

**High School Essay**  
**Honorable Mention**

**Blind Reflections**

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“Seis y siete. G. ¿Recuerdas? Six and seven?” My abuelita sweeps through the deserted mall, the eerie silence of the halls and stores contrasting with the sharp clicks of her heels on the polished floors. Her lips are painted with bright lipstick, and clouds of vanilla-scented perfume float off her shawl and engulf us in their sweet aroma.

“I remember, Abuelita,” I tell her. She seems reassured and I suppress a sigh; the theater, in the early hours of the morning, is vacant, except for a few employees, and the silvery silence of the world around us is jarring, as if all the world is asleep but us.

Entering the room where they’re showing the movie, we survey the seats; there is one other person there, a few rows ahead of us, snoring, and Abuelita peers at him over the tops of her glasses, the frames glinting under the theater’s lights. She wrinkles her nose in distaste.

“Here they are, Abuelita. Row G, seats six and seven.” She smiles at me, eyes still trained on the dozing man, hand closing protectively over the popcorn. Other moviegoers file in, chattering loudly, but Abuelita and I remain silent, parallel, watching advertisements whizz across the screen, exploding in blinding color and endless noise. The man remains asleep, and I’m becoming increasingly concerned for him, when I hear, “Excuse me. Is this seat 12?” I turn to see a lady next to me, smiling and pointing at the seat to my left, white teeth contrasting starkly with her dark skin.

“I think it’s closer to the middle,” I say, matching her smile and gesturing to my right. Her gaze flits between her real seat and the seat next to me before returning to my face.

“I think I’ll sit here, instead.” She sits down beside me, and the previews start, lights dim, and conversations lull. We exchange one last smile, and glancing over, I see Abuelita looking past me, frowning, gaze flitting between the screen and the lady, on edge, unsure of the situation.

Then the movie starts, and the dark, impenetrable shadows of the room renders them indistinguishable, like an echo, or impressions of the same portrait, laughing, covering their faces, and crying in synchronization. Their inhibitions crack away, unifying despite their differences, under the brilliance of the movie screen.

I feel I am the link between two converging worlds, and no longer remain solely in my burgundy theater seat, but in the seats of all around me. We are not merely self-contained units, but interconnected webs spidering, splintering into the lives of others. I am featured in their lives, and they in mine.

The movie ends, and with a curve of her lips and a nod, the lady leaves, gone from our lives forever, nameless. The man remains comatose, remarkably, and Abuelita returns to her popcorn, glancing at her wristwatch.

The illusion is shattered, but for two hours, it had been whole.

“I liked it,” Abuelita said. “What did you think?”