

THE PROM

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A young man named Joe was looking forward to his final week in school. At the end of the week there would be a prom - a huge party where everyone would dress up really smart and dance in the school hall. Joe's mum bought him a suit and his brother, Seb, showed him how to tie the tie properly. Seb also told him to start thinking about who to take the prom:

'Start thinking now about which is the prettiest girl in your year at school. Ask her to go to the prom with you before anybody else does. That's the smart thing to do. Otherwise, if you wait too long, the only girls left will be ones you don't want to go with.'

Joe thought this made sense. He had never thought too much about which girls he liked best, but he liked the idea of going to the prom with the prettiest one of all. So during breaks and lunchtimes, he looked around - and he soon made his choice. Yasmin was the girl that all the other boys seemed to like. And all the girls said she was the prettiest too. So Joe asked Yasmin to go to the prom with him. She said Yes. Joe was looking forward to the prom even more now that she was going to be his date.

Whenever she saw him, Yasmin would smile and wave, and sometimes stop to chat. He knew that everyone was really impressed and that some people were pretty jealous.

On the night of the prom, Joe spent ages getting dressed up but he was still ready long before it was time to leave. But eventually the moment came. Seb slapped him on the back and drove him over to Yasmin's house. 'I'll pick you up here afterwards,' said Seb, 'Because Yasmin is your girl and you have to walk her home safe.'

Joe got out of the car and Seb drove away. A little bit nervous but very happy, Joe knocked on Yasmin's door, and together they walked the short distance to the school.

The prom was huge. There were games and rides and a disco in the hall. Joe and Yasmin walked around together for a while and then they each went to say hello to their friends. Joe had only been talking to his friends for a couple of minutes when someone came and tapped him on the shoulder and pointed to the sports hall, saying:

'Looks like you lost your date, Joe.'

Joe walked over to the sports hall and saw Yasmin dancing with the captain of the football team. He didn't know what to do so he waited. But the two of them danced to the next song and the song after that. Joe could feel the anger rising up in his body. He was so humiliated. Everyone knew that Yasmin was supposed to be his date and now he was being made to look very stupid.

Half an hour later, Yasmin and the football captain were walking round together holding hands. This was too much. Joe left early, without speaking to anyone, and walked back to where he knew his brother would be waiting. When Seb saw Joe on his own, he couldn't believe his eyes.

'What went wrong, little brother?'

Joe told him. He could see that his brother was angry too.

'Here's what you have to do,' announced Seb. 'You have to go back there and punch that guy right in the face, right in front of everyone.'

'I'll get in big trouble for that,' replied Joe.

'Listen,' said Seb, 'There's a rule. Don't ever let anyone take what's yours. Do you think if someone came up to me now and told me to get out of my car so they could take it, I would let them? I would do what I had to do to protect what is mine. So that's what you've got to do. If you don't, people are just going to take stuff off you your whole life.'

Joe got out of the car and walked back to the prom. Everyone was getting ready to go home. Joe told one of his friends what he was going to do. But his friend was in the football team and knew the captain. He said:

'It's not him you want to punch. He never promised you anything. It's her you want to hit. There's a rule. Punish the person who's to blame, no-one else.'

Joe didn't like the sound of this much so he went to speak to a couple of girls he knew. He asked them if he should hit Yasmin. They were shocked.

'No way,' they said. 'There's a rule: a boy can never hit a girl, no matter what.'

Joe was glad to hear that because he really didn't want to hit Yasmin. But his fists were clenched tightly and he could feel anger all through his body as if it was pumping in his blood. Each rule he was told seemed to be true but that just made it worse. He had to do something but there didn't seem to be anything he could do.

