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Ms. Stein

English 12A

22 October 2019

“You can be DD, right?”

“Sure, but you owe me.” A statement I would soon regret more than anything.

The first party of senior year was filled with sweaty bodies smelling of alcohol and weed; my best friend Skye and I squeezed through the crowd looking for a fun group. She grabbed a beer when we passed a cooler, I did the same, to avoid judgmental stares labelling me a prude for not drinking. I told myself and Skye it would stay in my hand untouched all night.

As the night progressed, I found myself absentmindedly taking sips of the alcohol in my grasp, unknown to Skye. Time wore on, and I cared less and less, telling myself when the time came we would figure out a way to get home. When she got a text from her mom at 1:00 in the morning wondering why she wasn't home yet, I was barely able to walk in a straight line, let alone drive. She told me it was fine, that she was able to drive a mile home, and asked if I wanted to come with her or stay.

“It’s probably better if I stay, you don’t need any distractions if you’re driving. I can figure out a ride home in the morning,” I said, handing her my keys, “Just be careful.”

“I will.”

“Text me when you get home, okay?” I watched her walk out of the party, then turned back to my friends, assuring myself she would be fine.

Five minutes later, I checked my phone, and there was no text from her. *She’s probably driving slowly so she doesn’t crash.* Ten minutes. *No text.* Fifteen minutes. Twenty.

I don’t remember the rest of the night. I woke up the next morning in my friend Moira’s bed: she must have taken me home at some point.

“Good morning, Sunshine,” she said, handing me ibuprofen. That’s when I realized the pounding headache. “The police shut down the party right after we left.”

“Thanks for bringing me home.”

“Of course! I wasn’t going to leave you there all alone. Do you want to head downstairs? I can catch you up on what happened; you seemed pretty out of it last night.”

“Sounds good.” She turned the television on for music, but before she could switch the channel, Skye’s face appeared on the screen. *Teen pronounced dead in drunk driving accident.*

It was all my fault. She would never make it to graduation, to the college she had worked her whole life to be accepted into. She would never get married, never have children: she always wanted to start a family. I thought I owed her, because I always asked her to be the designated driver. I didn't owe her anything. I should have taken it more seriously, or understood the gravity of what my offer entailed.

The death of my best friend, the valedictorian, star athlete; the death of their family's only child was *all my fault*.