

REFLECTIONS OF A UNIQUE WRITER

**A play
by
Anthony J. Piccione**

(The story is set in a small room. There are two desks on each side of the stage. One side has two chairs. The other side has one chair and a laptop. The play begins with ANTHONY sitting at the desk that has the laptop.)

ANTHONY

Now how should I start this essay? I always have known that I should start with a strong opening sentence and a good thesis statement. That always helped on other writing assignments. It's pretty cool that my first English assignment is asking me to write about the way I write, but I didn't think that it was gonna be this tough to start working on. I mean, having a disability like Asperger's Syndrome really makes can make certain assignments harder for me as it is. But usually I didn't need help with these kinds of assignments. If I am writing about myself, I always did much better because I always knew what I was like as a person. But here, I really do have to do more thinking than I did in a typical high school assignment.

(sighs)

Sometimes I feel like I shouldn't even be here in college because of how hard schoolwork can be for me. But I've always wanted to work as a professional actor, director, playwright, and possibly more. And with those kind of goals, I know that I'm gonna need a college degree of some kind. It's good I actually did well enough in high school to get into college. I guess that must say something about me. I guess that it's a bit ironic that my first college essay is asking me to describe my writing process, considering how that is exactly what is challenging for me. I feel like I kinda already talked about this with my mom when I was sending her emails last week.

(Switch to other desk, where Anthony is talking to his mom. Anthony is writing a letter to his mom.)

ANTHONY

Dear Mom, So far, I am really enjoying college. I am making lots of new friends and I am enjoying my classes. The one problem I still seem to be having is being a better writer than I was in high school. These assignments tend to be more challenging than they were in high school, and some of these assignments are difficult for me. I don't know why, but I just can't seem to really get into these assignments, and I think that may be the main reason why I am struggling so much in school. Anyway, I hope things are going well at home. I miss you guys. Love, Anthony.

MOM

Dear Anthony, we really miss you here at home. Yes, I noticed throughout high school that you always got much better grades on creative writing assignments than ones that do not allow you to use creativity quite as often. I think it would be smart for you to use the academic support center at college often, and to take advantage of the tutors that are available to help with your English assignments. Just remember that there is nothing wrong with asking for help. We want you to be able to do as well as you can on your assignments. We love you and miss you. Love, Mom.

ANTHONY

Mom, I have been getting some academic help on my English assignments. I have visited the writing center at the library and have worked with tutors on editing my assignment. Thankfully, my first major essay for English class has been to write about your writing process, and I tend to do well on assignments that ask me to write about my own personal experiences. The only

obstacle is how there seem to be many rules on how I should be writing this paper, but then again, rules have always been an obstacle for me while I was writing in school. Anyway, I hope to write back again soon. -Anthony.

(Switch back to desk with laptop. Anthony is writing again.)

ANTHONY

So that's what it is. I always do well when it comes to writing assignments that let me be creative and write what I want, but assignments with stricter rules tend to be much harder for me. That's why I need help with my writing. It's not that I'm a bad writer. I just can only write a certain way. But I guess you could say I've liked to use my imagination since I was a little kid, both when I'm writing and in other situations. Well it always a good thing to know that I'm good at coming up with creative ideas. But I really do need to work on my writing for when I'm working on an assignment about something that is completely boring. Otherwise, I might not make it through college. Sometimes, I look back at my high school days, and I'm still shocked that I passed high school. Math and science were both much more challenging subjects for me, obviously. But I really needed to work hard in English class too. I really did need to think hard during certain assignments in order to do well.

(Switch to other desk, where Anthony is talking to his high school English teacher after class.)

ANTHONY

Ms. Clay, I was wondering if I could ask you something?

MS. CLAY

Yes, Anthony?

ANTHONY

It's just that I was having trouble answering a couple of these questions for the essay that we had to write about the book we've been reading in class that is due next week.

MS. CLAY

Anthony, have you even actually been reading this book in class?

ANTHONY

Yes. It's just that I feel like I'm not really doing as well as I should be doing when it comes to responding to the essay questions we've been getting after we finish reading the book in class.

MS. CLAY

Anthony, I am disappointed that you aren't doing well in this class lately. I know that you can do much better than this. I've seen it before. You got an A for my creative writing class last semester. Why is it that this time you aren't living up to your full potential?

ANTHONY

I'm so sorry, Ms. Clay. I swear that I really am working hard to try and do well on this assignment.

MS. CLAY

Well I'm hoping that you do well, for your sake. For someone who wants to graduate and go to college next year, you aren't doing as well as I would expect, much less as well as your professors will expect.

(Switch to desk with laptop.)

ANTHONY

So how the hell am I supposed to do well in college if I barely made it through high school? I doubt that I'm gonna get very many assignments that don't have very many strict rules. I mean, maybe at some point I'll get a cool assignment where I get to write a play or something. Who knows? But it's pretty obvious that I'm gonna have to work much harder than I ever did in high school to graduate from college. That includes working on my writing. I always start with a good opening sentence and a strong thesis statement. I always organize my thoughts before I write them down on paper. I try to make sure my grammar is accurate. But I still have to do more in order to do a satisfactory job in class, apparently. Well how did my friends do so well in class? How were any of my adult friends who I've worked with in theatre been successful in school?

(Switch to other desk, where Anthony is talking to a friend from theatre.)

ANTHONY

So exactly how hard was college?

