

Eddie, The 25 Year Reunion

How to do Homework (Milana Style)

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Early during Winter semester, Milana comes home from school on a Friday, throws her notebook down on the kitchen table, and heads straight for her keyboard. Kathy, seeing Milana's lone five-subject notebook laying on the table, recalls how Eddie, when he was in high school, also carried around a single five-subject notebook.

Walking into Milana's music studio, Kathy asks Milana, "how was school today?" Milana replies, "it was good. We came up with a whole bunch of songs we want to do." Kathy asks, "really? Like what?" Milana explains, "Roberta knows a song from the seventies, called *Jungle Boogie*. Have you ever heard of it?" Kathy replies, "oh, yeah! Ask Mr. Braden about that song some day. He used to sing it and dance to it before a race." Milana reveals, "I can really see him doing that! That song is like really cool."

Wanting to know how Milana's school days are going since she quit band class, Kathy asks, "how's home economics going?" Milana replies, "awesome! We never really do anything." Kathy asks, "really? How can never doing anything be awesome?" With a highly evasive answer, Milana replies, "it just is." Realizing Milana's elusiveness, Kathy asks, "do you miss the band?" Milana succinctly replies, "no. Not really."

Suspecting that Milana is potentially distracted from her schoolwork by music, Kathy asks, "do you have any homework?" Milana replies, "I already did it. It's all done." Knowing that Milana has been home for only ten minutes,

Kathy asks, “really? When did you find time to get your homework done?” Milana replies, “I have a system.” Kathy now knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that her wild child, Milana, is up to something.

Wanting more of an explanation, Kathy asks Milana, “a system? Please enlighten me as to what your system is. I really want to hear this.” Finally focusing her full attention on her mother’s inquisition, Milana explains, “okay. So, we have this really great system. Me, Svetlana, Roberta, Yasmine, James, and Peter are like in all the same classes. Well, except James and Peter aren’t in home economics. James has wood shop, and Peter is still in the band. But, anyway, so, in second period, we all do the homework the teacher gave us during first period. Then, in third period, we do the homework the teacher gave us during second period. And so on. And, sometimes, if there’s a lot of homework, we’ll split up the questions between us. Then, at lunch, we check our answers with each other. Oh, and also at lunch, we do the homework from fourth period, which is right before lunch.”

Kathy sighs, and tells Milana, “hmm. Why didn’t I think of that when I was in middle school?” Suspecting her mother’s approval, Milana reveals, “so, home economics is our last class of the day. And, Mrs. Patterson, our home economics teacher, like almost never gives us any homework. So, by the time it’s time to go home, all our homework is done. Oh, and if Mrs. Patterson does give us any homework, it’s usually just busywork. So, we just do it during first period the next day.” Kathy compliments Milana, telling her, “that’s a really good system you came up with.” Milana smiles, and replies, “thank you.”

Kathy inquires, “so, what happens on a day when you have a test?” Milana explains, “we never get homework on a day we have a test. So, if we have a test, say, like in second period, we just do the first period homework in third period instead.” Kathy replies, “that makes a lot of sense.”

Wondering how well Milana's system works, Kathy asks, "if you're doing your homework during class, don't you miss everything the teacher says?" Milana explains, "not really. I mean, like, there's a lot of time before class, and when the teacher takes attendance. And, when someone asks a stupid question and the teacher tries to explain it, we go into homework high gear. And, besides, everything is in the book anyway. And, most of the time, the questions on the tests are like the homework questions or the ones at the end of the chapter in the book." Kathy replies, "got it." Some things never change, even decades later.

Changing the subject, Milana asks, "so, what's for dinner tonight?" Kathy replies, "did you forget? Today's Friday. It's pizza night. The whole group will be there." Milana exclaims, "awesome! Can Roberta come with us? We don't even have to pick her up. She lives like three blocks from the pizzeria." Kathy replies, "I don't see why not." Milana exclaims, "awesome! I'm going to call her right now!"

Next year, when Milana is in high school, it's a sure bet she'll occasionally head to the pizzeria with her friends after school. It appears the apple has not fallen far from the tree.