

## A Place that Feels Like Home

My name is Matias Macero. I was born on the outskirts of the Venezuelan capital of Caracas. This is the story of my journey to America.

I sat on a run down porch swing next to my father, gazing out into the thick brush that surrounded my house. My mama had gone to Caracas hours before, but my father and I still waited patiently. Just as the sun began to set, I could hear the sound of tires on the worn down dirt road that lead to my house. My father had dozed off, so I shook him.

“Papa,” I whispered excitedly in his ear, “Someone is here.”

My father stirred and walked toward the car. I stood a little ways from the car as my father spoke to driver. After a few minutes, my father finally turned towards me, his face pale.

“What's wrong?” I said, obviously sounding worried.

“Matias,” he finally said slowly. “Your mother has been murdered.”

I just stood there in shock, tears streaming down my face. My father came to me and we embraced.

“Come now,” he whispered, choking on his words, “we have a grave to dig.

” The next few weeks were hard. After the funeral my father had told me that we were moving. Not just moving, but immigrating to the United States of America. He said he and mama were planning to leave before she died, because the violence was increasing.

He chuckled a little, “Ironic, isn't it,” he said desperately trying to crack a smile.

At first I was very angry, especially because of the timing, but I began to warm up to the idea. New hopes and dreams. Sounded good to me.

We spent the next six months waiting for our green cards and selling most of our possessions so we could afford our plane tickets. My father had gotten a job in North Dakota, working for an oil company. North Dakota sounded very different from Venezuela, and from what I understood, it was. When the day came to leave, I was less ready than I thought. The whole night before, I tossed and turned. Before breakfast, I threw up. Twice. I tried to use it as a reason not to leave, but my father knew it was just nerves. It didn't help that we got to the airport two hours early, so I had to just sit their, miserable. When our names were called to board, I almost fainted, but I dragged myself into my seat on the plane. As the plane took off, I looked out my window over the lush green forests, and I leaned into my seat and cried.

I was awakened by the sound of the pilot over the intercom telling everyone to prepare for descent into Bismarck, North Dakota. When we left the airport, there was a rental car waiting

for

us. Our new house was a couple of hours from the airport and both my dad and I didn't say a word on the way there. I just looked out the window at the vast landscape.

The town that I was now supposed to call my home was small compared to Bismarck, and I took in all of the odd sights that I had never seen in Venezuela. We weren't that far into town when my father pointed out a group of white-washed buildings. One of the buildings read:

“ Maddock High School  
Home of the Wildcats”

I gave him a quizzical look because he knew I couldn't read English.

“Escuela Secundaria," he said. I nodded in response.

Not far past the school my father turned down a driveway that read “Rob’s Trailer Park”. Our new house wasn't that much different from our's in Venezuela; disturbingly small, and ugly compared to the ones I saw in Bismarck.

The next couple of days were spent getting settled into our new house. When the day finally came when I had to go to school, I was terrified. The first few periods were horrible. I couldn't understand a word the teacher said. When lunch came I found an empty table and sat down. Thoughts floated through my head that my years in high school would always be this miserable and lonely, but not five minutes into my lunch a kid with red hair came and sat down next to me.

“I’m Logan," he said calmly.

“ Que?" I asked.

“You don't speak English, do you? Hold on one second, " he said, holding up his finger.

“Jeremy," he called, “come here."

A strong looking kid with curly brown hair walked over.

“This one can't speak English,” Logan said to Jeremy. “Can you translate?"

“No problem,” replied Jeremy.

Jeremy sat down on the other side of me and said "Hola mi nombre es Jeremy y este es Logan." I smiled and responded.

I spent the rest of the day with Logan and Jeremy and when I arrived home I sat down on my couch. America wasn't as bad as I thought. Besides, I now have the chance to become something beside an oil worker, unlike in Venezuela.

“Here," I thought, I have a future.”

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