EMILY

Well, I will tell you that the workload is much bigger than in high school, and that the professors tend to be much tougher than high school teachers.

ANTHONY

Even in the theatre department?

EMILY

Especially in the theatre department. I can tell you for certain that your professors will make you work much harder so you can get better.

ANTHONY

I always thought it would be the other subjects that would be challenging. Math and science were easily my worst subjects. Writing for certain complex assignments had also been a tough challenge for me in school.

EMILY

Just think of it this way. All of those subjects you study in college will probably be something you could use while working in the theatre, and that will encourage you to work harder on those subjects. That's what helped me get through them in college.

ANTHONY

What if I still struggle with those subjects?

EMILY

Anthony, I've known you for quite a few years now. And one of the many things I've learned about you is that you've always worked hard to accomplish many things. You've learned a lot over the years, you've gotten parts in many theatre productions, and you've always gone above and beyond to help others working in theatre. I think that hard work will pay off in college, and that you will have a very successful career.

ANTHONY

I hope you're right.

EMILY

I'm optimistic about your future. I think this is true.

ANTHONY

I don't know. I guess maybe I'm just exaggerating. Who knows? Maybe I will go through college fairly easily. I always try to be optimistic about the future. But I guess I'm just nervous, that's all.

EMILY

Just stay positive. Positive feelings always pay off. Trust me.

(Switch to desk with laptop.)

ANTHONY

So I guess maybe I'm gonna need more than advice from my friends if I'm gonna figure out what to do in college. I mean, seriously? Am I gonna make it through even my first semester here at college? How am I gonna do this? I can't fail in college. Or else I will probably fail in life in general. I can't deal with that. I don't wanna have to go through life being seen or judged as a failure. I wanna be successful. I want to go on and become a great actor or director in professional theatre. I want to show everyone that despite having Asperger's syndrome, I am able to overcome these obstacles and defy the stereotypes that have defined people with my disability. I have to do well in these classes. These next couple of months could very well be some of the most crucial moments in my entire life. And that really is saying something, considering how much I really do think about myself and my own personal life experiences.

(Switch to other desk, where Anthony is talking to a mirror image of himself.)

ANTHONY

So what do you think? Where should I go from here?

MIRROR ANTHONY

What do you think?

ANTHONY

Well I know I need to get help certain assignments and try and find ways to improve my writing in areas that need improvement. But what if that's not enough?

MIRROR ANTHONY

Why wouldn't it be?

ANTHONY

sighs I don't know. Maybe I'm just overreacting. Maybe if I just work a little bit harder, I will do well in college after all. I mean, if I was able to get through high school, maybe I'll get through college too if I just work harder than before.

MIRROR ANTHONY

You have been through a lot, Anthony. That is something you need to consider.

ANTHONY

I know, I've seen a lot of crap during my lifetime. But almost every time I've been presented with a major obstacle or have been told that you couldn't do something, I've proved those who told me I couldn't do something wrong.

MIRROR ANTHONY

And what makes you think you can't do it this time?

ANTHONY

Mainly because of how I overcame previous obstacles in the past. I feel like if I handled these ones the same way, I would fail miserably this time.

MIRROR ANTHONY

But that is how you felt in worse situations.

ANTHONY

Well yeah, but this is kinda a first try for me. I've never been through college before. I don't know whether I will succeed or fail as a student here.

MIRROR ANTHONY

But you do know that you've always been willing to work harder than most people to get what you want.

ANTHONY

And what if that's still not enough this time.

MIRROR ANTHONY

Don't let having Asperger's make you think it won't be enough. You already know what you want and how you'll get it. You know you want to work in professional theatre someday. Don't ever think that you're incapable of doing something. That's never helped you get anywhere in life in the past.

ANTHONY

Sometimes I wonder how I come up with this advice.

MIRROR ANTHONY

That's what happens when you spend a lot of time thinking to yourself.

(Switch to desk with laptop.)

ANTHONY

Well, I guess the good thing about all of this thinking is that now I have plenty of ideas for my essay.

(Starts typing on the laptop. After a ton of typing, he stops.)

Alright, it looks like this is gonna be a pretty decent first draft for my essay. Now it's time to think of a good title. What should I call it?

(Brief pause.)

Ah hah!

(Says title while typing.)

“Reflections of a Unique Writer”.

(Stops typing.)

(FADE TO BLACK)

THE END



About the Playwright

"This is what makes me who I am.
It is both my curse and my blessing.
It is both the cause of my bliss and the cause of my sorrow.
It is both what leads me to make mistakes and what leads me to do great things.
It is both the founder of my past and my pathway to my future."

Anthony J. Piccione was born on December 31st, 1992, in Rochester, New York. He always had a strong love for the arts. His main goal in life is to graduate from college and then succeed as a professional playwright. Since he was a child, Piccione had enjoyed writing stories, and acting out scenes from my favorite movies. His first discovered his passion for acting while he was in high school, when he had been involved in the Drama Club, and also with several local community and regional theaters in Connecticut, perhaps most notably with the Hartford Children's Theatre, where he had been involved for four years as a student, actor, intern, volunteer, assistant director, and teaching artist. Aside from theatre and writing, his interests include music, film, painting, history, politics, philosophy, cooking, and spending time with my friends and family.

To read more of Mr. Piccione's work, please visit his blog at

www.anthonypiccione.blogspot.com

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