

Susannah Beddingfield

Ms. Feher

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### By the End of the Night

The night was young, and I could already tell it was going to be a disaster. It was my last year of middle school and everyone was in their pre-panic of preparing for high school emotionally and physically. And according to our school, an eighth-grade formal dance was the best way to cope. We've had dances before this, but I was just never interested. But we all knew it was our last year, so all my friends and I promised to be there. Including in that promise that we were also going to enjoy it.

The theme was typical: Paris. So, I just got a black and white one-piece dress that came with a necklace. Not one of my best make-overs. I was still in my tomboyish faze so I just knew I wouldn't look good in a dress. Looking back at it today, people would look at the picture and probably think I was going to a party from the 80's or 90's. With my hair all too curled and tight in hairspray and my bright red lipstick that didn't match anything that I was wearing. My friends though were a completely different story. They were stunning and wore pretty dresses with make-up that fit them and hair that suit them.

We did what all other groups of people did when they were dropped off by the entrance doors. We waited for the others to arrive as well. I had two separate groups of friends I went to the party to see. The ones from middle school I had met and just gotten close to by the end of

the year. And the ones I had known since fourth grade. So, I was waiting for a good minute. And when the waiting was all done and over with, everyone decided to take group photos. I don't recall joining any of them in the photos. We headed into the cafeteria where the dance was being held.

My memorization of the dance is as clear as day. Like what songs played, where what was set up, who all was there, and could even think of people I knew I would never see there. In the entrance, by the door onto your right, teachers leaned against the wall chatting and watching the students. The snack and drink bar were further back also to your right. Stringers hung the ceiling like stars falling from the sky and Eiffel towers were everywhere. The song I can remember the clearest from that night is "Paris" by The Chainsmokers. And me yelling to my friends over the music, "I knew they would play this song! I just knew it!"

Half way through the party we all split up and I didn't even realize it. Probably because it was a party and everyone has different preferences when it came to dances. Mine was to dance the whole time, two of my friends was to stay and snack at the bar, and some just sat there staring into space, having no clue what to do or how to interact with others. It was only about an hour in and I was worn out from dancing. So, I joined the others at the snack bar.

On the edge of one of the tables my friend had a plastic cup full of M&Ms. And cookies stacked sky high they had picked up from the bar. Clutching her stomach when I walk over, complaining she doesn't feel too well and that she maybe ate too much. That and she swore for the rest of the night *something* was in those cookies. I sat down around the table that everyone was awkwardly standing around and take pictures with one of my friends. We were in the

middle of conversing when one of my other friends are seen in the background. Her long dress falling behind her and her dress shoes in her hands. Even over the music you could hear the angry pounds of her bare feet against the floor.

And a few of the others were nowhere to be found. I thought nothing of it though at the time. So, I took advantage at socializing with the ones that were around. We reminisced about Cougar Carnival and how some drama went down, teachers we will and won't miss, and even good and bad times. And what we thought about the dance.

It was almost the end of the dance and others stormed out without even saying goodbye. We didn't even know who all was still even there. The teachers were dismissing the rest of the students that were left to go outside and wait by the pick-up line. My mom dropped me off, but she couldn't come pick me up, so I stayed to wait with the one friend I had left and ride with her. And as the tired, oddly in a goofy mood, and delusion state we were in, we were laughing at the dumbest things. Like this bug in the ride line that was just waiting to get run over.

We were waiting for it to get ran over at any moment. And when it did, it made the sound popcorn makes when it's being microwaved. We hunched over, belly's clutched, laughing. And once we settled down and wiped the tears out of our eyes, we notice a guy to the side break dancing and laughed some more. That was probably the hardest we had laughed, and we weren't even at the party anymore, it was already over.

Our ride finally arrived, and we sat in the van and her family immediately asks us how everything went. And if we had fun. I can't remember much about the ride to their house

except that it was mostly quiet and there were those rare occasions someone did talk. By the time we had gotten to their house, my phone was beyond dead. To the point it wouldn't turn on. Her mom asked if I could remember my grandmothers' number so she could come pick me up and take me home. She lends me her phone, I dial the phone number in and wait patiently for her to answer, unaware of the fact that I was calling from an unknown number on her end. It rings once, twice, and even the third ring. I repeat this until she finally answers the call. She was furious, thinking some stranger was calling her, or one of those telemarketers she always gets those calls from. She hangs up, and I call back having to explain that it's me- her granddaughter- and if she would mind picking me up from my friend's house. She was apologetic. All while I was completely embarrassed.

We sat in her living room on the couch to wait for my grandmother to get here. When she finally pulls into their driveway and I walk to her car, dreading to open the door. I sat in an uncomfortable silence for a few minutes until she went onto her rants, she always does, complaining how I should of told her who I was when she first answered. And I just knew when I finally reached home that I should of done what I always did, not go to some lame party and just hung out at a friends house. Because surely that would have been way better.

