

She Remembered

by Ryndi Zastrow



She remembered being given permission to go hang out with some neighbors that she knew from the cabin at the lake. She remembered driving up to the lake and thinking how different everything looked in winter. The lake reminded her of a rumpled white sheet. The empty houses seemed forlorn with their heavy loads of snow weighing them down.

She remembered the crackling fire in her friends lake house and how excited she was. She remembered the bottle of scotch sitting on the worn wooden table and her friends encouraging her to have some. Having never consumed alcohol before, she remembered that after the first couple of swallows the liquor actually tasted pretty good. The burning in her stomach was more than compensated for by the warm glow she felt. She remembered not being painfully shy for the first time in her

life and how she made everybody laugh that night. She remembered drinking more of the scotch and then chugging a beer to her friend's delight. A little more hilarity and then she remembered beginning to feel nauseous and dizzy.

Her memory is hazy and sometimes nonexistent after this with the exception of two things. She remembers coming to in someone's car and screaming while violently vomiting onto the dashboard. She remembers opening her eyes in the emergency room and seeing her mom sobbing next to the bed. She does not remember her "friends" dumping her unconscious body onto her grandparent's porch, ringing the doorbell and driving off before the door was opened. She can only imagine her grandmother's horror and fear as she knelt by her limp body. She doesn't remember having a seizure, the ambulance ride to the clinic or having her stomach pumped.

She tries not to remember the embarrassment and guilt she felt but fortunately those feelings didn't ever fade from her memory. It keeps her from ever repeating an awful mistake and in that way she is blessed.

In the United States alone, more than 50,000 cases of alcohol poisoning are reported every year. Approximately once a week someone dies from alcohol poisoning. This is a well known statistic. High schools and colleges actively address this issue. Why does alcohol poisoning happen over and over again?

People don't drink because they enjoy getting sick, going to jail or ending up in an emergency room. Most

drink because they enjoy the feeling they get when they have had a drink or two. Unfortunately, judgment is one of the first things to be affected by alcohol. This makes it highly likely that more than one drink will be consumed and will be consumed quickly. The liver can only process about one drink per hour so the blood alcohol level continues to rise. Before most people realize they are intoxicated there is already such a high amount of alcohol in their system that alcohol poisoning can already be occurring.

Every day more than 13,000 teenagers and children take their first drink of alcohol. The results can be devastating and destructive. Some are lucky and find the taste to be repugnant, but others embrace the taste and the feeling that accompanies it.

This is what happened to my friend. She was lucky that the people she was with did not let her "sleep it off" because there is a high possibility that she would have died. She is lucky that she did not choke to death on her own vomit or suffer permanent brain damage from having seizures. She is lucky her heart did not stop beating. Many things were wrong about that night but there was one right thing ... she lived to remember that night.

*The editors and staff of Alert Magazine wish to congratulate Ryndi on winning the essay contest and encourage her to pursue her academic goals. We would also like to encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program. Sincerely,
Alert Magazine, LLC*