**It Is With A Heavy Heart That I Announce I Am Having My Parents Pick Me Up Early From This Sleepover**

Friends, I have some unfortunate news to share. When this sleepover began just a few hours ago, I had every intention of staying through the night. Like many of you, I greatly looked forward to goofing off until midnight or so and then waking up to a full spread of chocolate chip pancakes. Alas, things don’t always work out the way we plan. It is with great sadness and a heavy heart that I inform you I have asked my parents to come pick me up early.

Please trust that this was a very tough decision. Numerous factors came into play, not least of which was my reluctance to abandon the group partway through our *Mario Kart* tournament. I would love nothing more than to continue on playing as Bowser, but after weighing my options and excusing myself for a brief cry in the upstairs bathroom, I made the difficult choice to arrange for my transport home, effective immediately.

If you’re wondering how it got to this point, I understand. I’ve asked the same thing of myself. In part, it’s because I became frightened during our viewing of *Jurassic World*, especially the part when the T. rex fights the Indominus rex. Even after we had moved on to chasing Ryan’s cat around the house with his remote-control car, I began to think of the dinosaur-related nightmares I might have tonight and started to panic.

No doubt this was all **compounded** by the fact that I’d consumed a sizeable quantity of root beer and Twizzlers, and my tummy hurt.

I tried to tough it out at first. You may recall my marked enthusiasm as we discussed whether to watch *Power Rangers Megaforce* or play flashlight tag. While on the surface, it may have appeared that I was having a good time, in reality, the opposite was true. The prospect of playing outside in the dark, and my attendant fears about how there might be a guy with a knife hiding out there in the bushes somewhere, made contacting my parents an **inevitability**.

Yet even as I marched upstairs to ask Ryan’s mom to call my mom, I was still tempted to stay. Leaving would mean missing out on our plan to make our own mini pizzas, which, if I’m being honest, was one of the main selling points of this sleepover in the first place. Had this exact same get-together taken place during the day, I wouldn’t have thought twice about staying the whole time. But here’s the thing: It’s not the day.

It’s nighttime, and I’m scared, and I want to go home.

So, regrettably, I will not be able to participate in the Nerf gun battle. I will not be changing into my Kylo Ren–themed pajamas. I will not be demonstrating my belching skills, nor will I be present when we make a list of all the bad words we know and type them into Google. You’ll all just have to carry on without me.

For now, I must roll up my sleeping bag and un-sync my extra Wii U controller.

Know that my departure isn’t just for my own good—it’s for the good of us all. Had I stayed, I would have only brought the party down, be it with my sniffling in the corner, my uncomfortable silence, or, given the heightened anxiety I have experienced, my inability to make it through the night without wetting myself.

At the end of the day, all I really want is what’s best for the sleepover. And thus, though it grieves me to do so, I must formally take my leave.

I now have time for a few questions while my dad drives over. I have to be standing outside when he gets here.