

# THE TATTOO

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## Prom proves a rip-roarin' good time

By **KATIE JORDAN**  
The Tattoo

My prom night was unforgettable. And I'm not just saying that because they want me to.

Oh, sure, they gave us a none-too-subtle hint in actually naming the event "Unforgettable." But when I say I had a memorable night, I'm not necessarily referring to the magic of the evening.

And while I realize some of my peers may have found their memories a bit blurry the morning after - for some less-than-magical reasons - that's not what I mean, either.

No - it was memorable for me as Alice's trip to Wonderland was memorable for her: As a journey into the realm of the bizarre.

Understand, the whole idea of prom was pretty bizarre to me from the start. Guys shell out lots of cash to wear borrowed clothes for an evening.

Girls do the same to purchase a dress they can only wear for one night - and shoes that they'll be lucky if they can wear for one hour. All this so they can look good ... in a darkened room.

But I agreed to go because my friends were going, and my friend Joe Keo asked me to go with him.

That, and because I heard the food was really good.

I realized from the start that the event would be memorable - even in the weeks leading up to it, as prom preparation was going on.

Maybe a week or two before prom, I had a doctor's appointment for a checkup and the meningitis vaccine I had to get before going to UConn in the fall. As the good doctor checked me over he pointed out some acne on my face and asked, "Taking anything for it?"

I laughed and said no. He responded by asserting that that was my choice. He said it the way you might say, "Well, that's your choice..." to someone who just told you they'd decided to vacation in the Middle East.

Of course, this is the same doctor who remarked once when I had to walk across the room for part of some checkup, "Hmm ... your feet turn in when you walk, don't they?" I thought to myself, "Um, I never noticed that ... but thank you for ensuring that every step I make from now on will be made with the utmost self-consciousness."

And that's without high heels.

Of course, you have to wear high heels to prom, because the only women's shoes dressy enough to wear to a formal dinner and dance are high heels. Fine for those of us who can wear heels without wobbling like a newborn deer - think Bambi. But, as you could maybe have guessed, I'm not one of that fortunate number.

But I'm getting ahead of myself. Because you can't buy the hideously uncomfortable shoes until you buy ... The Dress.

Now, surprisingly enough, I didn't have too hard a time finding my dress. But then, I'm not picky. I would accept any dress that fit me, as well as my two rules for dress-shopping:

1. Thou shalt not wear anything pink.
  2. Thou shalt not wear anything poofy.
- It only took a few stores to find something suitable. My mom was there to help, by picking out some dresses for me to try on - mostly pink, poofy, or pink-and-poofy ones. But she tried.

We finally found a sort of brownish-goldish colored dress with some glittery flowers, and more layers than a wedding cake. Okay, okay - so it only had two layers, plus a piece of something called "crinoline" on the inside. The purpose of the crinoline, as far as I could discern, was to be scratchy.

Once I found the dress and then the shoes, there was nothing else I had to arrange. Or rather, there was nothing else I knew I had to arrange.

I was chatting with Joe, ironing out some details of arrangements, and just generally antic-

ipating the event. Finally he said, "I just can't wait until you pin my boutonniere on me!"

"Yeah!" I cheerfully replied. "...Um ... what's a boutonniere?"

Apparently, for those of you who don't know, "boutonniere" is another word for "flower" - of the sort you pin to the lapel of your prom date's rented tux.

Like I said before - this was all foreign territory to me. And I was only just learning the language, since I hadn't attended junior prom. If I had, my vocabulary might have already included the words "crinoline" and "boutonniere."

One word my vocabulary did already include was, "Oops." Since I'm a bit of a klutz, this came in handy - minutes before I had to leave the house.

I stepped up the bottom two steps of my staircase to take a final peek in the mirror, and heard a sound no girl ever wants to hear her dress make on the day of prom:

**I heard a sound no girl ever wants to hear her dress make on the day of prom: 'Rrriiiip.....'**

"Rrriiiip." I think my parents may have then heard some words no parent ever wants to hear from their daughter, but I can't recall for sure. I do know I heaved a huge sigh before looking at the damage.

This defeat hit me especially hard because it came shortly after I had teased my father for counseling me on how to properly walk in a long dress. With a laugh and an eye-roll, I had replied, "I think I know a little more about this subject than you do, Dad."

