



A Tale of Two Countries

Erin & Nene's Friendship Story

My friend Nene is Japanese, but she grew up in Australia. I'd like to tell you about our **friendship!** Nene moved from Osaka, Japan, to the Gold Coast, Australia when she was 6. We met in year 2 at Miami **Primary School**. We **quickly** became friends! We were in the same class from year 2 all the way to year 6. Year 7 was the first time we had ever been in different classes.



**The
April
2024
Issue**

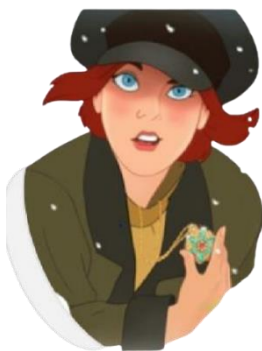
**What is in
this issue:**

**Friendship
Without
Borders:**

**Erin &
Nene**

**Sheila,
Andie &
Megan**

**Double
Bonus:
Song from
Anastasia**



Next, we moved to Miami High, but we were in different classes again.

We finally had some classes together in our last 2 years. We were together in Japanese class, **Business** class, and **study** period **together**. There were many fun events in High School like running a business for a day, sports days, and visits to the beach next to school.

After high school, I went to Griffith University, & Nene took a **gap year**. She went home to Osaka and spent a year working at a **souvenir** shop in the Kansai **airport**. The next year, she joined me at University. We had 1 **linguistics** class, and 2 **Chinese** classes together. But now I have forgotten almost all my Chinese! One thing I remember is: 'This is my Japanese friend (这是我的日本人朋友).' Nene also did a **study abroad** in Spain. How cool!



After University, I taught in Australia, and Nene worked a **few** different jobs. She worked at a shop called Miniso, at the Apple store, at a Japanese restaurant, she even worked as a **casino** game dealer. I moved to Japan in November, 2020. It was during corona, which was crazy! Nene moved here on the 17th of March, 2022- **Saint Patrick's Day!** Now, we both live in Tokyo! I teach English at Keika, and Nene works at a **translation** company.

Interview with Nene

Please tell us about yourself, and when you first moved to Australia.

Hi, I'm Nene! I'm 27 years old, and I was born in Osaka Japan. However, I grew up in Australia! I moved there when I was 6. Erin was one of my first friends I made on the Gold Coast in grade 2. One of the very first memories I have is her and another girl inviting me to **hang out** at lunch time on my first day at Miami Primary School. I remember feeling very **relieved** that my classmates made me feel welcome. It meant a lot to me as I was in a new school, and a whole new country where I was not **familiar** with the **language** yet (English).

Was it difficult to adapt to the Gold Coast?

I remember I cried most days before going to school for about the first 6 months. I don't remember very well now, but I think I was just very **nervous** and **uncertain**. My mum tells me that even though I was **emotional** for a while, I never cried about wanting to go back to Japan. I never hated my life on the Gold Coast, it just took some time for me to **adapt**.

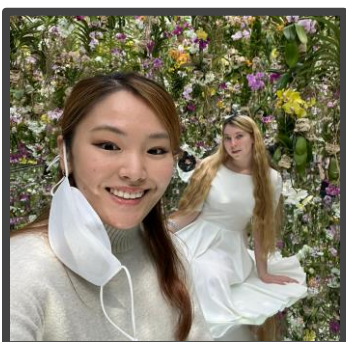
Can you tell us about adapting to a new culture and language?

Surrounding myself with lots of local people **definitely** helped me adapt to a new culture and language faster. Some Asian families will choose a school that has a big **community** of Asian people and students there already. So that their child can feel **comfortable**, and like they **belong**. When my family moved, we just chose a school that was near our new house. I think there were maybe 2 other students in the whole school who were also Japanese, and they weren't in my grade. I think some kids who move to a new country might feel **uncomfortable** in an **environment** like that, but somehow, I was ok.

I think having amazing **classmates** like Erin making me feel **welcome** from day one helped me a lot. Also, because I moved at 6 years old, I didn't think about my **identity** or my **race**. I was just another kid. This made it easier for me to adapt without many **worries** or **anxiety**. I wasn't scared to **pronounce** things wrong as I learnt English. I felt **confident** in my **daily life**.



XOXO,
Erin & Nene



The Keika Chronicle 2009 - 2024 <3 3



A Tale of Many Cities



Sheila, Andie, and Megan's Friendship Story



Megan



Andie



The Beginning...

Stone Ridge School of the Sacred Heart High School in Washington D.C.

Andie, Megan, and I (Sheila) met when we started high school together in 2009. We were all new to the school and quickly became friends. We went to a **private**, all-girls, **Catholic** school right outside of Washington D.C. We are from the **capital** of the United States of America. We wore school **uniforms** which are **rare** there. In fact, in a lot of ways, our school was like Keika Girls' School! However, high school in the U.S.A. is four years long. The school year is from September to June.

In **freshman** (1st) year, Megan had a fun Christmas party, and then a pool party for her birthday. We had many fun events in **sophomore** (2nd) year. We had a **formal dance** called the Winter Ball. Students wear **fancy** dresses and suits and dance together! That summer, I did a special two-week U.S.A. and China / Taiwan **foreign policy** class.

In **junior** (3rd) year, Megan and I helped to make Anime Club at our school. We watched popular Japanese anime shows and Studio Ghibli movies with friends in a classroom on Friday afternoons. Then that summer, Andie and Megan joined me in another special two-week summer class. It was on U.S.A. and **Russian** foreign policy.

