

Summer School, Short-lived

By Hannah Murphy

My summer began at 6 AM walking to get to my bus for summer school. I was sad and scared and mostly tired as I walked to the bus to pick me up that morning. The bus pick up was at our high school, I recognized maybe two of the girls out of the seven or eight people that were standing around just like me, I always knew them as those weird girls though, and they sat right at the front of the bus first day, eventually the bus driver told them to fan out and they ended up in the middle of the bus. Who sits in the middle? It's a giant long empty bus, we're the first pick up, everyone knows the back of the bus is where it's at. I knew no one as more people piled on from the different pickups we went to. I would glance up like Wilson to catch a glimpse of who they might be, but I didn't dare say a word or talk to them, the nerves would take over so I would dart my eyes back to the fogged-up window and slump down. Meeting new people sucks. So, I realized quickly that summer school wasn't just for kids who failed, it was also for kids who wanted to graduate faster, I had one class that I failed but I overheard that other people had numerous classes to go to. Summer school ran from 8:30 AM till 1 PM, no one told me there's only ONE time that the buses come and pick you up. When I thought about it after, I wasn't really even sure why I would think that a bus would bother to come and pick up a few kids when they could just wait to pick everyone up.

That first day I found a pay phone after my math class around the corner, the change jingled in my pocket as I fumbled out a quarter finally, it was 9:30 AM on the dot, I called my mom's work.

"Hello this is so and so company,"

"Can I speak to my mom?" I said without trying to cry. "Yep, hang on sweetie." They knew who was calling. "What's up," my mom said when she came on.

"Mom there's no other bus, everyone here has other classes, I only have one... and I'm done already, I don't know anyone here,"

"Well, this is how summer school works, I can't come and pick you up every day from there now." I cried, I was so scared and nervous, the hallways were big here and they had like FIVE whole floors in this school. It was dark everywhere, the library was closed and locked off. I thought I was the only one, walking alone I walked up the hallway stairs, it got hot, there was only air conditioning on the main floor, I guess. I made it all the way to the top, staring out the window at the view of a few pine trees, when I heard kids laughing. I was terrified to introduce myself, but as my heart pumped out of my chest I decided to figure out where they were. I

found this room with couches, cool, I thought to myself, our high school didn't have couches! I guess you could count the ONE dirty couch in our small drama class. They were laughing and cuddling and once they saw me cleared out holding hands. Oops, maybe I just interrupted something, shit. I walked all the way back down to the main floor where it became cool again, opened the giant heavy loud metal clunky doors, slamming behind me. To my surprise there were a few people that looked the same as I did, gloomy faces and unaware of what to do. I saw one of the girls that was on my bus, she got picked up on the second stop we made, I wanted to introduce myself, but she saw me walking over and immediately introduced herself to me instead, Daisy was gorgeous, silky brown wavy hair with these beautiful popping green eyes. Envious? I wouldn't say, more in awe of just being in her presence. She knew how to talk to anyone and everyone! There wasn't a teacher in site to ask anything, seemed like we were all on our own. Eventually we realized that the principal was there every day, he would just stay in the front office and never ventured far from there. Daisy knew a lot more people than I did, there were people from high schools from all over even city schools! I was from a tiny town, nowhere. The boonies.

An embarrassing fun fact about myself is that I've always suffered from nose bleeds from a young age, it first happened to my older brother and then I started to get them as well. I'd be in class and a small drop of blood would drip down on to my work in elementary school, I'd raise my hand,

"uh, my nose is bleeding," my teacher would eye roll, slowly get up from her desk,

"Go take a seat at the back," while she grabbed those rough brown paper towels, "you'll have to learn from the back of the class until it stops." A lot of times sitting on a milk crate learning lessons trying to sit as tall as I could to see over. As most people would think, I was called a nose picker a lot, mostly compared to Ralph Wiggum. My brother and I would both ask my mother,

"Why does this happen? Why do I get nose bleeds all the time?"

"Well, it's because you're growing, and you have too much blood in yah!" I think that carried with me till I was about 17 years old and realized, well I think I'd be about Shaq's size now if this really was true. I've looked it up, there's no known reason for it to this day, I've also brought it up to my mother recently and she distinctly remembers my brother having the issue, he was brought to hospitals and even went as far as to have nose cauterization, but as for myself, blank.

The buses all piled in that day along the half circle driveway out front of the school, we all rushed to get on and get our regular spots, mostly always fighting over those two far back

seats, where the cool kids sit, obviously. I got a seat second from the back this time and was excited for the ride home to listen to music, share ear buds with Daisy and laugh with everyone else on the bus. Daisy trailed on not far behind me and suddenly shrieked when she glanced down at me,

“A BEE! IT’S IN YOUR HAIR!” All the girls were ear-piercingly screaming and freaking out as I shook my hair furiously and flipped my head down trying to shake out the bee. Daisy saw it fly out and calmly said, “you’re good, it’s gone.” The bus driver stared at us in his giant back mirror, shaking his head once it was all over,

“Everyone okay back there?” as he closed the door and went to take off. Daisy’s face eased, as she turned to look at me again her eyes grew huge,

“You...you have blood, your nose...it’s bleeding!” my eyes went huge just like Daisy’s now, ‘Oh shit, fuck, not now!’ I thought it in my head.

“Did you hit your face off your knee?” someone yelled out laughing to the crowd of people all huddled and staring over the brown pleathered bus seats at me, well no I’m not a MORON! But the blood also was not stopping, I kept my hand under my nose. It’s always the same, starts off pretty slow, but you only have a few minutes before it starts gushing. I looked through my purse with one hand, why do I have so much crap! I thought to myself.

“You need Kleenex?” Daisy asked as I frantically searched through my bag,

“I swear you have everything in there BUT Kleenex.” Someone laughed. I moved my hand a short distance away from my face to see how much blood was pooling up in my hand. It started to drip through my fingers now.

“I have no Kleenex, I’m screwed.” Daisy immediately stood up, she rushed forward to our bus driver, “Do you have napkins, paper towels, anything up here... a shirt? Her nose started bleeding back there.” The bus driver had nothing, and all the buses were leaving at the exact same time, one after another, we were the last bus in line of course to be leaving. But just ahead of us the second last bus was starting to turn out, Daisy booked it and RAN like hell to the other bus waving her hands, smacking on the side of the bus. She was able to get on and run immediately back to us, it was a handful of napkins, and now the floor was covered in blood, a puddle was starting to form, from one small human body, it made no sense, the napkins definitely weren’t enough. And just like that, within a few moments, my nose finally stopped. Not one person didn’t have a question for my weirdly strange circumstance, but I had no answers. It definitely wasn’t attention I could need or handle, thankfully, summer school is short-lived and doesn’t last long.

