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The Most Valuable Lesson I Have Learned

The issue with dreaming about something, for as long as I've dreamt about studying in the UK, is the moment you get the offer, your expectations skyrocket. So you pack your life into a 23kg suitcase and get on a plane. During the drive from the airport, and perhaps for the first time ever, you realise the moment you've spent years wishing for is here. You get out of the taxi and as soon as you step onto the zebra crossing to take those final steps towards the new beginning, you almost get hit by a car you weren't expecting. And there's many more to come!

The first girl that sees you in the door to your boarding house gives you a warm hug, and despite the obvious wear and tear on the building's historic exterior and the freezing temperatures inside, the people there make it instantly feel like home. In the whirlwind of taking on a new curriculum in your second language, the days fly by and sooner rather than later, you feel like you're getting the hang of it. That is precisely when your first test comes, and the former straight-A student in you gets humbled, but when the sun hits your face for the first time since your arrival, weeks ago, you're suddenly reminded that despite the need to reconsider your study methods, you're living your dream.

You spend your Sunday helping out with an Open Morning, or go on a DofE camping trip, and it's exactly there, crowded in the drenched, supposedly waterproof, tent and with aching joints, that the fact you've only known each other for a few months doesn't matter. Without realising, you become a part of a community so close to your heart that by the time you break off for the first holidays, you're utterly missing the new reality you so carefully crafted, and along with that, everyone in it.

That is not to say the traffic has stopped. The slight inconveniences you never planned for will always come. But just like with the cars coming from the opposite side of the road to what you're used to, you adjust. In September, I wasn't expecting them either, but I crossed the road anyway and maybe that's the whole point. So take a deep breath, look in both directions, and don't let the traffic discourage you from the biggest adventure of your life.