

# PROM NIGHT & THE 5 THINGS



Carlos sat in the car, jittery. He looked in the rearview mirror at his reflection for the tenth time in five minutes. Did he have too much gel in his hair? Was his tie straight? Even though it was so cold outside that you could see your breath, he didn't turn the heat on. He was already hot. He rolled down his car window to let in some of the chilly night air.

*OK, that's it. Just get out of the car, walk up to the apartment building and ring the buzzer. But what if the only reason Kaya said yes was because she felt bad for him? She was so sweet, that's what everyone said about her. Maybe she just would have felt bad saying she didn't want to be his prom date. When he'd asked her, Kaya's friends were there too. They stood behind her and stared at him like he'd just climbed out of a dumpster. He was sure they were just waiting for him to be done so they could laugh at him. But Kaya had said yes. He tried to remember that fact.*

Carlos looked up at the third floor of the building. He didn't know if her apartment was in the front or the back, but he thought he could see someone through the gauzy curtains looking down at him. The loud cackling laugh of a person walking by broke his stare. He glanced down at the pink rose corsage he bought for Kaya on the passenger seat and noticed that it had dog hair on it. As he picked it off, he felt a wave of shame wash over him. He'd tried to clean up the car the best he could, but his dog went with him everywhere. It was nearly impossible to get the dog hair and dog smell completely out of the car.

Carlos took a deep breath. *What was the worst thing that could happen?* She could laugh at him, but Kaya wouldn't. Would she? Would she get into the car, smell wet dog and refuse to go? He should've paid to have the inside of the car shampooed. An SUV zoomed by blasting music so loud that he could feel the vibration, and he immediately wondered what he and Kaya would look like dancing together. Would she even dance with him? Would she dance with her ex-boyfriend? Would her ex-boyfriend be there? Carlos reached for his phone to look at her Instagram for the millionth time. There was a new post from her with a closeup photo of a pink rose corsage. The caption said, "Where is my cute date? @Carlos97 -- Prom won't wait!"