

MIDDLE GRADE NOVELLA: STORY BY LESLEY NIEMY

Summary: End of year 5th grade field trip to amusement park. Hannah has been looking forward to this trip forever. Gets to park and realizes can't go on any rides because she is too short. Realized she was short but that never stopped her from classroom success, friends, etc. Begins to question her reality, friendships, etc.

CHAPTER ONE

“This is the first day of the rest of your life.”

That’s a saying on the poster on my cousin Jill’s bedroom wall. She’s a sophomore in high school and into yoga; so she knows what it all means.

I think people say that when they are about to embark on the adventure of a lifetime or when they do something never done before. Well that’s me, Hannah Richards, soon to be graduate of Parkwood School , ready to start the first day of the rest of my life.

Right now I am lying in bed staring at my alarm clock. It’s an old fashioned clock that my great grandma Millie had. It’s got a regular dial and it winds up, no battery or plug. When GG Millie died last year I asked Dad if I could have it. That made him not so sad.

“Tick, Tick, Tick”. The sun is streaming through my bedroom window and I am wide awake but I refuse to get up before the alarm rings. That’s a teenage thing and I can’t wait to be a teenager so I’m practicing. (like my Dad says)

“Tick, Tick, Tick”. Just a little more till my alarm goes off at 7:00 am. “5, 4, 3, 2, 1, “RING”. “Yes! I know it’s going to ring but I can’t help screaming Yes!, as I jump from under

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my covers and dance out of my room and into the hallway. Surprisingly I'm not tired at all. This is the day that is going to be the best ever.

"My gosh, Hannah, shut it, it's too early." Mumbles my brother Jack. His eyes are half closed and he drags himself into the bathroom. I cut him off, race in front and practically slam the door in his face.

"Hey, no fair, I was here first. Mom, Mom". I laugh. Jack may be a head taller than me but I'm too good at scooting in front and getting what I need without being seen.

As I look in the mirror, my mouth foaming from toothpaste, I say to my reflection; "the best day of the whole school year."

Better than the Friday before a holiday break.

Better than having a surprise assembly instead of a social studies test.

Better than trading my leaky hummus and Gouda on sundried tomato wrap for Allison's homemade meatloaf sandwich. Oh, that's so good. (We must have been switched at birth.)

Today is the end of the year field trip.

Not just any field trip like to an inside, smelly museum or the house built in the 1800's, where the people wear old time clothes and cook over a wood stove. No, not so fun.

This is the field trip we all have been waiting for since the start of this 5th grade. This is why I've been on my best behavior at school, did extra help for the teacher and got tons of "good job" points.

The graduating 5th grade class of Parkwood School, of which I am a proud member, is going to the Big Kahuna Amusement Park. The best amusement park ever made, with all kinds of rides; scary rides, fund rides, even rides where you get so dizzy you throw up. YOLO!

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I race back to my bedroom almost knocking over my sisters Hailey and Jen on their way to breakfast. They share a room at the end of the hall. Hailey is in first grade and Jen, she's really Jennifer but we all call her Jen, is graduating from preschool next week. They are such a pain; they fight all the time. Mom and Dad think by sticking them together in one room they will stop picking at each other and learn to get along. They're such babies. I am so over their whining. I'll be in middle school next year and will have no time to break up their "raspberry fights", as Mom calls them.

Well, enough about them. I've got to get dressed and be ready for Amanda's Mom to pick me up. We have to get to school by 7:30 so the bus can take us to The Big Kahuna Amusement Park. Just saying those words makes me giggle.

"Take a deep breath. Calm down, Hannah," I tell myself. I try that yoga breathing my cousin Jill showed me. Breathe in your nose; breathe out your mouth with a whistle sound, slowly, slowly. Hey, it's working.

"Oh, wait, where's my pants? Like, I'm getting frantic. My new pants that Mom was supposed to hem! Oh, My, Gosh. Is that them. Great. The tag is still on. They have to be washed before you hem them, Mother." Says Hannah. She holds up the pants and the bottoms of the pant legs bunch on the floor. "And they're a short! Aagh!"

"Mom, how could you." Hannah hangs her head and shakes it back and forth. "You promised. You said you'd hem them so I could wear them on the trip." She looks in the mirror. Rolling her eyes, she says "we'll have to talk about this later." "I can't be late."

Hannah goes through her drawers, throwing clothes on the floor to look for the right pants to wear. "Thank you, Thank you. Not the best pants, but they're clean. Well, at least you did my wash, Mother." Hannah quickly pulls on her leggings.

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“Breathe Hannah, Breathe.” I check myself in my full length mirror. “Outfit. Check; No thanks to you, Mom. Hair, check. Am I ready to be whipped around by the biggest and scariest ride? Check, check, and check.”

Hannah goes through her small back pack. “I’m carrying everything I need for today. I have my hairbrush, lip gloss”. “Oh, my gosh, Mom.” Again, Hannah rolls her eyes as she takes out 2 packets of tissues her mom put in the backpack when they went to the mall. “I’m not a baby. That’s right, Mom. Yeah, I know I’ve got to have tissues on me no matter what. You never know when you’re going to need to blow your nose, or end up in a bathroom with no toilet paper,” says Hannah with a sigh. “Is that all she thinks about? Yes,” she says to her reflection in the full length mirror.

Deep breath. “I’ve got my cell phone and camera. All charged up. I know my phone has an awesome camera but my Christmas camera is the best and I love pretending I’m a famous photographer. Totes.” Hannah looks in the mirror again and shakes her head. “Now I’m just babbling.”

Hannah checks the time on the alarm clock. “Gotta go!” and runs down the stairs, jumping the last three. “I am getting older. I used to only jump the last two”, she says as she “sticks” the landing.

CHAPTER TWO

“Hey, hey, hey”, says Mom. “Where are you off to so early?”

Dad is reading the paper at the table and I can hear him moaning about his baseball team. “You’re so right”, she says as she turns her head back to the kitchen. We both smile and roll our eyes. Mom told me she could care less about baseball stuff when we had one of those Mother-

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Daughter times she likes to have. But she loves dad...blah, blah, blah. Really, during those talks, she's just picking my brain for info about my friends.

"Amanda's Mom is picking me up early so we can get to school on time because today is the 5th grade field trip to The Big Kahuna Amusement Park and I can't be late." I blurt out in one breath.

"Oh, you mean it's today?" "Already?" "Ok, I'll get your lunch from the fridge." Her voice trails off as she heads back to the kitchen.

I follow her into the kitchen and see Dad and Jack engrossed in yesterday's box scores.

Hailey and Jen are eating breakfast are fighting over the cereal box. As usual. "Let me see it." "Let go." "Mom she won't let it go." I just shake my head. They poke at each other. I am so done with this.

"No, Mom, I don't need lunch. The school gives us a lunch ticket so we can eat at the Park." It was all on the paper they gave us. I put it on the fridge.

"You're not going to eat that greasy excuse for nourishment, Hannah," lectures Mom. "I already made your lunch, take it. It's your favorite wrap, sprouts and tofu."

"Oh Mom, not today." I mouth the words.

"What was that Hon?" says Mom in a calmer voice. She hands me a bag. "And I put a few napkins in there to. Just in case."

Just in case what? My friends see my lunch and puke, too. I never know what she means by that; "Just in case."

Mom keeps smiling at me and it's making me feel like I should say something. Is there a booger hanging out my nose? Just then I hear the beep, beep. Saved by the car horn. "See you." I call back as I run down the front stairs.

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“Hannah, sweetie, what time will you be back?” Calls Mom still smiling at me.

“It’s on the school notice on the fridge.” I yell as I race down the front steps.