In our **senior** (4th) year, Andie and I did a Model **Organization of American States** (M.O.A.S.) Conference in the fall. This is like Model **United Nations** (M.U.N.) but only for North, Central, and South America. We were also in high-level **Spanish** class together. Megan was in high-level **French** class. In the spring, our school has a special **debutante ball** called the Très Bien Ball for graduating girls. We wore beautiful white **gowns**. Then, we had Ring Day to **exchange** our class rings. Many American high schools and universities have special **class rings** students can buy when they graduate. They are **unique** to each school! Then, we had **Prom**, a famous final formal dance. Last, our high school **graduation** was in June 2013, right before I turned 18 years old. We became (young) adults!





¿The Middle? Universities Around the World



All three of us went to **undergraduate** college from 2013-2017. I went to Kalamazoo College in Michigan, U.S.A. I was a **Religion** major & Japanese **minor**. Megan went to Vassar College in New York, U.S.A. She was an English & French double **major**. Andie went to the University of St. Andrews in Edinburgh, **Scotland**. Her **degrees** were in **International Relations** and Russian.

All three of us went on junior (3rd) year **study abroad** exchanges. I went to Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan. I was in the School of International Liberal Studies (SILS) & Center for Japanese Language (CJL) there. I did a short teaching **internship** in Shimane **Prefecture** too. Megan studied at Reid Hall in Paris, France. She studied French **culture**. Andie studied at Yaroslavl State University and Kazan State University in Russia. She **focused** on the Russian **language**. Then, she did a **translation** internship at the famous **Hermitage Museum!** All three of us have **experience** teaching English abroad too. Andie in **Kyrgyzstan**, Megan in Évron, France, and me in Unnan City, Morioka City, and Tokyo, Japan.



...The End?

Where are we now?



Recently, back in America, Megan got a **master's degree** (MFA) in **Fiction** from the University of **Maryland** in 2020. She was a teaching assistant (TA) for **creative writing** classes there. She has a book of **short stories** coming out in November 2024 from West Virginia University Press! Andie went to the famous University of Notre Dame **Law School** and graduated in 2022. She is studying for the test to become a corporate **lawyer** now. I have been an **Assistant Language Teacher** (ALT) in Japan since 2017. First, I taught in Morioka City in Iwate Prefecture. Then, I came back to Tokyo in 2019 on the JET Program. I got an online TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) **Certificate** in 2021. It is now my fifth year at Keika Girls' School! **Hopefully**, I can **level up** more and stay for a long time!

Our Special Spot in the World Hillwood Estate, Museum & Gardens Washington D.C., U.S.A.



Hillwood is our favorite place in the world to see each other again. It is beautiful old house with a **museum**, café, and **gardens**. It is perfect for us because it has Russian art and **Fabergé** eggs for Andie, who studied in Russia. French **art** and desserts for Megan, who studied in France. Then, Japanese gardens for me, who lives in Japan (and Andie whose grandmother is Japanese!). Finally, it is in Washington D.C., our hometown where we first met. We have achieved so many dreams... but it hasn't been easy. We have had money problems, **bully** problems, **health** problems, and more, but we still have each other. <3

Please enjoy my bonus **scrapbook** pages on the next page!



XOXO,
Sheila,
(Andie & Megan)

A Green Christmas



at Hillwood!



Christmas Eve Eve 2023



Hillwood



Hillwood Estate
Museum & Gardens 2019



Japanese Gardens





♪ Double Bonus: 'At the Beginning' (Anastasia, 1997) ♪

This is a short version of the song from the end of the movie. There is an English and a Japanese version of the movie. However, this song is only in English. You can see the official Japanese subtitles below. It is a beautiful song about loving and supporting others so you can all achieve your dreams. It is also about remembering where you came from and then discovering where you will go in the future. My class sang this as our high school graduation song! Then, later, Andie and Megan went to study in Russia and France where this American movie is set. Amazing!



'We were strangers, starting out on a journey. Never dreaming what we'd have to go through. Now here we are. I'm suddenly standing at the beginning with you.' (一緒に旅立った。見知らぬ者同士。何が待っているか。夢にも知らずに。今ここにあなたと立っている。これからが始まり。)

'No one told me I was going to find you. Unexpected, what you did to my heart. When I lost hope, you were there to remind me. This is the start.' (信じられないこうなるなんて。君が僕のハートを変えてしまった。望みを失うと君はこう言った。これからが始まりよ。)

'Life is a road and I wanna keep going. Love is a river I wanna keep flowing. Life is a road, now and forever. Wonderful journey!' (人生は長い長い道。愛は流れる川。二人で出発しよう。素晴らしい旅に。)

'I'll be there when the world stops turning. I'll be there when the storm is through. In the end, I wanna be standing at the beginning... with you.' (手を取りあって。嵐を乗り越えて。そして最後に立とう、二人の新しい一出发点に！)

'Knew there was somebody, somewhere. Like me, alone in the dark. Now I know my dream will live on. I've been waiting so long. Nothing's gonna tear us apart.' (どこかにいると信じていた。私と同じ孤独な人が。幸せな巡り合い。やっと夢がかなって、永遠に結ばれた私とあなた。)

'And life is a road and I wanna keep going. Love is a river I wanna keep flowing. Life is a road, now and forever. Wonderful journey!' (人生は長い長い道。愛は流れる川。二人で出発しよう。素晴らしい旅に。)

'I'll be there when the world stops turning. I'll be there when the storm is through. In the end, I wanna be standing at the beginning... with you.' (手を取りあって。嵐を乗り越えて。そして最後に立とう、二人の新しい一出发点に！)



PARIS

