

Things I Know About Her

by Lucas Selby

Hospital

She was born on January 2, 1999, sometime in the night. Her mother didn't want to hold on any longer, so she pushed extra hard and out popped her daughter with time for a kiss goodbye. The baby's new family poured champagne and smoked cigars outside to mourn and celebrate. She returned to that hospital almost 18 years later.

Grapes

Her dad kept the grapes on the top shelf of the fridge, but she was always able to reach them by pulling up the kitchen chair. She could snack on grapes for days if she didn't get caught. Next to the grapes was the adult juice. She was curious about the taste at first, but thought it wasn't very good when her dad let her try. She wanted grapes instead.

Locked Door

When she was five, her daddy switched out the lock on her door so the room could be locked from the inside. He showed her how she could lock herself in her room if she ever felt unsafe. That night, she tried it out for the first time while her daddy yelled at her to open the door. There was nothing next to the grapes in the fridge.

Hike

The father-daughter hike before she graduated from elementary school congregated at the foot of the mountain. More like a large hill, really. They congregated at the foot of the large hill. All the girls, all their dads, and a few teachers to lead the way. She raced her dad up, but he was vastly outpaced.

“Wait up!” he cried.

“I can’t!” she called back.

“Why not?” he asked.

She turned around neatly and beamed back at him. “I wanna win!”

He caught up to her and took a moment to pant. “Sweetheart, what are you talking about? You’re already so much faster than me.”

First Crush

Her first crush sat behind her in her 8th grade language arts class. He was a year older than her, but he wasn’t stupid. He just learned differently from everyone else. When her friends asked the boy if he liked her, he asked who she was.

Birthday

When she opened her lunchbox on January 2nd, she found grapes. She smiled.

Homework

She worked hard to get into the toughest classes, only to work harder to stay in them. She wanted to be a scientist, an architect, an astronaut, an anything. Leaving her chair, she walked to the

fridge to grab a snack before continuing her homework. On the top shelf, the grapes had been moved to make room for more beer bottles, some of them only half full. She slid them aside and grabbed a handful of grapes.

Alley

Lost downtown on a Friday evening, she took a shortcut through an alleyway she thought let out at a familiar restaurant. As she turned the corner, she felt someone grab her and pull her back. Before she could turn to defend herself, the man had a knife to her throat and had started to feel her up. She was terrified, but felt his weight fall away when another man bludgeoned him over the head with a solid briefcase. She ran before she could say “thank you.”

Pepper Spray

When her father found out about the attack, he gave his daughter pepper spray and told her only to use it if she needed to. That night, she locked the door.

First Party

The shimmering black dress gave her away. Sleeveless, backless, low at the neck and high on the thigh. This wasn't her dress, and it was obvious. She probably borrowed it from the friend she came in with, the one wearing a rather revealing red dress. When her friend abandoned her for the group of guys sitting across the room she looked panicked and instinctively glanced around for someone she knew. I grabbed another red plastic cup in my free hand and approached her from across the room. She eyed me cautiously, and refused me before I could even offer. She

quietly stood up, grabbed her bag and attempted to make her way outside. The group of boys near the door watched her as she walked their way. One of them reached out his hand and grabbed her ass, sending her hand immediately into her purse. The boys erupted in laughter as she slipped through the door into the brisk night air. When I approached her again, I brought a cup of root beer instead. She accepted, but I noticed that she didn't take a sip until I matched pace with her comments on how awful boys can be.

Flower

There was a wildflower in her locker. She didn't know where it came from, but she had a funny feeling I was involved.

First Date

Her dad didn't know what to think of her new boyfriend, but he made her promise to be home on time. Dinner was pleasantly awkward, as she attempted to flirt but ended up talking about her home life to her new boyfriend. I really cared about her, and I wanted her to feel at ease when talking to me. At the end of the meal, she let me pay the bill and drive her home. She led me into the house but stopped before we could enter the kitchen, stopping at a few crushed grapes on the floor near the fridge. She made me leave right away. She refused to be kissed goodnight.

New Year's Eve

Getting home by midnight was her dad's idea, but I timed it so we could kiss goodnight right at midnight. She was staring off into space, not excited to return home. I looked at the way the

moon seemed to dance across her face, and I couldn't imagine a time I had found her more beautiful. I leaned over and took her hand. The smile she gave me in response distracted me long enough to not see the car headed in our direction.