

# The rainbow café essay example

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The Rainbow Café is somewhere in which to hide. I have been going to it for years, ever since my parents introduced me to it when I was a child.

Nowadays, I mainly visit alone, but for a time I went with someone else. It was where I took my first partner on a first date. It was also where that same partner broke my heart. The Rainbow café has seen a number of important moments in my life.

The café has a scattering of customers, talking in couples and small groups. Soft folk-rock plays through speakers in the ceiling corners, and the walls are covered with black and white photographs of 40s celebrities. Many people come to the place for its exclusively vegetarian menu, but I enjoy it because it is quiet and anonymous. The music is just audible enough so that you can't hear other people's conversations, but quiet enough that you don't have to shout over it to someone opposite you. Although there are only a few tables, they are spaced apart to allow for privacy. This is why I chose it for a first date. I also think that this is why my partner chose it to break up with me. There are around eight tables in this café; it is not large, which is perhaps why not many people know of its existence. On the centre of each table is a sprig of local vegetation: sometimes a single flow, others a collection of twigs. This is a way, I presume, of making the surroundings as casual and as unpretentious as possible. It is an alternative café in an alternative town, attracting mainly alternative people. I am not really alternative, not in the same way as most of the other customers. Still, I'm alternative in my own way.

Out of the window, the high street is usually busy. In the sunshine, eccentrically dressed people emerge from the bars and, instead of drinking

in the murky rooms, stand in groups, chatting on corners and smoking dope. Business people on their lunch breaks negotiate a pavement littered with alternative citizens. A young woman often sits on the bench outside the bookshop. She wears brightly coloured patchwork trousers and a purple vest top. She holds what looks like a spliff in one hand and her other hand rocks a pram back and forth. After having food, I sometimes like to wander around, looking in the shops and taking in the atmosphere. Sometimes I dream of moving to this place and disappearing into it.

The Rainbow Café has been important to me for a number of years now. I have both laughed and cried at the table by the window. The high turnover of staff mean that I can still be anonymous there, even when visiting every few months. Although I have had bad experiences there as well as good, I still like it just as much as I always have. I think I will always love it.

Hopefully one day I'll take my own children there, and my grandchildren.

Perhaps my love for the Rainbow Cafe is because it is real to me; it is not a fairy-tale place and it brings me back down to earth when I'm most in danger of floating away.