

## ESSAY

### 12-13 "Vacation" by Kelsey Cipolla

"We're going on vacation!" isn't exactly the phrase that invokes terror into children. For most, vacation means long, lazy days, spent sleeping late into the afternoon, then lulling in the sun. Many look forward to the unique opportunity of traveling and exploring that a vacation provides.

Then there's my family. At first we're ecstatic, thinking of all the fun and adventures to be had on vacation. But as the actual even grows closer, we begin to see the downside of a holiday in the sun.

First, I pull out a suitcase, thinking I'll pack before the morning our flight leaves this time. A half hour later, I see I've greatly underestimated packing. My suitcase seems to be holding a grudge against me, perhaps from the time I left it in the airport. It won't hold everything I've deemed necessary for a trip to Florida. It refuses to zip-up, after only eight pairs of shorts, nine T-shirts, three pairs of shoes, a hat, two swimsuits, and a super-sized bottle of sunscreen, SPF 45. This is just over half of what I'd been planning to bring. I dump the contents on the floor and glare angrily at the items.

A few hours later, I've successfully packed, and I'm pondering what to do next. Taking it easy seems to be the best idea after all that strenuous packing.

So I relax, until my dreams are interrupted by the satanic beeping of my alarm clock, which is funny, because I don't remember setting my alarm clock. Who on earth wanted me to wake up at 5:00 in the morning? Do they not realize I'm not pleasant to be around until at least 8, and not chipper until 9? "Wake up, sleepy head!" someone yells from down the hall. Why am I waking up? I vaguely remember a trip. A plane might have been involved. The words, "Vacations aren't always about rest and relaxation, sometimes they're about waiting in hour long lines." Suddenly, our trip to Florida floods into my mind.

I haul my bag down the stairs, then shower and get dressed. I then journey into the kitchen. "Bright lights. Why are the lights so bright? They weren't like this yesterday!" I grumble. "Coffee? Pancakes? Please, feed me!" I whine.

"We leave in ten minutes. Are you going with your hair like that?" my dad asks gleefully. I hate morning people. I catch my reflection in the oven door. My hair has dried into a bird's nest. I run to find a comb to untangle my hair before the eggs start hatching.

By the time I'm finished, we have to leave. Upon arrival at the airport, we are each handed an itinerary. I glance down at the mess of numbers and words. Wait! There must be a mistake.

"Dad, this says we wake up at five-thirty a.m. We're supposed to be in the parks by six-thirty a.m."

"Yes, it does. Is there something wrong with that?" my dad asks, looking offended.

"It's a vacation. People don't wake up at early on their vacation!" I shout.

"An early arrival is the only way to get maximum fun out of our Disney World Vacation. I read it in the guide book," he says, as if the guide book is the Bible. "Don't argue."

I mumble. This will be the worst vacation ever. We board the aircraft, and we're in the sky a few minutes later. I'm surprised we can stay in the air, since I'm pretty sure the dread that has taken over every inch of my being, is quite heavy.

We return two weeks later. I'm not tanner, or more well rested. If possible, I've actually grown paler. Blue circles bunch up under my eyes. I've just gotten back from my summer vacation, and unless I'm very much mistaken, I believe I needed a vacation *from* my vacation.

There was no lounging, lulling, resting, relaxing, or basking in peace and tranquility. I have a bruise on my knee where some little kid kicked me when I told him he was too short to ride Space Mountain. Yet, I've still managed to have a decent vacation.

Maybe, just maybe, a vacation shouldn't be measured by the way you feel afterwards, but the way you feel during the trip. Now, I might feel like something the dog dragged in, jumped on, and then through in a cold, muddy, puddle. When I was there, in the Magic Kingdom, I felt happy. Not comfortable, not relaxed, certainly not tranquil, but happy. Maybe we should all be striving for this kind of pure bliss, that might not leave us feeling refreshed, but that gives us a memory to look back on, and lets us remember the way we felt at that moment.