

Writing a biography about yourself should be easy, right? That's what I thought until I began thinking of ways to fill up this page with my life story. In fact, what is my life story? I am not sure I know. I guess it started March 8, 1991 in a hospital in Nashville. My parents always say it was a gorgeous Friday morning, which I think contributes to my love of the weekends. I have lived in the same house in the same town since I was two. Mt. Juliet, which at one point may have seemed like a cow town, has built itself up quite well and has probably doubled its population since then. However, my stagnant residency has not left me uncultured. Aside from the many family vacations to Florida, I became a world traveler at 14 years old. The summer after my eighth grade year I was a student ambassador for People to People. I traveled to four countries (France, Italy, Switzerland and Austria) in a matter of three weeks with a group of fifty other students who, just like me, were traveling for the first time traveling without our parents. My traveling escapades did not stop there. Once I entered my freshman year of high school, my church hired a new youth pastor. She brought new talents and ideas to the table in the form of mission work. We went to Matamoros, Mexico, Gulf Port, Mississippi and most recently the Bahamas. The lessons that I have learned from those trips still stick with me today, and my growth continues to climb.

Middle school was all a blur. Either I honestly cannot remember those horrible three years or I just don't want to remember. Both of those sound about accurate. I remember being tall and lanky. My clothes never fit me right because of my skeletal-like frame. Mid-way through my sixth grade year I got braces, which I was actually very excited about. The thought of having my red and green braces match the Christmas decor in my house seemed so cool to me... Then I discovered it wasn't. Not only did my braces cause a huge glare in every picture taken between sixth grade and freshman year, they also hurt and made talking some what odd. Luckily, my singing voice was unscathed by my head gear. I joined the middle school choir and drama programs. I got the lead in "Give My Regards to Broadway" in eighth grade. I loved it so much, and the fact that I could escape what then felt like a torrential down pour social awkwardness. Thankfully, those years came and went.

I went through high school thriving in every extra curricular activity I could find. Student Council, the volleyball team, and the National Honor Society, you name it, I was in it. But what intrigued me the most were the arts. I grew up singing in the shower and dressing up as the Little Mermaid imagining what it would be like if I were Ariel. I specifically remember asking my parents if we could move to New York so that I could star in my own show. Absurd? Yes. Unattainable? Maybe. But as an eight year old girl dreaming big was only natural. So it was no surprise when I joined choir.

Choir was where I met my favorite teacher, Mrs. Elliott. She styles her blonde hair into a short, spiky do and she has the personality to match. She took the time to get to know me as a student and as a friend. Choir became my one competitive drive, and while I still loved acting, drama took the back seat. Freshman year, I became taking voice lessons from a man named John Ray and his wife Kat. Nothing changed in high school except for my work load. I was still taking voice lessons, still playing volleyball and still doing everything I had always done. My senior year I decided to join the drama club. Partly for my own enjoyment, and partly for Kat. She always asked me why I never got involved in drama. When I couldn't muster up an answer she swiftly pushed me into trying out for the musical at school, which she was helping direct. I

landed the lead in the spring musical “Footloose” and what I originally labelled as a mistake soon became my passion again.

During my senior year my close girlfriends and I met a guy named Palmer. We were in BNN together (our school news). I was deemed the title of “Script Girl”. This was mainly because I wrote the scripts for the anchors but the real reason for the title was due the fact that my teacher could never remember my name. There wasn’t a single volleyball game that he wasn’t at cheering us on. He came to every choir concert to take pictures afterwards. Within a matter of months, he became one of my best friends. I think what I like best is his heart and passion for God.

All this led me to the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. My freshman year was pretty overwhelming. I came from a graduating class of almost 400, then I got here and realized that no one here even knows my name. But after the initial culture shock, I began enjoying my college experiences. I found a church, made new friends and found my life’s direction as a communications major and theater minor. Coming home for the summer was much different than summers in the past. I like to call this past summer “My Summer of Growth and Enlightenment”. First of all, my independency was a little short lived. I had rules when I went back home, something I wasn’t used while at college. Also, many of my friends didn’t move back home. I got a job at JCPenney nearly working full time so the ones that did come back for the summer I didn’t see very much. My friend Kylan was a church intern in Jackson which caused her to be in and out of town most of the summer. Olivia, like me, also had a job. Palmer was on a mission trip in Maine, one that he was uncontrollably ecstatic about. Palmer didn’t come back from Maine this summer; not by choice, just strictly by fate, or life. Whatever you want to call it. Palmer, along with his team members were struck in a head on collision this past June. For reasons way above my head, Palmer died. I felt like two tons of bricks had thrown me into the ground, then they did it again, and again. I have never gotten an answer from the question “Why?” and I certainly didn’t get one this time.

Palmer taught me the value of friendship, even when I took him for granted. That’s the best friend that anyone could ask for. As bleak as this summer has been, I’ve grown and learned more in the past three months than I have in the past nineteen years. So here I am, back at UT waiting for the rest of my story.