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Graham

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Author Bio

Haley Weaver is a senior at Gettysburg College. Some facts: I'm a college swimmer, English major, and Mr. G's enthusiast. I also have a guilty pleasure for the Diary of a Wimpy Kid children's book series.

Graham

Haley G. Weaver

As the neon lights swept the crowd and the bass shook the floor, there was only one thing I was certain of: I was going to vomit. Unfortunately, being sandwiched between sweaty teenagers in the mosh-pit of the MGMT concert was one of the worst-case scenarios possible for my sudden need for space and a toilet bowl. I pressed my hands across my mouth and looked urgently at my brother Graham.

“What, you don’t like this song?” he shouted over the music. I shook my head, pressing my fingers deeper into my cheeks. “Wait, are you gonna—oh shit.” Graham grabbed my arm and forced his way through the crowd of drunk boys jumping to the beat, girls taking swigs from a light blue flask, grey-haired adults who looked out of place, and finally over to the trashcan next to the club’s backdoor.

“I don’t get it,” he said as I leaned over the black bin. “We didn’t even drink.”

I gathered my hair and tied it in a loose bun at the nape of my neck. “I think it was dinner,” I said.

“Dinner? Wait—you mean the lasagna? You’re sick from the fucking lasagna?” Graham laughed and pulled out his phone, aiming the camera lens at my head, which was deep in the can. “Do you mind if I show mom a picture depicting how you liked the meal she so lovingly prepared for you?” I took my hand off the side of the bin just long enough to give him the finger.

There was no way we would be able to reclaim our spot near the stage, nor did we want to walk through the swamp of body odor and beer in order to get there. We grabbed a table on the balcony and overlooked the concert.

“I’ll get us drinks,” Graham said. He was sixteen, though he could pass for twenty. He was already over six feet and he swam competitively, so his wide shoulders and developed muscles often played in his favor when he used his fake ID. He didn’t need it tonight, though.

“Ginger-ale. It’ll settle your stomach.” He handed me the glass and sipped a Pepsi. I studied him for a moment. His jaw flexed as he swallowed a gulp of soda and I noticed that his nose seemed more prominent than usual, causing his face to look angular rather than the round baby face he had sported for most of his life. There was the faint scar on his cheek from

years ago, in the Griffins' backyard where we zip-lined on the thin wire strung between two oak trees. I had been twelve and he had been eight: not old enough to be careful, but definitely old enough to believe we were invincible. Graham grasped the handles and swung through the air, a yelp of glee echoing across the yard. The wire snapped. I held his hand in my lap while Mrs. Griffin called 911. He had only been unconscious for a minute before opening his eyes. He bit his lip. It was obvious he didn't want to cry, but a tear trailed down his cheek. I wiped it away before anyone could see.

And now, here I was, the one being taken care of. I felt the faint stinging behind my eyes, that unstoppable itch that forewarned me of the waterworks about to take place. I took a deep breath, and blinked rapidly. *This is not something to cry over*, I reminded myself. The green lights faded to purple as MGMT's song "Kids" vibrated throughout the venue.

"Great song," Graham remarked. He stood up and leaned over the banister, nodding his head to the beat.

"Don't fall," I called out, only half-joking. The song ended, and the lights went dark.

We began the drive home in silence. It was comfortable, actually. The aftermath of the concert was setting in—it felt as if a thin layer of film had been stretched across the openings of my ears, diluting the shrill beeps erupting from the traffic around us. My feet throbbed from standing in heels. My stomach still ached. I ran my hand through my hair and exhaled. There was something strangely fantastic about the quietness, especially sharing it with Graham—nothing awkward or tense—just noiseless, almost peaceful. The whir of the tires against the cracked pavement, the low hum of hot air blowing out of the vents, the road curving from the dense urbanity of the club's location to the shaded homes of Charlotte suburbia—it was all too perfect, like something from the beginning sequence in a movie. *Too perfect*. I brought my knees to my chest and buried my head in the dark gap between my legs.

"Are you crying?" Graham asked. I blinked quickly, and a tear escaped, soaking into my black dress. I lifted my head and grinned meekly.

"A little," I admitted. I was a bit of an abnormal crier. I mean, yes, I bawled when I watched a movie involving the death of a dog and all the other standard sad stuff, but what really got my tear ducts going was realizing that the moment I was in, the beautiful piece of time that felt infinite now, would soon be nothing more than *that thing I did over Thanksgiving break*. I clutched the sides of my legs and pinched them. *Be here. Be in the moment. Be here.*