

## **Gretchen's Life,** Teen Short Story Writing Contest

The girl's first three years of high school were spent being bullied by rich, beautiful Blair and her posse. The girl was the only one in school who wore overalls and spent all of her free time reading about famous rocket scientists. Her studious and shy personality and quirky style were what tempted everyone. She spent too many days being stuffed in a garbage can, or having her head being dunked in the toilet. Eventually, it damaged her mentally, and she would refuse to talk to anybody, save for her mother. Her mother would always be there to have a discussion when there was something wrong. Her parents were the only ones who called the girl by her name, Gretchen. Others just addressed as "you" or "girl." No one wanted to be friends with the girl being bullied by the most popular clique in school.

It was the first week of senior year, and Gretchen, not wanting to embarrassingly sit alone as usual, ate her lunch in the bathroom stall. Depressed and crying, she realized that a new school year would start the same way as all the others. She let all the taunting and tormenting affect her, and decided that she needed to calm herself.

For the past year, Gretchen had tried to find a hobby to distract her from everything that was going on at school. Her father had given her a guitar for her fifteenth birthday in 2010, but it had been sitting in the storage room in the basement because she was not interested in learning. Gretchen hesitantly decided to attempt learning to play a few chords using online videos. She thought that she may end up enjoying it, but she was mistaken. It was all just too difficult and irritating for Gretchen to comprehend.

Volleyball resulted the same way. Gretchen joined a clinic close to her house, and took group lessons with other eighteen-year old girls who reminded her a lot of Blair. She felt disjointed from the rest, as they were all narcissistic, pretty, pompous girls. They kept having the need to inform everybody about their new boyfriends, cars, or clothes, just like Blair.

"Did you hear that me and Brandon are dating now? We are so cute right?" said the tall, blonde, pretty girl.

"Oh my god! That is so cute. My dad just bought me a BMW and I am so psyched to drive it!" replied the brunette.

"Hey you," notioned the blonde girl to me, "Does your dad own a BMW?"

I stuttered and before I had the chance to answer she said, "Thought so."

That was when Gretchen discovered that bullying doesn't just take place in school, but anywhere where people don't like her style and personality.

After lunch, Gretchen walked into math class and took a seat in the back of the classroom. She looked around the room and spotted a group of kids, who were known to take drugs, next to the chalkboard. They looked so relaxed and stress-free. That is how Gretchen wanted to feel. Although she knew all the dangerous symptoms of drug taking, she felt as if it was worth it, considering how much crap she had been through these past few years. As she finished scanning the room, she spotted a boy, named Darrell, sitting in the back corner seat. He was quite friendly boy to Gretchen, but rumor had it that he secretly smoked weed at home, as he apparently found some in his parents' bedroom. Gretchen had an urge to ask Darrell if he could lend her some, but she didn't know how to ask. It seemed like a very awkward question. She was debating whether to just say everything she was thinking, tell him what her life had been like, or to just blurt out and ask him if he possessed drugs or not.

With no further thought, Gretchen uttered, "Hi Darrell, I've been having a lot of stuff going on and been feeling really bad about myself. I was wondering if you had anything you could lend me to make me feel better."

That Monday afternoon, while her parents to out at work, was the first time Gretchen ever used drugs to relieve her. It took off any stress she had, and made Gretchen feel so good, but only for about a few hours. At 9 pm that night, she started feeling dizzy and nauseous.

Tuesday morning, Gretchen still wasn't feeling too well after her first, and last, use of marijuana. She was losing balance, her brain was shutting down, and studying at school was difficult. Walking into chemistry lab that morning, she was so dizzy and felt as if she was about to drop to the ground. Gretchen turns around to find a chair, unconscious of the fact that her bag was about to hit a tube filled with a boiling, turquoise liquid. It shattered on the ground, which let all the liquid stain the ground and start bubbling. The teacher, Mr. Adams, was frustrated, and ordered Gretchen to immediately leave the room. The whole class gasped and snickered together.

Gretchen felt her cheeks get fiercely hot, then ran out of the classroom,

humiliated. When Gretchen was walking home, still embarrassed, she encountered the captain of the football team, Chris, who had bullied her many times prior.

When he saw her, he shouted, "Hey you! Where's your chemistry book? Did you drop it on the ground like everything else today?"

Gretchen ran away rapidly, just to avoid anything else that may occur. Once she reached home, she didn't have a clue what to do. She was worried that all the bullying will affect her studies, as she was to be applying to colleges soon. Gretchen couldn't take the stress. She went to the kitchen and opened the knife drawer. She picked one out, and slit her wrist a half an inch. She couldn't take it anymore. Everything was so grim, and Gretchen wished that she had no clue to live life this way.

On Wednesday morning, Gretchen pretended to walk to school, but once her mother left for work, she walked back in through the back door. She was feeling too miserable to even show her face in school. She officially couldn't think that things could get any worse. She sat at home pulling out her hair, thinking of anything she could do to ameliorate this situations she was in.

Wednesday afternoon, reality dawned on Gretchen. She sat in her bedroom, thinking about her high school life so far, and what college could be like. Her high school years felt worse, year after year, and it didn't seem that things would change very much in college. She felt that she was wasting her life, and it was too late to change anything. Gretchen had had suicidal thoughts before, as unnecessary as that sounds, but she always felt depressed and miserable, especially now. She didn't want to spend any more days stuffed into a locker, pushed to the ground, or stepped on. Gretchen decided that the only supportive and trustworthy people in her life were her parents. She could not imagine living her whole life without substantial friends or a solid reputation, neither of which she had. She thought to herself, that she must end her life as soon as possible.

It was dinnertime at Gretchen's home and while spending time with her parents; she started second-guessing her suicidal thoughts. Nothing ever went wrong when Gretchen hung out with her parents. Whenever she did, all her of her life's worries seemed to go away. They always comforted her no matter what was going on. They respected her and all her qualities. She loved them more than anyone in the world, as

they were pretty much the only ones who didn't tease her.

Even though Gretchen was thinking of all this and how she would very much miss her parents, she tried not to forget the fact that the rest of her life was quite horrible. Nothing could make it any better; she was tired of living it. She decided to take advantage of that dinner and remind her parents that she love them and will dearly miss them.

"Mom, Dad, I have something to tell you. I know that this might be a peculiar moment to be saying this, but I haven't for a while. I just wanted to let you both know that I love you very much, and if anything were to happen it me, you should know that I always have and will love you."

Her mom and dad looked at each other weirdly like someone was wrong, but then her mom dusted it off and replied, "Okay honey, I love you too, but why say this now?"

"Um, no reason. I just felt that I haven't talked to you about that before." Gretchen said.

My dad didn't think too much and just said, "I love you too, Gretch."

Gretchen figured that his short response was just a result of him being tired, so she didn't think too much of it.

After dinner that night, Gretchen took a deep breath and felt a little more relaxed, now that she had talked to her parents. She would miss them greatly. She appreciated all that they had done for her in the past 18 years. Although her parents were amazing, 99% of her life was unbearable, and she won't miss it at all.

Gretchen's life was a bust, and not worth trying to improve. Eight o'clock, that Wednesday night in the bathtub, was the last time she took a breath. Gretchen slid down underneath the water, and never rose back up.