



The Night That Didn't Happen

By Kathryn Biette

"An error becomes a mistake only when it is not learned from."

EVERYONE HAS a reason for holding certain morals and values in their lives. When I was a freshman, I was dating a senior. At the time, I thought his addiction to drugs and alcohol was attractive. It made him a bad-boy, and me a rebel for having a relationship with him. One night, he ordered me to have sex with him. When I refused, he smacked me across the face and called me worthless. I convinced myself this wasn't him. This was the alcohol in his system controlling him. He loved me, and wouldn't treat me like this if he was sober. After we broke up, I promised myself that I would never let alcohol rule over my body the way he did. Drinking was something that I would never partake in, because I liked being Katy Biette, and I didn't want alcohol to take away my own identity.

Three years later, my values shifted ever so slightly, and led to complete disaster. While visiting my sister in college for my birthday, she took me to a party. I was excited to see my sister, and honored that I got to experience college life first-hand. She brought alcohol, and persuaded me to have some. I thought it would be safe since my big sister, my role model, was watching

and encouraging me. I took one shot in a dorm room, followed by five more out of stolen salt and pepper shakers which doubled as shot glasses. The rest of the night is a mystery to me.

The next thing I remember is waking up in the hospital, and busting up in laughter. My sister and her friends giggled along with me. The nurse, who I remember looking like Dr. Bailey from Grey's Anatomy, came in and scolded me for taking an extremely serious situation as a joke. She told me that I could have died, and I owed my life to the three people sitting in the room who were responsible enough to take me to the hospital rather than having me "sleep it off". Following this is a black hole in my memory.

I awkwardly rolled around on my makeshift bed on the floor of my sister's dorm room, trying to stand but lacking the coordination to do so. I told my sister that I was glad I went to the hospital, because they gave me really comfy sweats. My sister told me to go back to sleep, and when I reawakened we went to get water and Gatorade. After I regained high enough brain activity, she sat me down and drew the lines that connected my random memories. My blank stare confirmed that I had no recollection of the night.

"Why did you have to take me to the hospital? I'll be in so much trouble."

Her look got extremely serious. "You were throwing up everywhere, then you lost consciousness and stopped breathing. You would have died if we stayed there. When we got to the hospital, you had a blood-alcohol level of .34 and the doctors told us that if we had waited half an hour to bring you in, you wouldn't have survived. You were literally thirty minutes from dying. I talked to my friends and apparently, when I left the dorms for a little while, you attacked a bottle of vodka and had six shots of European absinth. It's a hallucinogenic, which is why you thought the tall blonde nurse was Dr. Bailey." I started crying, taking in the devastating night that I didn't remember.

When I got home, my parents hugged me and cried, saying they were happy I was safe. This is the only time I've seen my dad cry, and he said it was the scariest thing in his life knowing that his daughter was 4,000 miles away, dying in a hospital, wondering if he would ever see me alive again, and having no control over the outcome. He vowed to do everything in his power to never let that pain happen to them again, and I promised that I would too.

That night still feels surreal to me, like a nightmare. Only the evidence of my parents' tears, my sister's pain of losing rare time together, and the hospital bracelet are proof of its reality. I'm haunted every day knowing I hurt my family this much.

Even one drink is dangerous, because it leads to more. I'll never know what I did that night, but I'll never forget the results of my actions. I learned how alcohol can be deceitful, deadly, and conniving from this accident. I'll never drink again. My error will not become a mistake. 🚫

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Kathryn Biette recently graduated from high school in Colorado. **Alert Magazine** congratulates her for winning the Alert Scholarship and we encourage her in the pursuit of her academic goals. We would also like to encourage future seniors to participate in our scholarship program.