Essay Draft:

If I were a Pixar animation, I would be Coco.
Growing up in a Latino family in a historic city. Beliefs and traditions that are completely different from the rest of the world. Sunday lunches with the family together and your aunts asking why you don't have a boyfriend yet while kissing you on the cheek. Barbecues to the sound of samba while you wonder why you don't know how to "sambar" if you were born in Brazil. Parties ~~worshiping~~worshipping things you don't believe in and don't see any sense, like "Bumba Meu Boi", but you must pretend to like it to not upset your family. Constantly being asked if you're going to be a doctor, a lawyer, or an engineer. The pressure of having to fit all Brazilian stereotypes while keeping a secret that would distinguish you from the rest. My love of music has always been a secret, not because my family hates music but because of my fear of being different.

If I were a book, I would be Alice in Wonderland.
In the silence and the dark, lying with my head on the pillow and always questioning ~~me~~ nonsense things like 'where do Winx clothes go when they turn into fairies' and 'if the sky were violet, would the nights be clear and the days dark?' Strange dreams like putting a cockroach in a pan in the freezer and when you take it out the cockroach has turned into a puppy but that somehow makes me wake up with the idea for a great movie or book. Being in the shower and suddenly having the solution to the problem I spent weeks trying to solve, just like magic.

If I were a color, I would be blue.
Not liking hugs but loving people around me. Not liking feeling lonely but love being alone. ~~Don't~~ Not knowing how to show affection but ~~love~~loving it when other people know. Giving simple answers that can be interpreted as rude.

Being considered a "cold" person but not identifying with this. Always acting rationally and never emotionally.

If I were a word, I would be "Loyal".
Cultivating friendships for years, from everywhere and from the most different people regardless of distance. Making friends in concert lines and even at the market. Always protecting whoever is with me, especially myself.

If I were a song, I would be Girl On Fire by Alicia Keys.
Being sure of what I want to do, always having an opinion, and always trying until I succeed, not because I'm brave, but to appear strong. Dreaming big and hoping I'll make it.

If I were an element, I would be water.
Wanting one thing and then another, then wanting nothing more or wanting everything, ideas coming and going all the time. Having the feeling that one place is not enough, wanting to be here and there. Feeling the need for change all the time and also wanting to be the change itself.

If I were a Disney princess, I would be Rapunzel.
Cooking, cleaning, singing, studying, reading, dancing, writing, drawing, exercising, doing everything so that my days are not repetitive and boring, and always trying to learn something new. Wanting to know about everything, everyone and myself. Wondering when will my life begin.

Kaila Barber 12:31 PM Sep 30

As someone who has watched Coco, I understand you are comparing yourself to Miguel, which is why you have mentioned fitting Brazilian stereotypes while keeping a secret.

Are you able to clarify the difference between the movie + it's struggles/stereotypes from your own struggles and stereotypes?

Show more

Replace: “worshiping” with “worshipping”

Delete: “me”

Add: “”

Kaila Barber 12:36 PM Sep 30

Is there a way to differentiate between the paragraph and the specific/exact questions you think at night?

Show more

Add: “”

Kaila Barber 12:38 PM Sep 30

Can you build off of the ‘magic’ and imagination that you experience in your own life?

Show more

Kaila Barber 12:47 PM Sep 30

Can you expand on the similarities that you have with the color more? This will help the reader get a better sense of who you are.

Replace: “Don’t” with “Not”

Replace: “love” with “loving”

Kaila Barber 12:52 PM Sep 30

Can you clarify what you mean in this sentence?

Kaila Barber 12:53 PM Sep 30

Are you able to build on this? Are you loyal in other areas of your life? Loyal to ideas? Loyal to organizations?

