

NONFICTION –SECOND PLACE

Twelve came too late For Cinder-*Jasmine*

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The last day of eighth grade, June 15th 2007, started out like any other, *running*. My bright, green flip-flops hit the wet pavement with a CLACK! As I stubbed my toes repeatedly jogging down the hill all I could think was, *don't trip!* The bus was just in reach and it would not be good for me if 30 middle schoolers saw me fall flat on my face.

“Ha! Are you alright?” the bus driver asked not so sympathetically. Too tired to give my usual snippy comeback, I silently ascended the three or so steps into an aisle way with 24 seats and windows as its décor. I plopped down onto an empty hard, plastic-covered bench panting like a black lab on a hot day. I felt a little weird not to be surrounded by boys shouting, girls primping in their tiny hand mirrors, and last night's slackers trying to finish homework. Apparently not everyone felt like spending the last day of school on a hot, sticky bus.

June 15th was a day full of random outburst of tears, insane yearbook signings, crushing bear hugs, a rule-free field-day, and **very** meaningful good byes; the perfect mixings for my Cinder-Jasmine's fairy tale. My ball (field day), my carriage (the bus), my gown (jeans and a tank top), my glass slippers (sparkly green flip-flops), my prince charming (no clue).

When the big yellow carriage pulled up to the ball I knew the day was going to be sad yet exciting- I chose exciting. As soon as I stepped into the ball room (football field) I looked for familiar faces to hang out with. It came down to my sister Jade and my friend DeeDee. We spent all day at the courts watching basketball tournaments, running from people with water bottles ready for a fight, watching teachers get soaked in the dunk tank, and eating hot dogs. But when the ball came to an end, I was feeling that sadness come over me as I thought of how it was all over from this moment on...or was it?

RIIIINNNG!” went the final bell of my middle school career. Immediately the hall outside my English 8 class was filled with students. Some were crying, some were laughing, and some were just

flat out screaming. At first, I headed to the bus loop slowly, procrastinating never setting foot inside the doors of Carver Middle School again. But soon the tears of my fellow classmates put tears in my own eyes and I knew I need to get to the bus before the drizzle from my eyes became a complete down pour. I took off to the loop as fast as I could.

“Jasmine!” someone called out to me. I turned to see my best friend since pull ups, Mere-Mere. Tears filled her bright green eyes in a way that made my heart ache. I walked over to her and wrapped her in a huge hug. “Love you girl,” Mere-Mere choked out through her sobs.

“Oh, love you too honey,” I whispered back squeezing her tight, blinking back tears of my own. I pulled back from the hug and looked her in the eyes while smoothing back her long blond hair that stuck to her freckled face. Smiling, I hugged her on more time then kept walking out to the bus, picking up the pace. All I could think was, *no crying till your butt hits that bus seat*, as I stepped off the curb onto the asphalt of the parking lot.

“Jasmine!” yelled someone else. *Crap. Who the...Danny*, I thought. Cutie pie that he was- cocoa colored skin, big, round, gorgeous hazel eyes, five- foot- nine- woman-teaser (i.e. prince charming)- I just didn’t want him to see me crying.

“What?” I said with attitude so he’d see my frustration. He opened his arms wide with a look of innocence on his face. I sighed and pretended to fall on him. He tripped backwards and almost brought us to the ground.

“Kiss me,” Danny whispered after we regained our balance. I didn’t know if he was serious so I just kept hugging him as if I was oblivious. He said it one more time and the playful tone in his voice was gone. I closed my eyes and gave what was probably one of the most awkward kisses ever- but still just as good. A series of about 10 whoops went up around us and I quickly jumped back from him hot with embarrassment.

“I’ll call you,” Danny said, the smile back in his voice. I nodded, looking at my pale pink toes and walked away on cloud nine. All year I’d been waiting for a kiss like that but when it came down to it, I never expected it to be Danny. Since eighth grade started he’d been my best bud, but being cliché, I still had a little crush on him. Sadly, up until the moment at the bus loop we’d both had previous love interests- him, the girlfriend he’d had since that November and me, two guys I’d been flirting back and forth with for the whole year. But in the end, it looked like he’d had a crush too.

“Jasmine,” someone said from right behind me. I turned around with my 100-watt smile on thinking it was Danny wanting another ‘hug’. My smile withered when I saw not Danny but Jaquan. *Double Crap*. Jaquan had been one of my previous love interests. With him being my first kiss, we’d had some history. It turned out that he wasn’t ready to put out the old flame that we’d had (all field-day he’d been flirting with me hard) and I guess in my heart I wasn’t really ready either (I kind of flirted back). Jaquan was cute in his own way as well- chocolate skin, big lips, my height, a nice dresser- but when you got to the point, he didn’t compare to Danny.

“Look, I really have to go,” I said turning back around trying to leave.

“No, wait- come back here.” He enclosed his hand around my wrist. I turned around only to give him a piece of my mind but instead he gave me a peck on the lips. I shook my wrist free of his grasp and ended the day the same way I started it, running. And by the time my butt hit the seat- there was no more avoiding it- big, fat, wet drops were rolling down my cheeks and I was writhing in guilt.

There are only two differences between Cinderella and Cinder-*Jasmine*. One, Cinderella got a ball with dancing and court jesters. I got field day with basketball games and a dunk tank. Two, Cinderella knew how to only choose one Prince Charming. I didn’t and I paid my price in tears and rejection- in the end Danny text messaged me a told me he saw Jaquan and me. Instead of a happy ending, I got a life lesson: one guy definitely means a *happier* ever after.