

I knocked on the door of a girl I had met 30 minutes ago, then followed her to her house, just to get her number.

“Looks like no one's home.” Susan exhaled. I glared at her over my shoulder. “I saw her walk inside.” I crossed my arms.

“The problem is you're not knocking hard enough.” Ronald nudged me as he stepped in front of the door, banging his fist before yelling “your knight in shining armor awaits, Princess!” Everyone laughed, while my cheeks reddened.

As the door finally opened, I straightened up. “Wellwellwell if it isn't the fresh beaut-” He started to say, sounding like a bad Fonzie impression. Before he could finish, the bodacious chick suddenly yanked out a bottle of pepper spray, spraying it right into Ronald's eyes. “Go away, you creeps!!” she yelled before slamming the door on us.

Wait... I forgot to introduce myself! I'm Mike, your average, foxy, 18 year old, who happens to be in one of the craziest friend groups in all of Rosegrove. You're probably wondering how we got into this mess. To explain... we need to go back 20 hours.

I had just graduated from Rosegrove High School, class of 1987. Graduating means growing up, working, changing. Ugh. Change. I hate that word. I mean, can you blame me? I had a whole summer planned for us before Susan went off to school. We were gonna TP Mr. Woodly's house, shoot spitballs at the librarians, mess with the waitresses at the diner, and tons more. Now all of that is down the drain because Ronald was grounded, Chris was traveling with his band, David had summer school, Jennifer had to study, and although Susan had 3 months until school started, she was leaving in three days for California. Suddenly all my brill' ideas were flushed down the drain. But I wasn't about to let **any of that** stop me. I was determined to not let *change* defeat the best summer of our lives.

I had three days to create the best last summer together. I forced my friends into my Mustang and set off for my parents' lake house. I had everything planned out: 1 day to drive down, 1 night at the lake, and 1 day to drive back. Back in 3 days, before Cali, summer school, band, grounding, and studying. Badda bing badda boom.

The first 30 minutes were filled with Ronald and me arguing over who gets to be “map keeper”. Ronald was the friend you meet in kindergarten and become best friends for life. Funny but also a complete idiot. I still can't understand how the airhead graduated.

Ronald twisted in the passenger seat, snatching the map from me. “And that's why you don't mess...” he paused, slipping on his aviator glasses “with the map keeper,” he whispered dramatically. I rolled my eyes, shaking my head while David yelled, “BURN!” David was the baby of the group. He was only one year below us, but we all liked to baby him to make him get all red in the face.

Susan leaned up to reach the radio. “This is boring; I need some Madonna.” She used Ronald's face to push herself closer to the knobs. If you went to school at Rosegrove High, you knew Susan. And if you knew Susan, you knew Jennifer. These two were attached at the hip. As they said, they were a “package deal”. “Turn on 96.9,” Jennifer yelled from the backseat..

10 minutes later, everyone was belting out the lyrics to “Take On Me”. Chris tapped along on the steering wheel. Chris was the “bad boy”. Most girls fawned over him for his deadly style and attitude . He wasn't afraid to speak his mind, which usually ended up getting him in trouble.

Suddenly, the sounds of police sirens filled the car. “That's odd...” Jennifer said, looking out the back window. “We're going the speed limit... right?” We all glanced at Chris. “We were, but that song was too good to go slow,” he smirked, not slowing down. We all groaned, “Well, pull over!” Ronald threw up his hands. “No can do homeboy,” he drawled with his eyes flickering between the rearview mirror and the empty road ahead. “What do you mean, ‘no can do’?” Ronald's eyes were practically popping out of his head. “Expired license.”

A collective “WHAT!?” left our mouths. David grabbed a paperbag, hyperventilating into it. “Why would you drive, dude!?” I yelled. “Because I wanted to! Just sit back, and everyone hold on.” Before anyone could question him, he suddenly yanked the car onto a ramp. The car filled with screams as we were now in a police chase.

It took us 10 minutes to get away from the cop. I get 2 days of being an adult, and I turn myself into a wanted man. Not good.

We stopped at a gas station, after Chris burned all our gas on that stupid chase. We all went in to grab some snacks, as we were close to the lake house. We were on schedule. That was until I saw this wicked chick, with Farrah Fawcett hair, a killer bod, and a blinding grin. I didn't realize I was staring at her over the chip display until she cleared her throat and said "Excuse me," with a shy smile. My mouth dried up; I forgot how to function and ducked behind the chip display like a dipstick.

I ended up driving due to the last fiasco, but stupidly, I skipped the exit to the lake resort welcome center to follow the bodacious chick in her Honda Civic. Everyone was annoyed with me, but I was sure I could have us back on schedule in 15 minutes.

That brings us back to now. Ronald sat on the sidewalk while Jen poured water into his eyes. "Oh my eyes! My beautiful blue eyes!" He cried out. "Stay still..." Jennifer mumbled, holding his head back.

"Um..Ronald, why is the resort 1000 miles behind us?" Susan asked, examining the map Ronald has been keeping track of. "What!?" we all yelled. "What..." Ronald groaned more slowly than us, squinting up at Susan with red eyes. "Ronald, what way is North?" Chris asked. We all looked at Ronald. "Downwards," he huffed, rubbing furiously at his eyes now.

"Ronald, you Ditz!" Jennifer yelled, slapping him on the back of his head. "So...no lake house!? Was this road trip for nothing?" asked David. "No, David, this road trip was for Mike's selfish needs. Thanks to his tiny brain, we are all stuck out here. Nowhere to go, nowhere to stay overnight, and Ronald might go blind!" Jennifer yelled. She turned around and started storming down the road. Susan followed.

"Wait, I'm not actually gonna go blind, right?" Ronald whispered, squinting up at David, who helped him up before they both started for the car too. I glanced at Chris as he shook his head, and started to walk away. "Wait... guys, I'm sorry! Just... give me a minute to think or something!"

"Or something." Susan mocked, over her shoulder without stopping. As Jennifer got to the car, the same police car from earlier rounded the corner. Sirens suddenly blasted. "Police!" Chris yelled as we all broke into a run into the forest.

By the time we got away, we were in front of a small lake, sitting on a tree log catching our breath. “Guys... I’m... really... sorry.” I heaved.

David suddenly stood after a moment. “You know what.. Who cares about a stupid lake house? We got away from a cop, twice!”

Chris chuckled, “I got to watch David almost pee his pants,” to which David glared at him before Ronald spoke up, laughing. “Yeah, and man, I got pepper sprayed.” We all laughed now. “And I got to *watch* Ronald get pepper sprayed.” Susan chimed in, laughing harder. We all looked at Jennifer, waiting for her to speak. She took a deep breath before saying, “I have never seen so many guys sing, “girls just wanna have fun” at the top of their lungs.” The whole group erupted in laughter. After a minute, I finally said: “I guess the destination never matters...only the memories you make along the way.” I smiled, glancing around at my friends, the people I grew up with, the people who hold the most space in my mind and heart.

Chris suddenly shoved David backwards, causing him to stumble into the lake. After a minute, he popped out of the water gasping for air. “Water fight!!” Ronald yelled, grabbing Susan's wrist and pulling her into the lake with a chuckle. Jennifer and I glanced at each other before running into the water.

I guess in the end..all is okay!