Apparently, I was wrong. Luckily, of the many layers that could have torn under my inexperienced high-heel wearing foot, it had been the innermost, least important layer. In a word, the crinoline.

With as much tension as if the seconds were ticking away until my coach (i.e. my mom's minivan) turned into a pumpkin, my family debated the issue and finally agreed that I should just rip off the torn part - "carefully." Bippety-boppety-boo.

So I finally made it out the door and stuffed my glittery high-heel wearing self into the car, and we were off. By the time we got to my friend's house for her little photo-taking, hors d'oeuvre-serving pre-prom get-together, it was, of course, raining.

My mother handed me a purple umbrella to protect my hair from the damaging effects of those terrible raindrops.

Now, I'm not too crazy about fixing my hair. My date must have asked me half a dozen times, "What are you going to do with your hair?" And I responded, "I don't know - brush it." He thought I was joking.

I had tried to do something different to it for his sake, but nothing too fancy. My mother had tried to get me to wear some hair spray with gold glitter to match my dress. When I argued against it, she assured me, "It'll wash out. It's just like dirt."

For some reason, I didn't find that line of reasoning terribly persuasive.

So my mother was more worried about my hair than I was. I didn't care that even with the umbrella the wind blew the rain in my face and hair. I turned to my mother and said, "See, my hair doesn't look that bad, does it?"

She looked at me for a moment. All she said was, "Oh, dear..."

When it stopped raining, we stood outside and our parents took photo after posed photo, to capture our apparent joy at being all dressed up to stand on my friend's back porch.

When it was finally time to leave for prom, one of our group of friends assured us that, if

anyone didn't know how to get to the Aqua Turf, they could just follow him.

The only hitch was, he didn't actually know how to get there himself. He was relying on his car's navigation system, as were all the people who followed him and got lost - one of whom was my date.

So a few of us who arrived simultaneously stood outside waiting and worrying whether the others would find their way.

Actually, it was my fault everyone stood out in the cold for so long. I kept saying, "I'm not going in without Joe." Since they only give one ticket per couple, and I had ours with me, I had worried that he might have trouble getting in without me.

Of course, I was wrong to assume that what I referred to as a "ticket" served any practical purpose. Apparently they just took down names to let people in. I learned this after my friends had practically turned blue and I finally agreed to go in without Joe and the others we had heard were lost.

As it turned out, we were the last ones of our group to arrive. And, apparently, we were also the only ones who cared enough to wait in the cold for missing friends. This is why there are so few nice people - hypothermia kills us off.

So, finally inside and all together, we waited around until it was time to eat.

Each course was announced by blaring music. To the beat of this music, the waiters and waitresses all lined up in neat little rows on the dance floor. I wasn't sure whether to be disappointed or relieved when they didn't actually start dancing with those trays of food held high over their heads.

The food was quite good, in my opinion. It was also abundant: There were rolls, then salad, then more rolls, then pasta, then finally the main course. After eating all the food they served first (including one too many rolls) I was distraught to find that I could only eat half of my delicious steak.

I all but hugged the poor waiter who brought out Styrofoam boxes to take home the food we couldn't finish. I don't like to waste food, especially not when I've paid nearly 50 bucks for it. Of course, that fee was technically to get in to the prom - but as I've already mentioned, I wasn't exactly there for the dancing.

Even though I saved half the steak for later, I was still feeling pretty stuffed. I remarked to a friend next to me that I thought I might be sick.

Cue the strobe lights.

Now, for those of you who don't know, strobe lights, blaring music, and a huge meal are not exactly a great combination. Even on an empty stomach the flashing lights and the music are bound to make me a little dizzy - not to mention really annoyed. Luckily, I wasn't the only one who felt that way, so my friends and I made several escapes to the women's restroom.

Granted, the restroom wasn't as classy as the huge room the prom was in. The big room had something like 16 chandeliers. There was not



Katie Jordan and Joe Keo ready for prom.

Tattoo photo

even one in the restroom that I can recall, although that could be the effect of the strobe lights talking.

But at least you could hear yourself think there. Of course, what you inevitably heard was, "I can't believe I paid \$45 to stand in a restroom."

