



buffalo

an excerpt from the  
soon-to-be-published novel  
Grrrl by Jennifer Whiteford

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by Jennifer Whiteford

Marlie is 15 years old. This is from her diary.

November 15, 1991

I skipped my afternoon classes today which was kind of a risk because if I'd gotten caught I wouldn't have been allowed to go out tomorrow which is the 36(d)ead concert! But I'm discovering that when you're a good student and you're not in class the office never calls home to ask where you are. I guess being good all the time does have some advantages. And I had to skip anyway because Nettie and I really wanted to go to this Salvation Army store near her school and it is only open from 10 until 3. I felt like I needed something new to wear to Buffalo and I only have, like, five dollars to my name right now. The clothes there are super super

cheap so Nettie and I thought we'd find something we could afford. It turned out to be TOTALLY AMAZING! It was used clothes heaven! For my five dollars I got: two old-lady style flowered dresses that fit amazingly, one pair of kind of baggy boy's jeans, a black WINTER COAT with fake fur on the collar, a pair of stripey leg warmers (Nettie HATES them and says they're "too eighties"), a white fuzzy knit hat with mittens to match, and a burgundy fuzzy knit cardigan. Hooray! Now I have lots of new things to choose from. And the school didn't call my house. All is clear for tomorrow. I can't be excited because I'm way too nervous. Tonight I'm just going to chill out in my room and listen to music. I'm paranoid about accidentally spilling the beans to mom and dad about the trip to Buffalo. I think I'll go to bed early.

M.

November 17, 1991

Well, I'm not going to be allowed to go to any concerts for "a really long time" according to mom. And we didn't even get caught! She doesn't know that I even went to Buffalo and she's still kind of grounding me and not letting me go downtown or to concerts until she "decides that I'll be safe". All this because I have a black eye. It hurts like hell and so do my ribs that are all bruised, but I'm more upset about having to stay home for however long until Mom lets me go downtown again.

Nettie and I were totally fine getting to Buffalo and Nettie's map was great and we ended up just walking to the place where the concert was because it was only about twenty minutes from the bus station. When we got there it was only four PM but people were lined up outside. There were lots more boys



there than there were at the last concert. Everyone was really punky and there were lots of people with mohawks or big spikey hair-dos and lots of leather jackets and crazy huge combat boots that went halfway up their legs. The music that was playing in the club was so loud that it was making it hard for Nettie and I to talk to each other while we were waiting in line. It was broad daylight still and I was feeling like we were in a pretty dangerous part of town. Nettie and I just stood close to the wall and I tried to look tough. Nettie always looks tough. She was freezing because she just had her leather jacket over her shirt and kilt but no hat or mitts or anything. I was feeling warm but dorky in all my warm stuff. No one else had a hat on. Even though it was an all-ages show, everyone who was in line seemed way older than us.

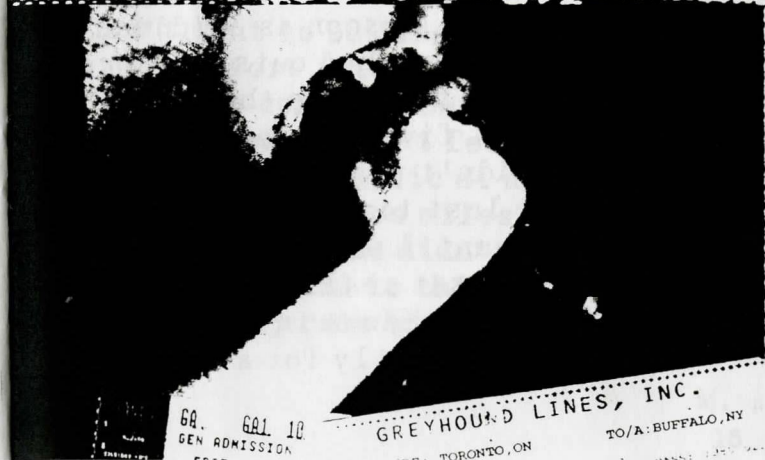
When they finally let us inside I stuffed my hat, scarf, and mittens in the sleeve of my coat and hid it underneath a table at the back of the club where no one was sitting. People were already pushing up to the front so we ran up there too. I was realizing that this concert wasn't going to be about having fun like the other one was. This one was going to be about surviving. I felt better after I got a clear idea of what we were up against. The people weren't too bad until the opening band came on. They were a band of all boys who played the loudest music I've ever heard in my life. I don't even know what they were called because the sound was so bad that I couldn't understand a word any of them said no matter if they were singing or talking. Every song they played was totally fast and they all sounded exactly the same. Everyone in the crowd was pushing so hard and people were slamming into each



other on all sides of us. I didn't know which leg to keep my weight on because I kept getting knocked over from different sides so eventually I just planted my feet down and tried to stay upright. Nettie had her fists clenched and her elbows sticking out. We were trying to be kind of polite at first but eventually we just started elbowing and pushing everyone who bashed into us. We were pushing these huge guys all over the place. Nettie almost got poked in the eye by someone's mohawk. I was getting really pissed off because we had as much right to be there near the front as anyone else. I was waiting for Hannah to come on and tell all the boys to go to the back.

