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A School Year of Disappointments

Senior year. The last stretch before really being considered an adult. I was beyond excited. We were finally allowed to eat outside during lunch, come in late if we had a study, got the good parking spots up front, we could even have coffee which was very important on the days that dragged on. I was most excited for Friday night football games under the lights, standing on the sidelines with the rest of my team and winning the homecoming game. But that didn't exactly happen. EEE took away the lights from us and almost took the whole season with it. Luckily we played through. We didn't know it yet but those days were the very start of the curse of 2020.

In December, word of the so-called "Coronavirus" started spreading through the media. I can remember seeing a bunch of different memes about it but not thinking anything of it because it was so far away from us all the way in China. Then by the end of January things started getting serious. January 20th, ten days before my 18th birthday, the first Covid case in the U.S. was reported. I was terrified. All the jokes we made about how it could never get here came back to haunt us. This was really happening. We managed to survive February in my town. All was going well up until the middle of March when a guy from the high school a town over was confirmed of having it. It was the week before March Madness Spirit Week which was HUGE at my high school. It was also the week of my final football banquet and the beginning of practices for the lacrosse team. On March 13th my world stopped dead in its tracks. At the end of that day there was an announcement and I remember it clear as day, "The high school will be

closing down for two weeks for safety reasons. All students should bring home books and supplies necessary to complete homework for said time.” We were so excited because we got an extra two weeks off from school and when we came back, there’d be one week of class and then April Vacation. However that turned out not to be the case. Two weeks turned into three, then four, and then the whole rest of the year.

That announcement was just one of things that caused my world to crumble. Right after school ended, I was in the band room for the weekly Tri-M Music Honors Society meeting and I got a text from my dad; “Call me - we need to talk.” I don’t know about anyone else’s dad but when I get texts like those it’s never a good thing, especially when it’s two o’clock in the afternoon and I know he’s still at work. I left my meeting early because I knew this had to be important. For a little background, my parents are divorced and have been since the beginning of my freshman year of high school so I’d only get to see him once every other weekend. I, having always been my dad’s little girl, took it really hard at first and still struggle with it to this day because we’ve always been so close. At the time he asked me to call him, he was living in my grandmother’s house and was taking care of her because she got knee surgery and couldn’t walk around the house yet and had just beaten cancer a few years prior. When he answered the phone, I could tell he was already choked up. He tells me that because of the Coronavirus shutting down schools and because Mimi’s immune system was still very weak, I couldn’t come over to see her which also meant I couldn’t see him either for at least a month. The news hit me like a bus. I started tearing up immediately because that day I was supposed to see the both of them. It was hard having the one thing you were looking forward to all day be the thing that got ripped away from you in an instant. I got off of the phone and it took everything in me not to cry. I felt like the world stopped and everyone was looking at me. There was so much that happened within an hour and I couldn’t control it and it was killing me. I just needed a hug.

Then quarantine happened and my mental health took the biggest hit. I became extremely unmotivated and didn’t want to do anything. I holed myself up in my room and didn’t

do anything except my online classes/homework, sleeping, eating, and watching Netflix. My body started to feel so weak because I would barely move from my bed. I went from dancing at least two hours everyday of the week and weekend in the studio to only an hour every other day of the week. Dancing became my outlet for my emotions. On Wednesdays we'd have a combination class where my teacher would teach 2 8-counts of a combo and let us improvise for the rest of the song. The songs would always be in the contemporary style so every week it was like I got to write down my feelings on a page except it was my body writing words on the walls of my bedroom. Dancing was one of the things I missed the most. The girls on my team are some of the closest friends I've had and it took a huge toll on all of us when we found out we weren't going to have a final competition season. I didn't hang out with my friends, although I really wanted to, because I wanted to see my dad and grandmother. It was one of the only two things keeping me somewhat focussed on school. The other was I knew if I failed any of my classes I wouldn't get to graduate.

Fast forward a few months through quarantine, online schooling, and LOTS of Netflix, it was almost June which meant I finally got to graduate. I had been waiting for this day for four years. Our school was very hesitant about letting us have a ceremony because there were 169 kids in my class. The administration settled on a drive-by graduation where we'd drive up to the front of the school, take our diploma, walk to the center of the small stage, switch our tassel, take a picture, and leave. I was somewhat thankful that we didn't have to sit in the sun for hours like we would have if it was completely normal but it wasn't great either. I was just happy it was over and I was free of the burden that was high school and all the drama that went with it; especially during quarantine. Going through what I did is something that I wouldn't even wish on my worst enemies.