GROWING UP

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[Assignment: Tell the story of an experience you had that taught you something or that changed you in some way. Is there a specific "point" you want to make? If so, where? How should you begin your essay to introduce your subject and capture the attention of your audience?]

(1) One day stands out in my mind as the first step in crossing over from childhood to the "adult" world. Before this time, I still had all the fantastic, dreamy notions that all children have about "growing up." I am not saying that I grew up in just one day, but I do believe that this was the first significant move I made toward understanding what it meant to become an adult.

(2) About seven months prior to this day, I was sleeping over at my best friend's house; we had not had a "sleep-over" for a long while, and we were both pretty silly. Sherry and I had shared a very deep friendship for about four years, and despite our practically opposite lives, we were still very close. I often envied her "fairy tale" life, for she was an extremely pretty girl and was seldom without a boyfriend. When she told me that she was pregnant, I was shocked—that was not part of the plan. We cried and held each other for awhile, but with the elasticity of our youth, we soon laughed at fate and began making plans for the future. Don and Sherry would get married, have the baby, and live happily ever after. A little baby...what fun; we could not wait. I threw myself into our plans as readily, and naturally, as Sherry did.

(3) Don quit school and came home, so we planned the wedding shortly afterward. Since Sherry and I had graduated from eighth grade only a couple of years before, we decided I would wear my graduation dress, and she would have a wedding dress altered, so our plans did not have to be delayed. It was like a fantasy come true; I was maid-of-honor in my best friend's wedding, we were soon to have a little baby, and we would all live happily ever after.

(4) Life proceeded quite smoothly and conveniently; we all seemed like one, big, happy family. For several months I was happier and more content with life than ever before; maturity was a fantastic thing, and getting married and having a family was not any different from what I had previously thought—it was every little girl's dream come true. Sherry and I spent a lot of time together, and I reveled in taking care of her and our little precious baby to be.

(5) Before I knew it, though, I had less and less time to spare with her. Life was proceeding normally for
me; I was a teenager and free to do all of the wild and
crazy things that teenagers do, but Sherry did not have
that same freedom—she was married and starting a family.
The newness of the situation was wearing off, and we were
both adjusting to our different lives.

(6) On May 15 at nine-thirty, the fantasy became a
reality. I got a call from a friend who worked at the
hospital.
"Hello, Sandie? This is Carol Eierman. Sherry
is here!" a voice told me excitedly.
"Oh?" I questioned, not realizing where here was.
"Yes, yes; she's here, and she's in labor!"
"In labor? Oh my God! You're kidding!" I gasped.
"No! She's in labor. Isn't it exciting?" she
squeaked enthusiastically.

(7) I said goodbye and hung up the phone. My mind
was whirling. I would have to get dressed and be there.
But suddenly it dawned on me; this was NOT my baby—not
even my family, and however much they liked me, I would
not be welcome. Reality set in, and for the first time I
finally realized that my best friend was married. No
more sleep-overs, no more parties, no more flirting; she
was married and now she was a mother—just like my mom,
and her mom, and thousands of moms before them—all in
eight short months. Now for the first time since Sherry
had told me she was pregnant, I cried; I wept hyster­
ically until I finally collapsed on my bed and fell
asleep.

(8) On May 16th I awoke, a little different from
before. Today I wasn't so excited about Sherry's having
a baby. I was happy for her, of course, but I also felt
sorry for her; she had passed from a child to an "adult"
in such a short time, and she was going to miss a lot of
the adjusting years in between. I also was not happy for
myself; I was losing a good friend, and although we would
always stay close, it would be different. Perhaps
growing up was not quite as much fun as I had thought it
would be; perhaps it would be quite painful. So on that
day, I took my first step in growing up; I decided not to
wish away my teen years and to enjoy them as long as I
could.