But when 36(d)ead came on she didn't say anything like that. She didn't even yell like at the last concert. She was kind of looking over everyone's heads and they just started playing the fast-

est, hardest song off of the album. The crowd really went nuts then and lots of people started jumping up on stage and then jumping off into the crowd. Because of that, Nettie and I got to move closer to the front. Eventually, we got right up to the edge of the stage. That's when my ribs got bruised because people were pushing us so hard from behind. It hurt but there was no way we were going to move. I kept hoping Hannah would say something to the crowd but she was hardly even talking in between songs and when she did we couldn't understand what she was saying. They played all their songs really fast and for a couple of them they stopped before the song was over. "Fucking Jeopardy" was the last song and people were going totally crazy. This one girl with huge combat boots jumped up on stage and then threw herself over our heads back into the crowd but she didn't really make it all the



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way and her toe hit me right in the eye. It hurt so much that I felt like I was going to pass out. I closed my eyes and started to get really dizzy and I was just holding my hands over the eye that got kicked and people were still pushing us from behind. Things got pretty fuzzy and my vision clouded over and I started to fall down. Nettie grabbed me around the waist and dragged me backward through the crowd. We sat down at the table where I left my jacket and eventually I started to wake up and feel not as bad. No one else noticed us or talked to us. As soon as 36(d)ead stopped playing we rushed outside to go and get our bus. I felt like the whole concert was about five minutes long. I'm sure they didn't play for as long as they did the last time. I didn't feel fully okay until we got onto the bus. Nettie and I sat really close together all hunched down in our seats. We talked kind of quietly for a while

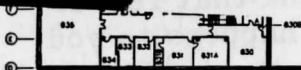


and then we both fell asleep. I was totally exhausted and my eye and my ribs both hurt like hell.

So now I'm kind of grounded, I have this gross black eye that is all puffy and purple and disgusting looking and my ribs hurt whenever I take a deep breath but I can't let mom know about that because she's mad enough about the black eye. I can't wait for Neil and Deepa to see me tomorrow. They won't believe how beat up I look.

I don't want to be disappointed. We put so much effort into planning and getting to the concert. But I kind of am disappointed. I don't feel like I was connected to the music at all. Hannah was, like, a million miles away. I needed help and she didn't help me. I guess it's stupid to think that famous people really care what happens to you.

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PAGE 8 OF 9

BUILDING	ADDRESS	1856 Main St. V6T 1Z1	CONSTRUCTION DATE	1923, 1947, 1959
MAIN LIBRARY	FLOOR	STACK LEVEL 8	SCALE	1" = 40'
			REVISION DATE	07 MAR 95
			BY	ME1 DGC



November 18, 1991

I'm at school hiding in the library with my stupid black eye. Our first period was cancelled and they told us to go to the library or the cafeteria. I think everyone went to the cafeteria because I don't see anybody in here. Deepa and Neil haven't seen me yet.

One more thing happened at the concert that I didn't write about. I think I wasn't ready to talk about it but now I think I should. There were lots of girls there who were in couples, like, kissing and stuff. They were really tough looking girls so no one bothered them. And there was this girl who was looking at me outside and then was standing beside me in the crowd and I thought she was totally pretty and she had bleached hair like Brianna except that it was short. She was really skinny and she almost looked like a

boy. She kept smiling at me and when Nettie went to get a drink of water this girl leaned over and kind of yelled over the music, "IS THAT YOUR GIRL-FRIEND?" and I shook my head. Then she smiled really wide and just stood there beside me for a few minutes, watching the band. Then she reached over and tried to hold my hand. I wanted to hold her hand so badly! I wanted to make out with her like all the other girls were doing and like Brianna and I did during the concerts in Seattle. But I totally couldn't because I was with Nettie and what would she have said? She doesn't even know that I'm maybe a lesbian. I don't even know if she thinks being a lesbian is okay. So I pulled my hand away from the girl and shook my head. She just shrugged her shoulders and smiled a little bit and then disappeared into the crowd. All of a sudden I felt really lonely and like I was going to cry. And it totally wasn't

fair because if it had been a boy who wanted to hold my hand and I liked him enough to do that Nettie would have been totally excited and teasing me and leaving me to be with him. So this is another reason why I'm depressed about the concert.

I better get to second period.

M.

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ottawa 2002

set in Fucked Olympia J

layout and design by Paul Jasen