The Stormi Giovanni Club

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A drama is a story written to be acted out for an audience. As you read, imagine the actors speaking the lines and acting out the action.

Question of the Week
How do people adapt to new places?
SCENE I

SETTING: Stormi’s new home. There are unpacked boxes everywhere. Mom holds Stormi’s backpack.

MOM: Stormi, hurry up.

STORMI (off stage): Coming, Mom.

MOM: You don’t want to be late on your first day.

STORMI (entering): No. Wouldn’t want that. (to AUDIENCE) I would rather not go at all.

MOM: Honey, don’t frown. You’ve started at a new school before. It’ll be OK.

STORMI: Yeah, (to AUDIENCE) OK like a book report due and you haven’t read the book. OK like a trip to the dentist with five cavities. OK like walking over hot coals with bare feet. (MOM hands STORMI her backpack and exits.)
STORMI (to AUDIENCE): Hi. I’m Stormi Giovanni Green. I’m named after Nikki Giovanni, the famous poet. I am not a happy camper! See, Mom and Dad move around a lot with their jobs, and since I’m the kid, I go too. They’re college professors. Dad teaches philosophy. Philosophers try to figure out how you know what’s true and what’s not true, and why some things are right and some things are wrong. I only kind of understand. Mom teaches teachers how to teach. Oops, lost my train of thought. Mom says I’m distressed.

MOM: No, Stormi, you’ve digressed.

(MOM exits.)

STORMI: Digressed, right. Got off the topic. OK. I just moved here from Chicago where I had great friends, played basketball, and was on the speech team. Moving is for the birds. So this time, no new friends. In fact, no anything that I’ll just have to say goodbye to. From now on it’s the Stormi Giovanni Club, and I’m the only member. When I told Marsha and Penelope I was moving they said:

MARSHA & PENELope: NOOO!!!!

STORMI: And I said, “Yes.” And they said:

MARSHA & PENELope: NOOO!!!!

STORMI: And I said, “Yes.” And they said:

MARSHA & PENELope: NOOO!!!!

STORMI: And David said:

DAVID: Stop! Don’t say “no” again. It’ll be OK.

MARSHA: Sure, we can e-mail.

PENELope: And telephone.

DAVID: And send letters.

PENELope: But it won’t be the same!

STORMI (to AUDIENCE): That didn’t make me feel better.

(In Chicago, DAVID and MARSHA exit. In classroom, MRS. MOON enters.)

STORMI: So, here I am, in homeroom, on the first day of school, keeping a low profile.

MRS. MOON: Welcome, Stormi.

Please tell us about yourself.

STORMI (to CLASS): I’m Stormi Giovanni. From Chicago.

MRS. MOON: Please tell us about Chicago.

STORMI: It’s called the Windy City (pause) because it’s windy.

MRS. MOON: All right. Let’s welcome Stormi Giovanni, class. On the count of three. One, two, three . . .

(MRS. MOON gestures for the class to speak.)

CLASS: WELCOME, STORMI GIOVANNI!!

(MRS. MOON exits classroom. STORMI sits at classroom computer.)
STORMI: Well, I lived through homeroom. Things were OK until study hall, when I went online to check my e-mail. (In Chicago, PENELlope sits at computer and types.)

PENELlope: Dear Stormi, I miss you so much. Fifth grade is definitely better than fourth. Everyone says hi. Write to me about your new friends. Love, Penelope.

(In Chicago, PENELlope exits. In classroom, HANNAH enters and stands behind STORMI. Pens stick out of Hannah's hair, from behind her ears, and hang on a string around her neck.)

STORMI (typing): Dear Penelope, FYI, I won't be making friends. Love, Stormi G.

HANNAH (tapping STORMI on the shoulder): Do you have a pen? Maybe a roller ball or a ballpoint? Black or blue is best. I don't really go in for the funky colors, you know, the greens and pinks.

STORMI: Oh, I'll look. (STORMI searches through her backpack.)

