or more Marcus was not the best at understanding their complicated directions.

This brings us back to where we are now. Marcus was standing in front of Fujikawa University saying: "It's official, I am DEFINITELY not in Charlotte anymore..." .

Well, here we go... This is where my new life starts : he thought.

Marcus entered and started walking to his first class: Japanese History 101, following the Finder App map's directions on his phone. The morning was already hot, being about 86 degrees Fahrenheit, as it was the month of August, yet the concrete pavement of the campus's sidewalks made Marcus feel even hotter.

Huh... feels like just North Carolina. Darn humidity...

It was so hot, Marcus was already sweating

As he walked through the campus, he noticed how swollen the walkways were with people. Lots of students seemed to be either walking or riding bicycles, scooters, and skateboards to class. Even though there were so many people around, Marcus felt more alone than he had before. Back in America, he had friends that he could talk to on a regular basis, but coming to Japan felt like being the new kid all over again. Not only that, but going out of his way to talk to people was not Marcus's strong suit because of his social anxiety. Marcus wanted to make

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Japanese friends, of course, but he knew that would be easier said than done, especially with social anxiety and introverted personality.

When Marcus finally found his history classroom, he was completely surprised at what he saw.

“What the hell, where is everyone?” he said.

That’s when Marcus checked the time. It was 8:30 AM. The class started at 9:30 AM. He was a full hour early.

“Snap, I’m early. Well, since I’m here, all by myself, might as well listen to some music.”

Marcus began to switch through the songs on his phone as he went searching for a desk.

Haggstorm, Key, Wet hand, Dry Hand, Crystal Warrior...

Coincidentally, when he found a desk he liked, that’s when he found his favorite song: Ultra Lover by Buddhas Priest. It’s a song from one of his favorite games: Guard Dogs 2. Do you ever have that one song that when it plays, you just can’t help but sing it out loud and dance and dance to it? Well, for Marcus, Ultra Lover was that song. As the guitar riff started, a wave of euphoria washed over him.

Then the lyrics started, and Marcus just couldn’t help himself from singing....

“Then within your senses..... You know you’re defenseless....”

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After a bit, the song went up a decibel, and so naturally, Marcus got louder as well. The music began to possess his body, running through his veins. It gave Marcus more and more excitement, the excitement geeks get when they experience something nerdy. By the time the chorus of the song came along, Marcus had graduated from singing to screaming and dancing...

“I’M YOUR ULTRA LOVERRRR!!”

This song is lit as freak! Man, I hope no one sees m....

Instantly, Marcus stopped mid-thought. Actually, every part of his body stopped. Even his heart skipped a beat. Marcus’s eyes had just happened to look at the door to the classroom. And there stood a guy. A guy who was now mimicking Marcus’s face of shock. The guy had messy, yet shiny black hair, with the majority of it covering the left side of his face. He also wore a long black-sleeve button up shirt, black pants, and black shoes. He pretty looked like someone who was into Goth subculture.

“Um..... Hello there?” said the guy.

“Hey.... What’s up, my guy....” said Marcus with an audible hint of nervousness.

“Y-Yes, um.... it seems as if you were.... enjoying your song...”

“Yeah... Yeah it was good..... “

“Hold on a minute...” The guy looked intently at Marcus’s face as he walked closer.

Marcus eased his face back a little with a confused look.

“Something wrong, my guy?”

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“Oh, nothing, nothing at all. I have just never realized that men were, how shall I say, into Gal fashion. If I had to provide some critique, I would say you overdid it with the tanning.”

“*Dude, what the heck...*” Marcus thought to himself. His skin wasn’t tanned, Marcus was an African American. Even though most African Americans didn’t have his shade of skin color, it was not rare enough to warrant fascination. “Uh, dude. Wait, actually, what’s your name by the way?”.

“My full name is Imakawa Jinzaburo, however, I have often been called Jin by my previous classmates. What is your name?”

“Marcus, Marcus Devreux. Nice to meet you, man.”

“Likewise...man...”

“Hey, is it okay if I call ya Jin?”

“Yes, but I would prefer if you used an honorific with it”

In Japan, if you are talking to someone else, it is considered polite to use honorifics with their names, in this case “-san”.

“Aight, Jin-san. Believe it or not, I’m an African American. Though, we’re more commonly known as ‘black’. Either way, this is my natural skin tone.”

Jin gave Marcus another look of shock and made a stance that looked like a defensive position.

“Unthinkable! How cannot be!”

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Jin grabbed Marcus's arm and began to feel his skin. The skin was smooth and natural. Marcus was understandably weirded out by this. How could the guy think that Marcus's skin color was the result of tanning. Back in America, unless you lived under a rock all your life, you would know that people with dark skin existed. That's when Marcus realized where he was again: Japan.

In Japan, not many people have met a African American person in real life before. Sure, they may know they exist or may seen them on TV, but seeing something on TV and witnessing something in real life are two completely different experiences.

“Amazing... Absolutely amazing, this is real skin!”

“Yeah, man. Believe it or not, there are tons of people like me back in America, most with even darker skin than mine.”

“Goodness, this is.... certainly an eye-opener!”

Just then another person walked into the classroom. And the minute she saw Marcus, she gasped and covered her mouth with her hands... She wore a white button-up shirt, a black and yellow plaid skirt with a blue sweater wrapped around her waist, and lace-up boots.

“Oh my gosh! OH. MY. GOSH! I TOTES love what you did with your skin!” said the girl.

The girl then rushed to grab Marcus's hand and rubbed it.

Aight, these guys have no idea what the heck personal space is, do they?

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“Maeda-san, you might not believe this, but this is his natural skin color! Also, there are apparently more like him in America!” said Jin.

“Jin-san, seriously?! OMG, you are so beautiful! I TOTES wanna go to America now!!” said the girl.

“Oh... Thanks. Wait Jin-san, you know her?”

“Yes, this is Maeda Sayu. She is one of my friends from high school. As you can see by her attire, she is a very big fan of the gal subculture here in Japan.”

“Heyyy, what’s cookin, good lookin!”

“Hey. Wait, you think my skin is beautiful?!”

Marcus was taken aback a bit by this comment. Back in America, there was a common stigma in society that beauty was tied to people with lighter skin color. So when Sayu said that Marcus’s skin was beautiful, his heart fell backward into his chest with a weird feeling. To Marcus, it felt like his heart went backwards into his chest. Marcus’s body then began to feel a little warm and tingly all over. Next his eyes darted to the right and his cheeks turned red from embarrassment. He eventually found the courage to muster out the word “Thanks..” still with a beet red face.

“Yes! It’s like a gal skin, but real! Can I take a pic and show my friends?!”

“Oh... ok!”

“Jin-san, wanna join us?!”

“I suppose...”

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Sayu gave a really peachy smile and a peace sign with her free hand, while Jin just gave a small, wry smirk. Marcus decided to give a small smile and hold both thumbs up to Sayu's phone camera. The camera flashed, creating Marcus's first memorable moment as an American in Japan.

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