Show more

Kaila Barber 12:58 PM Sep 30

What do you think about expanding this? I was looking at the lyrics and ‘cause they can see the

Show more

Kaila Barber 1:02 PM Sep 30

What do you think about adding water imagery to start off this paragraph? for example: Water has a mind of its own;

Show more

A: Overall feedback

Thanks for sharing your essay with me! I can see that you've put a lot of thought into the ‘If I were…’ framework to show the reader sides of yourself. I especially enjoyed the reference to Coco. While reading your Coco paragraph, I was able to get a glimpse into your life, which seems to really resemble the movie.

You offer several different ‘If I were..’ examples to give the reader insight into you, but I’m not sure if the examples you are using and the values associated with these are clear… yet. I have some suggestions you may find useful in clarifying your paragraphs and emphasizing your values. I’ll also suggest a slight reordering of your paragraphs that may help them flow better.

B: Feedback on content/topic

With this essay, it looks like you’re taking the “Montage” approach—that is, writing about a series of seemingly unrelated events or moments that, put together, combine to create a coherent, connected story.

At College Essay Guy, when we see a montage, we like to ask the following questions. Does the essay…

1. Make clear what the topic/thematic thread is?
2. Set up specific examples for each paragraph that clearly link to a clear topic/thematic thread?
3. Demonstrate values through those specific examples?
4. Offer possible insights that answer “so what” in regard to the author’s experiences and values?

In my view, your values are evident in your paragraph about Coco, Alice in Wonderland, and Rapunzel. I don’t see the values as clearly when reading your Blue, Girl on Fire, and Water paragraphs. I’d like for you to try and clarify the values you want to emphasize in these paragraphs. You could potentially help the reader by deciding to either a) show the values through specific examples, or b) state the values explicitly (either approach can work).

For example, in your water paragraph you talk about wanting something and then not wanting something AND feeling something is not enough and then feeling like it is enough. As a result, I’m not quite clear which specific value you’re hoping to show the reader using water. Is the point of the paragraph to show that you continuously change your mind? It can be difficult for readers to understand your ‘so what’ (i.e., insight) moments if they aren’t sure what values you’re trying to emphasize.

I’ll provide links in the ‘Next Steps’ section that I think you might find useful in revising/refining your paragraphs.

C: Feedback on flow/structure

In terms of you structure, it seems to me your paragraphs are currently set-up like this (I’ve listed what I think the values are in parentheses):

1. Pixar Animation – (culture, family, music)
2. Alice in Wonderland Book – (curiosity)
3. Color Blue – (friendship)
4. Word Loyal – (Can you expand on what you are loyal to?)
5. Song Girl on Fire – (Maybe drive?)
6. Element Water – (?)
7. Disney Princess Rapunzel – (Curiosity)

What do you think about the following restructure? I grouped together the paragraphs that seemed to be more closely related. Since the first three are stories, it might be nice for the reader to read about them all in a row.

1. Pixar Animation
2. Disney Princess Rapunzel
3. Alice in Wonderland Book
4. Element Water
5. Color Blue
6. Word Loyal
7. Song Girl on Fire

This is only a suggestion for your paragraph order. Once you make clear your values, you might find a different structure to be better.

A final note on tone: I notice you’re using sentence fragments as a stylistic choice. This took me a minute to get used to, and while I think it could work for your final draft, you might also consider playing with full sentences. Perhaps try both and see which way you like better.

D. Next steps

1. Clarify the values in each paragraph. You might find it helpful to expand on the similarities you have with each of your ‘If I were…’ paragraphs as a way to highlight values.
   a. At this link you can find a sample outline chart for a montage essay. This might help you clarify the relationships between your ‘If I were [x object/character],’ the values you share with the object, and your ‘so what’/insight moments.
   b. You can find information at this link to help with revising/refining your paragraphs.
2. Include insight that answers your ‘so what’ moments in regards to your experiences and values. This link provides information on what ‘so what’ moments are and suggestions on how to add insight into personal statements.
3. Consider restructuring your paragraphs based on your ‘If I were…’ topics. It could be beneficial to order similar topics near each other.