

## **Flying High**

I groaned and hit the snooze button as soon as my alarm went off. I rolled over in an attempt to fall back asleep, but then the thought occurred to me; I was getting on a plane today. I threw off the covers, sprung up, and looked around my room. The other three girls I roomed with still rolled around their beds and rubbed their eyes sleepily. I stood up and turned on the lights to wake them up. Apparently they needed to be awake if I was up and moving because I didn't care how noisy or bright the room was - even at three o'clock in the morning. I pulled everything I'd need for the morning out of my carry-on suitcase and began getting ready.

Four o'clock rolled around and I eagerly packed the rest of my items in my suitcase. I was the first one to be completely ready because I was excited for the thrill coming my way. I stood by the door staring at my "roommates" in hopes of hurrying them with my glares. We finally walked out of our room at the Ramada in Albuquerque, New Mexico and headed to the school bus.

Every two years, the juniors and seniors at Monticello High School are able to take a trip to our nation's capital, Washington, D.C. It is a long sequence of bus rides, flights, and metro rides to get us there. It is a long and tedious process, but it's exciting for someone who's never been on a plane before, let alone a trip across the country without their parents. This was the case for me.

We arrived at the Albuquerque International Sunport and hurried off the bus to grab our bags. Getting our tickets and our luggage checked proved to be a very long process considering there were 44 people - high school students and chaperones - coming on the trip with us. When

we all finally had a ticket and paid for the luggage that would ride in the belly of the plane, we headed to the lines for the security check. A whopping 30 minutes later, we finally made it past the metal detectors and various scanners. At this point, I was starving and I had to have the full airport experience of getting an overpriced iced coffee and a bagel from the food court. I took my food and sat in my seat, impatiently waiting until the blessed time when we'd finally board the plane.

I became accustomed to the flashing lights on the runway and the way the carpet was woven and worn in front of my seat, considering that's all I could look at for the 1.5-hour wait. I began bouncing my leg and looking around the area full of seats with an annoyed glare. Every time a voice came over the intercom at our gate, I only became more disappointed when they didn't tell us to board.

After what seemed like the most lengthy wait of my life, the overdue announcement came and everyone eagerly rose from their seats and formed a long line in front of the hallway to the plane. One painstakingly long step at a time, I drew closer to the first plane I'd ever been on. When I finally saw it, I couldn't stop myself from reaching out to pat the metal panels that made up the enormous jet. As soon as I stepped onto the threshold, my whole attitude changed from irritable to enthusiastic. I was finally here! I found my seat and silently willed everyone to hurry and find theirs so we could take off.

After what felt like an eternity later, the plane started moving and a pilot's voice came over the intercom. I didn't hear the safety briefing because I was too distracted looking out of the window at the flashing lights on the runway. We rolled onto the straightaway and came to a stop. The suspense was *killing* me. All of a sudden, the plane launched forward at an unbelievable

pace. Faster and faster we went until the wheels left the ground. As we soared higher off of the ground, the butterfly count in my stomach and the pitch of my laughter followed suit.

The view was breathtaking. The sun was just peeking out from the horizon, turning the clouds various shades of pink and orange. The city below us was lit up and sparkling, but growing dimmer as we moved east away from it. The entire flight impressed me just as much as the take-off. I was left in awe for the rest of our time in the air.