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### I'm With Her. And Her. And Her.

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## I'm With Her. And Her. And Her.

The sky was so gray it looked like it could have started snowing at any moment. Thousands of pink hats bobbed their way down the main streets of Washington D.C. Chants echoed through the air, demanding equal rights, an apology, or even a resignation. The people wanted change. Members of various backgrounds, including myself, gathered together for the largest organized protest in United States history.

Growing up in Bloomsburg, Pennsylvania I wasn't surrounded by a diverse community. Most of the people I went to school with came from the same background racially, socially, sexually, and economically. It took a majority of my adolescence to understand the privileges I have in life, and I am still continuing to learn about those things. With each new experience I uncover, I get a new perspective on what the world, the real world, is like outside of my oblivious bubble. So when I went to the first annual Women's March in 2017, immersed in a culture I hadn't been exposed to, it was unlike anything I had experienced before.

After the 2016 election, a time when I was too young to vote, I had felt powerless in my ability to create positive change. It didn't feel like I was living in the democracy I learned about over the past twelve years of school. Then my friend from class said her mom bought bus tickets to go to the Women's March on Washington. I was immediately jealous, and I asked if she could share the link with me and my best friend, Kayla, so we could tag along.

However, due to my differing political opinions with my family, I decided not to tell them about the purpose of the trip. All I asked permission for was to go to D.C. at the end of January, and my father said yes. We've always had a strong bond, and he put a lot of trust in me, even if that meant he would never understand my newfound need to share my opinion on the

controversial political climate. He said I would be eighteen by that time, and I could technically do whatever I wanted, though he knew who I would be with and where. I figured what he didn't know about my actions down there wouldn't hurt him. So I bought my ticket, requested the day off of work, and planned to take part in history.

Even though our bus left from Bloomsburg University at 4am, I was wide awake. I had no idea what to expect, especially since a mutual friend of mine and Kayla's, who describes herself as "not a political person," expressed fear for us. "What if you get arrested? What if someone starts a fight? What if you get shot? What if you get bombed?" The thought of those events occurring never crossed my mind before then, but it didn't waiver my decision in the slightest. All I could say was that I was not there for violence, and if violence somehow found its way to me, I would accept whatever consequences came along with it because I knew that what I was doing was right. And nothing could make me regret my decision to demonstrate my right to protest.

When we got off the bus, I couldn't tell where we were. The streets of the city were hidden by an ocean of people. No cars were in sight except a few lone ones parked along the street or some strays trying to find their way around the crowd that was protected by orange cones and men and women in blue.

We rallied together, listening to Ashley Judd speak to all of us "nasty women," demanding to be noticed by a society that pushed us aside. Cold tears streaked my cheeks; I was overcome with the realization that I was a part of something bigger than myself. Drying our tears, Kayla and I marched down the populated streets of Washington, letting the cheers of the crowd push us along for miles.

We ended up losing the crowd we came with but decided to just continue our march alongside thousands of strangers joined in solidarity. The rows of people were endless, as we were one of many who came out to see the mass support. As we said in numerous chants, “this is what democracy looks like.”