

Privileged

Zoey Spooner

On a day, just like any other day,
My close family was going to meet my aunt and uncle's family
At my uncle's restaurant called
Mama Lacona's.

My family's white Honda Pilot stopped in its parking spot
And I hopped out while my dad was still turning off the car.
My new pink dress that flares up when I spin,
trailed behind me as I ran into the restaurant
Excited to see my favorite little cousin, Livi.

Her dad owned the whole restaurant,
So when I was with Livi,
I too felt like I owned the place.

Reaching the double doors before the rest of my close family,
I'm welcomed by my favorite little cousin
Who seemed to have been waiting to see me too.
She had a new bouncy ball.

We cut through the bar and kinda smokey area
To arrive to our personal playroom,
Also known in restaurant language as the "Party Room."
Our time passed by the number of bounces of the ball
Not by the seconds that passed on the clock.
So, after probably not too many bounces,
my mom summoned us to our normal table because it was ready.

I ordered my normal raspberry iced tea with my rear sitting in my favorite chair next to the fireplace.
I colored the restaurant's coloring sheet like so many times before.
Bored and ready for more fun, I turned to Livi,
Whispering and asking if we could go to the kitchen.

(The kitchen was always *alive*.)

Livi nodded yes,
so we snuck off from the table like we always did.
Our parents checked where we were going and we giggled and said
“The Party Room.”

We lied because we weren’t supposed to go the kitchen.
The kitchen had big knives, hot ovens, and
“Don’t be in the way of the Mexicans!”

We zigzagged our way to the kitchen,
So that our parents couldn’t see where we were actually going.
Pushing the door just far enough
For our two little bodies to squeeze through,
We shimmied our way into a place that seemed completely detached from
the burgundy colored and dim lighted restaurant.
It was a different world.

The Mexicans were singing along to their Mexican music,
Patting another Mexican’s back, and
Speaking in their Spanish secret code.
The lights were brighter,
And the spaghetti sauce smell was much stronger.
The kitchen was the source of energy for the whole restaurant.

I followed my nose to the sweet caramel smells,
The dessert station.
I asked for some of the bread pudding that one of the Mexicans was
making,
Already knowing that he would say yes.
He gave me the delicacy that I asked for,
No complaints.

Over time, I decided that Mexicans were really nice.
They would always do what other people told them to do,
No complaints.

I never wondered why the Mexicans didn’t eat in the restaurant
Like we did.
Their place was in the kitchen,
That’s just how it was.

They weren’t chefs, they were Mexicans.



About the Author
Zoey Spooner is a senior in elementary education at Iowa State University.