So we took deep breaths and once again braved the noise, the flashing lights, and the bodies rubbing against each other in the darkness. Some of my friends danced, but I mostly stayed at my table. I had discovered that, while all the cool kids were distracted by dancing, the waiters had placed strawberries and ice cream at every place at every table.

"This ice cream is going to melt," I realized. And then quickly added, "Hmm ... nobody else even knows this ice cream is here..."

But I was still too full to eat more than one serving of dessert, so I tuned out the sound of opportunity knocking. You couldn't hear it over the crappy music, anyway.

Finally, many hours of crappy music later, and after my very pathetic attempts at dancing with poor Joe - luckily he had the company of another girl whose date had canceled - we got to watch the crowning of the prom king and queen.

Well, actually, I got to watch the backs of people's heads who were watching the crowning of the prom king and queen. But I found that pretty much as exciting.

Finally, tired and half-deaf, my friends and I escaped into the night. I clutched my class gift - a small photo album - and my Styrofoam box and searched the darkness for my mother's minivan.

After that, the whole gang met up again at Bristol Ten Pin to bowl a few games - in our prom attire. We'd heard that they let you in free if you come all dressed up on prom night.

Of course, they still charged us for the shoes. The fact that we actually pay for the opportunity to wear old, borrowed shoes has always seemed a little bizarre to me, but then, I'd done and seen stranger things that day.

Unfortunately, me bowling well was still too far into the realm of the bizarre. But by that point most of us were too exhausted to care about our scores.

Yeah, it was a strange evening for a person like me. Some of it was just ridiculous, some of it was really annoying, some of it was embarrassing. But even I can admit that a lot of it was fun.

And even - as I thought to myself after I returned home in the early hours of the next morning, and sat down to eat the other half of my steak for breakfast - unforgettable.

## Senior journal

## Dancing until I nearly dropped, then walking home

By **ZACH BROKENROPE**  
The Tattoo

"You know, if we were in a movie, right? There are two ways this could end up. We could either have like this really life-changing walk or could be killed by some psychotic murderer," I say as Jake, Amanda and I walk down the street at 5 in the morning.

"Well, I hope I make it to the sequel, in that case," Jake says and laughs.

It's the morning after prom and our ride has apparently ditched us, leaving us no choice but to walk two miles to Amanda's house.

"That was good," Amanda says, as Jake holds her close to him.

It's cold outside and Amanda doesn't have a jacket of any sort. Amanda is a senior, and perhaps one of the coolest people I know.

She's a role model really, someone who stands up for what's right, no matter the consequences.

Then there's Jake, who you can't really describe.

I guess you could say he's glamorous. No matter what he does, he does it with poise, and his goal in life is to be a model. Enough said.

"It was good," I say. Despite being in the 30s out, the night is beautiful, not a cloud in the sky and the air is dry. You can see your own breath hover after each word. "I think we ticked a few

people off with our dancing though."

"Screw them," says Jake.

The whole night we danced crazy and different than everyone else there. We over-exaggerated each movement, we bowed to our partners, danced in circles like flower children, and danced ballet.

"I really don't care anymore," Amanda says. "I'm outta here in a few months and I'm not looking back."

It's scary for me to think about, but it's true. My senior friends are leaving me behind and moving on in life.

"I liked prom but after-prom sucked," I say. Every year the parent committee organizes a post-prom party in order to reduce teen drinking and sex, but this year they managed to totally spoil it by giving it a NASCAR theme.

"Definitely," Amanda says and shivers, her skin turning blue.

"God, life is great, isn't it?" I ask, feeling alive.

"Yeah ... it is," Jake says as a car slows down and then passes us.

"Life is going fast," Jake says. "I can't believe I'm going to be a junior next year. It's kinda sad."

"Yeah ... it is," I say.

There are completely random moments in life that you don't want to end, moments when you want to stay frozen in time, and as we walked down that street, freezing in the cold, I wanted to stay there forever.

## the freshman diaries



(Left) Wiped out from dancing, freshman Zach Brokenrope reclines during the Aurora (Neb.) High School prom. Above is Brokenrope, ready for action.

Tattoo photo

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