HANNAH: We aren't allowed to use school computers for e-mail. Mr. Morgan is very strict about that. (pause) A mechanical pencil might be all right.

STORMI: I have a yellow #2 pencil.

HANNAH (examining Stormi's pencil and frowning): No, thanks. (handing pencil back) So, you're the new girl?

STORMI: I guess so.

HANNAH: What brings you here?

STORMI: I don't want to talk about it.

HANNAH: OK. (pause) My friends Ajitha and Joseph and I sit together at lunch. If you want, tomorrow you can—


HANNAH: Oh. Don't let Mr. Morgan see you on e-mail—it's a guaranteed detention.

STORMI: Thanks. Gotta go.

(HANNAH exits. STORMI to audience): Well, I made it through my first day. There's never much homework on the first day so I read a story in my creative writing class and made book covers. Marsha taught me this really cool way to make covers out of the funny papers. I finished and decided to check e-mail. I can go online for an hour after homework as long as Mom checks it first.

SCENE III

SETTINGS: STORMI is in her new home. In Chicago, MARSHA is at the computer with DAVID looking over her shoulder.
MARSHA (typing): Dear Stormi, Lunch was a drag without you. But David told us a stupid joke and before we knew it we were laughing anyway. Oh, wait, David wants to say hi.

DAVID (typing): Hey, what do you call a cross between a television and a pizza? A really bad idea. You can do it with any two things. Funny, huh? Get it? (MARSHA pokes DAVID’s shoulder)

MARSHA (typing): Me again. Isn’t that the silliest thing? I bet you’re making lots of new friends. OK. Later, Alligator.

(MARSHA and DAVID exit.)

STORMI (typing): Hey guys. I miss you. School is OK. (to AUDIENCE) OK like you forget your permission slip and miss the field trip. OK like your dad’s playoff game’s on TV the same night as the “to be continued” episode of your favorite show. OK like vegetarian meatloaf. (typing) Not much to write about. Bye.

(STORMI shuts off computer and sits on the floor, legs crossed, looking sad and lonely.)

STORMI: In my old house there was this little room under the stairs. Probably a closet, but it sloped down so there really wasn’t enough room in it for anything. I hung a flashlight in there, and put a rug on the floor and made some pillows. I would go there anytime I was sad, or even just needed to think. Here I just have my room.

(DAD enters.)

DAD: How was school?

STORMI: OK I guess, Dad. (to AUDIENCE) OK like . . . never mind . . . you get it. It was not OK.

DAD: Make any new friends?

STORMI: No.

DAD: Could you try to make just one new friend? For me?

STORMI: You should make your own friends, Dad.

DAD (laughs): Could you try to make just one friend for you, then?

STORMI: I make no promises. Could you try to raise my allowance?

DAD: I make no promises, Pumpkin.

(DAD starts to leave.)

DAD: Take a look at the bay window in the living room. I thought we could hang a curtain from the ceiling and let that be your own private space.

STORMI: Thanks, Dad. I’ll look at it.

(DAD exits.)
STORMI (to AUDIENCE while removing things from her backpack): The second day was worse than the first. I lost the little piece of paper that had my locker number on it, and I had to go to the office to get a new one. Then I had to dump everything out of my backpack to find the other little piece of paper that had the combination on it. Then I had to figure out how to make the combination lock work.

(HANNAH, JOSEPH, and AJITHA enter.)

HANNAH: Do you always talk to yourself?

STORMI: I wasn’t. I was just—

HANNAH: Whatever. I wanted you to meet Joseph. He talks to himself too.

STORMI: Hi.

JOSEPH: Hi. This is Ajitha. Ajitha, Stormi Giovanni.

AJITHA: After the poet?

STORMI (surprised): Yeah.

AJITHA: Are you having a hard time with your locker?

STORMI: We didn’t have locks at my old school.

AJITHA: You don’t have to lock it. I put tape on the side of mine to keep it open. Like this.

(AJITHA shows STORMI.)

STORMI: Cool. Hannah, did you find a pen?

HANNAH: I got a couple of interesting ones.

JOSEPH: Hannah collects pens.

