A story about a scar

Every scar has a story. For example, the scar I have above my eyebrow, I got it when my brother pushed me, and I fell on the corner of the small table my grandparents had in the middle of their living room. Or the scar my best friend had on his chin, since kindergarten because I made him race with me down the hill next to our school and we both fell off our bikes. I guess in that story I was lucky because I wasn't the one walking away with three stitches on my chin that night. But other scars, the ones that cut much deeper, don't have a sweet childhood memory attached to them. When we remember those scars, our lips don't form a cheeky gin. When we remember them, we want to cry and scream, we want to disappear into a hole and never come out again. Everyone has at least one of those scars, perhaps we don't know we have them, or we choose to ignore them, but they are here, and they formed us into people that we are today. For the story of my most painful scar, we need to go back in time a few years...

The clock is ticking too slow, I thought as I paid attention to twelve numbers above the board instead of what my history teacher was talking about. My phone buzzed and I pulled it out slowly, trying to avoid being caught by the older man writing something on the board in front of me. "Mr. Davis" I raised my hand, after reading the text, trying to get my teacher's attention. "Yes, Miss Reed?" he turned around slightly annoyed at the interruption of his lecture. "May I go use the restroom?" I said innocently, slowly putting my hand down. He started to hesitate, probably because it was almost the end of the class "it's an emergency" I blurred out interrupting his thoughts. "Okay, you can go" he said obviously annoyed at his decision. I walked out of the classroom and hurried down the hallway as Mr. Davis continued his lesson. My phone buzzed again, without reading it I knew that it was my friend telling me to hurry up. So, I did, my legs

walking faster than my brain can process it, turning corners along the empty hallway making the fastest route towards the unisex bathroom. "Finally!" my best friend, Daniel whined as soon as I stepped into the room "What took you so long?" he got up from where he was sitting on the floor, probably scrolling through social media. "Why are you always sitting on the floor, it's disgusting." I scanned the floor area where he was sitting, ignoring his question. "Because I'm gay, Sherlock" he rolled his eyes and laughed. "Anyways why am I here? I have Mr. Davis he'll kill me if I take too long." I looked at him with a slight smile as a reaction to his previous statement. I always knew he was gay at least a little bit, I probably knew it before he did but he never wants to admit it. Before he had a chance to respond Mrs. Lee ran into the restroom looking terrified. "What are you two doing here?" her eyes got wider as if it was possible. "We went to the toilet" Dan responded making it sound more like a question than a statement. "Go to the lab." Mrs. Lee said pushing us both out of the room "And be careful!" she whisper yelled after us. Not knowing what was going on, but without a word, we walked to the chemistry lab that was right across the restroom. School was so quiet I think I was able to hear both of our heartbeats, which were beating faster than I thought was possible. Right before Dan opened the classroom door, the bell rang, making us both jump slightly but no one came out of the classrooms, it was still empty. When we opened the door, everyone was at the back of the room, looking terrified as they looked up at us. "Mrs. Lee told us to come here" I said while scanning the room to see who was there. I saw all familiar faces, there was Alyssa from my English class, Luke that sits in front of me in math, Joaquin that had a crush on me the whole third grade even Jaime that I used to be friends with in seventh grade. I recognized every single face even from just passing them in the hallway or seeing them in the cafeteria on my lunch break. "Go sit in with everyone" Miss. Hill, the only teacher in the room glanced at us and kept writing something on a piece of paper. "Is anyone else in the hallway?" she asked talking to me and Dan. We both

shook our heads in response, being unable to say anything. As soon as she got an answer, Miss. Hill hurried towards the door, peeking out through the little window and turning the lock on them three times. "What's going on?" I asked the very familiar blonde boy that I sat next to. "We are in the lockdown, apparently there is an armed student in school." his voice shook as he answered politely. "Are you sure it's not just a drill?" Daniel asked now panicking more than before. The blonde boy shook his head and my heartbeat sped up, I knew that I wasn't the only one judging by everyone's reactions. "Everyone, stay as quiet as possible and don't panic" Miss. Hill switched off the lights, after that moment it felt like ages were passing in the dark classroom. Most of the kids were texting their parents, or siblings that were in school as well. Probably only a few minutes of silence loud banging was heard down the hall. "It's over" a tall redhead girl, that I'm sure I saw playing for school volleyball team, whispered to herself more than anyone else. "No, it's not-" guy sitting next to her tried to argue before more shooting interrupted him. No one else said a word, it was dead silent... Soon someone knocked on our door, seconds later aggressively trying to open them. After not succeeding, senior Max Wilson that we later found out was the shooter, broke the glass on the door, putting his hand through it and unlocking the door from the inside.

After that I don't remember much, it was loud and horrifying but I'm here today, five years later, sitting on Daniel Miller's grave celebrating his 20th birthday. He was a good kid, I miss him. In two months, it will be the sixth anniversary of the day that scared me the most. On that day, October 17th, I will go to my old high school to light a candle and place flowers for all 44 students, teachers, and school staff that lost their lives on that day. I will pray for Alyssa Alhadffed that was in my English class, for Luke Hoyer that sat in front of me in math class, for Joaquin Oliver that had a crush on me in third grade, for Jaime Guttenberg that I used to be

friends with in seventh grade. For Nicolas Dworet, the blond boy, for Mrs. Lee and Miss. Hill and all the other 36 people that after that day I no longer saw in the hallway or the cafeteria on my lunch break. I will pray for families that have a scar because they lost their loved ones, and those scars are the worst.

In the United States, in 2019 there were at least 130 incidents of gunfire on school grounds, resulting in 32 deaths and 77 injuries.