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Final Draft of Article 1

Journalism

A Very “Sarah” Job

We pulled up to a warehouse building that was a faded green and purple. Even though it was a warehouse, there was a front porch with green and purple lawn chairs placed behind the rail. The sign read, “Tail Waggin’s Dog Bakery” and it had clearly been there awhile. Upon walking inside, a cool breeze with cinnamon and vanilla hit me. It smelled like someone was baking. An older lady behind the register greeted us with a huge smile and a bubbly welcome. You would have thought she had known us for years. There were pictures of someone’s dogs dressed up in Christmas hats behind the register. There were about 25 different kinds of decorated dog treats with a sign next to them saying they were handmade with human-grade ingredients. Bear looked at me and sort of laughed.

“I can’t believe a place like this exists in Georgetown!”

I laughed too because this seemed like the kind of place where people greet each other by name and actually enjoy their job. I looked to see if there was a “Now Hiring” sign, but I didn’t see one.

I would love to work here.

It was just an ordinary day. My husband had dropped me off in the morning because he was worried about the heavy rain that was coming after work. It was a busy day and a lot of my favorite customers had come in, which is probably why my throat was dry. I was counting the drawer, thankful the hectic day had come to an end. Diane was counting credit card receipts right next to me and she had a pensive look on her face.

“It was a good day today. Bear picking you up?”

I was surprised she hadn’t noticed I had come in through the front today. I usually come in the back because that is where I park. The front parking lot is pretty small.

“Yeah, he is. He should be here any second, but I can wait outside if you are ready to go.”

Diane stopped what she was doing and looked at me to speak. She does this a lot when she wants to emphasize a point.

“Don’t be ridiculous. Kelee and I can wait for you. You know you can use your key that I gave you. I don’t hand my keys out to just anyone, you know, only people I trust.”

I knew Diane trusted me. I had only worked for her for about six months and she had already given me a key and an Instant Pot. I looked at the door to see Bear bouncing in wearing a Harambe headband and workout clothes. He still looked sweaty and out of breath, like he had just come from the gym. Diane looked pleased to see him and smiled when he walked up the counter we were standing behind.

“Hi Bear, how are you doing? Are the dogs healthy?”

“I’m good. How about you? They are doing pretty well. They absolutely love the raw food you gave us. It is really making a difference in their coat, attitude; everything really.”

“That’s awesome! I’m so glad you guys are enjoying it. Its so important to feed them good food and I’m so glad you are seeing a difference.”

I looked from Diane to Bear as they talked about all our French bulldogs and their health problems. I found myself drifting into my own thoughts. When I first started working here, Bear had told me he couldn’t picture a more “Sarah” job. Truth was, I couldn’t picture a more Sarah job either. I wished I could do this job for the rest of my life. I loved the bright purple and green walls and how the store smelled like cinnamon and honey every time I walked in. I loved that you could tell that Pete and Diane made everything themselves. The store was well loved. I was vaguely listening to the conversation as I thought about what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. Bear was telling a story about how Bingsley jumped into the river after him and almost drowned. This story always brought Bear to tears because it showed him that Bingsley loved him enough to jump in the river after him. Ever since then, Bear and Bingsley were inseparable. Bingsley loved me too, but not as much as he loved Bear. After Bear realized that French bulldogs were the best dogs in the world, he decided to get two more. His voice cracked and he wiped at his eyes. Diane wiped at her eyes too. She started to say something and then stopped. She met my eyes with a fierce look and then glanced at Bear again before saying what was really on her mind.

“You know, I have had my franchising license for awhile but I just had a bad feeling about both people that approached me. Pete was really mad at me for turning them away, but I just didn’t feel like they were the right person. You guys have the passion for this business. You guys have the support and each other and that’s what it takes. I’m just saying that it is here if you want it. Y’all can think about it.”

I felt tears in my eyes as I saw tears in Diane’s eyes. I never in a million years thought she would ever be open to franchising. I looked at Bear. He already knew what I was thinking. *This is my dream job! This can’t be real, there is no way this will work out. Its too good to be true, Sarah. Don’t get your hopes up.*

I have spent a lot of time having no idea what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. Of course, that’s usually the first and most awkward question people ask you when they meet you. *Why didn’t I know? Had I not found it yet?* I was driving home after my last shift at Pier 1. I just had to quit. I hated working with Brenda. When a customer walked in, I greeted them with a smile and asked them how they were doing. Brenda always told me to ask them if they already had a Pier 1 credit card, not how their day was. Brenda was tall, stubby, and had really curly blonde hair. I looked at her hair in a ponytail and her permanently frowned face with her drawn-on eyebrows. When Brenda looked at me, it was like she was always looking past me. She certainly never thought I did anything well. I quit because, well, I wanted to quit. Bear even told me to quit. He said all they do is take advantage of me. I didn’t know what job I was going to go to next. I looked at my phone and felt uneasy. I couldn’t tell my parents I had a quit a job that paid me. I could hear the disappointment in my father’s voice. I remembered when he asked me what I wanted to do.

“Sarahbell, you could be a speech pathologist or maybe a dermatologist.”

“Yeah Dad, I could. I’m not sure what I want to be, though.”

He frowned like he does when he disapproves but doesn’t want to hurt my feelings. His eyes looked tired and his skin was a dark brown from all his exposure to the sun. I hated to disappoint him. I would rather die than disappoint my parents. They had sacrificed everything to get me to college and I didn’t even have a direction. I felt like crying when I thought about the

fact that I had just quit my job and that I didn't have another job to go to. I wanted to do something I actually enjoyed doing. The only problem was, the only thing I enjoyed doing was playing with my dogs and talking to people. Too bad there wasn't a job where I could do something like that.