HANNAH: I’m looking for the perfect pen.

STORMI: Why?

HANNAH: When I was little my grandpa gave me this old silver fountain pen. I wasn’t supposed to take it out of the house, but I did, and I lost it. I keep thinking I’ll find something almost as cool. It’s my passion.

STORMI: That’s cool. I have a friend who collects unicorns.

JOSEPH: Next period is lunch if you want.

STORMI: I have a book.

(STORMI exits.)
AJITHA: That was audacious. (pause) Rude and bold.

HANNAH: She's OK.

JOSEPH: It would be hard to start a new school.

AJITHA: That's no reason to be rude. We were only trying to be hospitable and gregarious.

JOSEPH: I was just trying to be nice.

(They sit at a table in the school cafeteria and begin eating lunch. STORMI enters.)

STORMI (to AUDIENCE): Lunch at a new school is the worst. There's this awful time when you have your tray and you have to figure out where to sit. A book can really help. I sit alone and act like I'm reading. I have to act because it's hard to read in all of that noise. But today my plan didn't work. The cafeteria was packed.

AJITHA: Stormi, you can sit with us.

JOSEPH: What are you reading?

STORMI: A Wrinkle in Time.

AJITHA: That book is quite scintillating.

HANNAH: Don't mind her. She likes to use big words. She's not trying to make you feel stupid.

STORMI (to AJITHA): Do you write stories?

(AJITHA pulls out a dictionary)

AJITHA: I try to learn a new word every day.

JOSEPH: (reading from dictionary) Scintillate: to sparkle, gleam.

HANNAH: You can sit here and read if you want to.

STORMI: We did that at my old school. I wanted to be the Lion so badly, but I was too small for the suit. I ended up designing the set.

AJITHA: I could enjoy that.

JOSEPH: I want to be the Scarecrow.

(STORMI tries to look like she's reading but is drawn into the conversation.)

HANNAH: It's The Wizard of Oz, right?

STORMI: We did that at my old school. I wanted to be the Lion so badly, but I was too small for the suit. I ended up designing the set.

AJITHA: I could enjoy that.

JOSEPH: I want to be the Scarecrow.

(STORMI does a funny scarecrow imitation, with limp knees and wobbly head movements.)
STORMI (to AUDIENCE): Lunch was almost as much fun as listening to David’s lame jokes would have been. So, I’ve been thinking. You know how it is when you hurt your finger? Like maybe the pointing finger on the hand you write with. (STORMI holds up finger and demonstrates.) All of a sudden you notice all of these things you do with that finger. It hurts to put on a glove. It hurts to sharpen your pencil. It hurts to tie your shoe. And you think, I sure will be happy when this finger is better. Then one day you notice that it’s better. You almost can’t remember when it stopped hurting. You just didn’t notice. It’s the same with moving. You can’t know when you will stop missing the last place so much it hurts, but you can’t stop tying your shoes either. Hey, that sounds a little philosophical. My father would be proud.

(HANNAH steps forward.)

HANNAH: Look at this.

STORMI (pointing to AUDIENCE): I’m talking.

(HANNAH notices AUDIENCE for the first time.)

HANNAH: Oh, Hi.

AUDIENCE: Hi.

HANNAH: Look. (She holds up a pen.) A limited edition, 2001 four-color, ballpoint gel ink pen, a rare and beautiful thing. . . .

(STORMI sits at the school computer.)

STORMI (typing): Hey, guys. I’m sorry I haven’t had much to tell you. It’s silly, but I thought I would feel better if I didn’t make friends. I felt worse and I think people thought I was mean. Anyway, I’ve met some pretty interesting people. David, you’d like Joseph. He has this funny sense of humor and likes to act in plays. There’s this really odd girl who I think is my favorite. She collects pens. Like your unicorns, Penelope. . . . And Ajitha uses all of these big words, but she isn’t stuck up or anything. (TO AUDIENCE) So, I’ve decided to let other members into the Stormi Giovanni Club. Really, it’s better that way I think.