

# PALO ALTO ODYSSEY

## ‘Childhood is no longer permitted in Palo Alto’

MIRANDA felt that she owed some kind of amends to Taylor for pre-judging her as an idiot.

She had first encountered Taylor as a waitress at Coupa when the girl said “Perfect” to every customer’s request.

“What an airhead,” Miranda had thought. “I feel sorry for her and her future.”

Then it turned out that Taylor was the girlfriend of Miranda’s aspiring filmmaker friend Jeremy. She had gone to see her perform the night before at Lucie Stern Theater in “West Side Story,” where Taylor played the lead of Maria, and it turned out that she was a very talented actor.

“That’s just a reminder,” Miranda said to herself, “not to judge people superficially.”

It was a behavior she had worked to change, but it was still there.

This is part 26 of a 48-part fictionalized serial by John Angell Grant.

“Hi Miranda,” said Jeremy. Miranda looked up from her latte at Cafe Venetia.

Jeremy was on his way to his matinee ticket-taker shift at the Aquarius movie theater.

“I like the idea for your movie,” Miranda said.

“Thanks,” said Jeremy. “It ties together a lot of threads about my experience in Palo Alto.”

“Childhood is no longer permitted in Palo Alto,” he continued. “Except maybe what hyper-competitive parents see as the childhood part of boot camp for their kids; preparing them like Marines to do battle in the adult world; with a lot of high-end training.”

He added, “My mom keeps telling me I should learn Mandarin.”

“That’s a good idea,” said Miranda. “I’m thinking of doing that myself.”

“Kids are so tightly scheduled,” Jeremy rambled on, heedless. “Childhood the way my parents knew it, and the way you knew it, is gone.”

“So in my film I hope to make a meaningful commentary on the need for relaxation and unstructured time in one’s life; rather than the 24/7 rat-race that everyone in Palo Alto has fallen in to.”

“I like it,” said Miranda.

“Thank you,” said Jeremy. “I need all the support I can get. My parents aren’t too excited. They keep saying, get a job. So I got a job at the movie theater, working 19 hours a week, at minimum wage. They weren’t too happy about that.”

“I’m an artist, I told them. I need to pursue my art. That just makes my dad roll his eyes and say, ‘Why did I pay for your college education if you’re going to sit around and do nothing?’”

“That hurt. I don’t sit around and do nothing. I’ve shot half my film, and started editing some of the pieces.”

“How much have you raised for your movie,” asked Miranda.

“About five grand,” said Jeremy.

“What’s your budget,” asked Miranda.

“A hundred and fifty,” said Jeremy.

“It’s difficult being an artist,” he continued. “Anyway, my shift at the movie theater starts in 10 minutes. I have to go. Come by sometime. I’ll sneak you in for free.”

**More tomorrow.**