It was my first day on the job. Diane wasn't here today but there was a tall blonde woman named Jeanette who was training me. She was sort of like the manager but we didn't really have titles here. Everyone was sort of equal. We were baking cookies today. Dog cookies. I could hardly contain my excitement! Jeanette said after we were done with baking cookies that we were going to make cupcakes for a gender reveal.

"We get paid to do this?" I asked.

Jeanette laughed and said, "We like to have fun here. I know it seems kind of ridiculous, but the dogs and their owners really do love the treats and the cakes."

I really think I'm going to like working here.

I was running late. I was in a summer class, Journalism to be specific. I was trying not to look down at my watch too much because I didn't want to seem rude. Billy was supposed to meet us there at 2 and now he would be there at 12:30! I looked terribly unprofessional. Luna was sick all night so I threw on the first thing I could find in my drawer because I was running late. I was always running late these days because I was trying to graduate from college early while also trying to franchise a business. I looked down at my baggy t-shirt I had found in Slovakia, my yoga pants, and my filthy tennis shoes and realized I had no choice but to run home and change. I wanted Billy to take me seriously and that meant dressing the part. Billy had done over 400 million in business deals and he was the real deal. I pretty much ran out of my Journalism class. I ran in my house and ran right back out in a more professional looking outfit. Not only was Billy coming to evaluate the store but he was bringing his partner from New York, Jacqueline. Billy was about 5'10, had really curly hair, and always dressed very trendy. Billy had never been to Tail Waggin's before and he was bringing Jacqueline so that they could determine whether or not our business was the right fit for Domain North Side. This meeting was very important. After what seemed like an eternity of driving, I pulled up at the faded green and purple building. There was an unfamiliar Audi SUV in the parking lot and I knew exactly whose it was. I walked in to find Billy, Bear, and Jacqueline standing near the front of the store.

"There she is!"

"Hi, I'm so sorry I'm la-

"No, no, Sarah, you are not late. Jacqueline and I were early. Our meeting got finished at 11 and we decided to just head on over here."

Yeah, let's just head on over here an hour and a half early and drive Sarah into a panic. Jacqueline was wearing a navy blue t-shirt dress and she had on Chanel earrings. I saw her look me up and down. She probably noticed my snake-skin Tory Burch sandals and the small hole in the top of my jeans. I had worn my Tory Burch sandals because I knew she would recognize the brand. Her hair was a bright blonde and I couldn't tell what color her skin actually was because of all the makeup she was wearing. She seemed nice.

"We actually just finished the tour! I absolutely love the place. It is the perfect store to go in the Domain. It is adorable! I was asking Bear if we could invest in it because I just know it's going to be a success!" Jacqueline said.

A wave of calm washed over me when I realized they had liked the store. I was late, but it had gone well. I reminded myself to interrogate and thank Bear later.

“I’m so glad you liked it! We really love Tail Waggins and everything it represents and we are so excited to have the opportunity to be at Domain North Side.” I said.

“Well, we will be in touch. Now it’s just going to be up to the other investors and trying to find the right spot for y’all. We definitely want you and know there is a need for this store at North Side. Thanks so much for showing us around. It really is a cute store.” Billy said.

Billy smiled what seemed to be a genuine smile and gave me a hug before he and Jacqueline headed out the door. I couldn’t believe what had just happened. Did this mean my dream had a real chance? Did this mean I would get to play with dogs and help people with their pets for the rest of my life? I had never been so sure of what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. Tail Waggins Dog Bakery to me meant friendship, community, and a commitment to quality over money. I appreciated that I had a relationship with almost everyone that walked in the door of Tail Waggins and that Diane pulled any items that had ever had a recall. I loved that we were all about quality over quantity and that we did what we did because we loved it. For the first time in my life, I felt like I found something I wanted to do for the rest of my life. I couldn’t believe that I actually knew what I wanted to do with my life. I loved my job because I did things that meant something to me and others. I helped people with their pet problems, got them treats, helped them pick out food, and I absolutely loved it. Some people might think what I do is silly and insignificant but those people have never loved or cared for a pet. Now when people ask me, “what will you do after college?” or “what do you want to do for the rest of your life?” I can say, I want to love people and animals well through Tail Waggin’s Dog Bakery.

Authors Afterward

When I was writing this, I wanted to convey just how hard it was on me to not know what I wanted to do. Usually, you have a goal in mind and then you do stuff based on your ultimate goal. For me, it didn’t really matter what I majored in or what my GPA was because it wouldn’t have helped me. I do think Communications was (and is) the best major for me but its hard to work towards something if you are unsure of your goal. I also wanted to try and convey how this just happened to me because it really is just a crazy coincidence that I ended up working at a place that I love with people I love and that I get to open my own franchise. Life usually just doesn’t work that way and isn’t that kind. I also wanted to show Bear’s role in this because he encouraged me to pursue stuff based on what I liked and not how much money I would make doing it or how “glorious” of a job it was. When I got the job there, Bear and others told me that they couldn’t imagine a more Sarah job. I honestly couldn’t imagine a more Sarah job either but I wanted to show how this was a job that was suited to who I was as a person and it didn’t ask me to change who I was like Pier 1 did. I included the bit about Pier 1 because I felt like it was so corporate and fake and I just couldn’t deal with my own complicity within that system.