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Strangers

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I believe in allowing total strangers to change my life. Friends and family can help me figure out who I am, but it took an outsider to show me my true colors.

I was so excited to do the French Exchange at my high school and I expected my teacher to match me with a like-minded “fille”. When I saw the biography of my partner, Milena, I was taken aback. Milena and I come from completely different worlds. I live in the definition of suburban Pennsylvania. The new Target was the biggest attraction for a solid year after opening day. Milena lives about ten minutes away from Paris in an eclectic apartment and travels to East Asia for vacation. I am book smart and she is the definition of street smart. When she stepped off the plane, I was not completely convinced that our pairing would be a healthy relationship, but I was quickly proven wrong.

Ever since the day she walked into my home, I’ve underwent many personality changes. I believe that I’ve been responsible since the day I was born, but having another person to take care of, especially from a foreign country, gave me a sense of importance. I felt like I was the suburban ambassador to Downingtown, and as miniscule of a town I live in, I was opening someone’s eyes to a new place. Milena is a free spirit, and after spending a month with her, I learned to open up and show my feelings in a more vulnerable way. Of course I remain cautious, but I am not afraid to release those emotions that might not be so attractive or composed. I would have never had the confidence to leave my dull relationship without her reassurance and comfort. Most importantly, her breezy and vibrant attitude towards life freed me from the confines of my strict mindset that life is all about work and minimal play. I also believe that I have influenced her.

Milena's religious spirit strengthened around my family, and she met good people, unmasked from glitzy Paris streetlights.

Strangers can deliver a perspective that is completely objective, and I should not be afraid of letting others in my world. Watching her board the train for New York was the first goodbye of the summer. I wish nobody would ever feel this feeling. But maybe on her train ride, she will meet a stranger who will change her life, or better yet, be that breathtaking force in someone else's. I hope she knows that she has completely changed my life, and what I believe.