

The risk of one

Only a few days before graduation, a day I've been waiting for a long time.

For only being an 18 year old,
And for someone about to graduate,
I'd like to experience something fun.

2 days before graduation:

I'm staring at my white cap and gown hanging in my closet.
The pins are sparkling in the sunlight coming from my window.
White gown's colors pop with medals and cords hanging down.
I'm staring at my cap and gown realizing it's not going to get much realer than this.
After four long years, it will come to an end.
Everything I've wanted to achieve is going to happen.
"ring, ring"
A text I just got from Kelly.

Text message from Kelly: "Hey! I'm having a party after graduation. You're invited and whoever you want to bring. Bring whatever drinks you want. we're livin it up tonight!"

I'm not sure if I want to go.
I've never gone to a party before.
I'm sitting here thinking to myself,
This will be a night to remember and have fun.

1 day before graduation:

It's my last day of school until I officially close this chapter of my life.
After today I will be attending Stanford University to study pre-law.
During my high school career,
I've accomplished and achieved many great opportunities.
These include academic awards, scholarships, team captain, and Valedictorian for the class of 2024.
I start to think about it,
All I've done in high school is be that perfect straight A student.
Do I want to risk it all for a party?
"Ring, ring"
It's Debbie.

Text message from Debbie: "Hey!!" Are you going to Kelly's party tomorrow?? If you're thinking you shouldn't, you need to. We will finally graduate from that dump and for someone who always puts so much time and effort into school. You need to give yourself a break!! Just pick out a sexy outfit to impress Bryan and you'll have a lot of fun trust me!!!

Day of graduation:

I woke up around 11:36 am.

It's a warm Friday morning and I hear the birds are chirping.

When I start to wake up, I watch the clock tick.

I shut my eyes completely and I suddenly hear a knock on the door.

It's my mother.

She opens the door and sits on the edge of my bed.

"We're so immensely proud of your hard work and dedication, Andrea. You should be proud of yourself."

My mother said.

I get up needing to get ready.

I'm listening to pop music rather than sad because I don't want to start crying.

I keep thinking to myself,

This is the last time I'll ever see these people I've known for the past 18 years.

It's difficult to think of working for something so hard,

and knowing everything I've worked for leads up to this moment.

I'm feeling every single emotion right now,

but it's time to get ready and leave.

Later that night:

Text message from Debbie: "Are you almost dressed? We need to leave for the party soon."

Well I guess I'm going to the party.

As I got ready, I began to feel nervous.

Debbie picked me up and said I looked nice.

We arrived at the party and it's crazy.

I've never seen this many drunk people in one space and it's freaking me out.

Kelly notices me feeling a little out of place and hands me a drink.

I don't expect it to taste appetizing, but I reluctantly take a sip anyway.

It tastes just like fruit punch.
You can't even tell there's alcohol.
It almost tastes... good.
I tell myself that it's just one night and to test the limits.
Take a risk.
I take another sip of the punch.
A sip turned into 2 cups, 3 cups, 7 cups.
I'm feeling elusive about myself.

Text message from Mom: "You need to be on your way home."

The world is spinning, but I like it.
I tell Debbie that we need to leave right now.
I start the car and wait for her to get in.
She quickly stumbled out to the car and hopped in.
It's like I forgot how to drive,
Everything was spinning.
My head hurt,
But I was enjoying the feeling of being wasted.
I started to take off in the car and can't even remember what happened.
I think I swerved off the road and hit another car.

Text message from Mom: "Where are you? It's been hours? Come home I'm worried."

Text message from Dad: "Sweetheart you need to come home. We know you're at a party and having fun, but the fun's over. Please call to tell your mother and I you're safe."

I wake up to the sound of police sirens and see the flashing blue and red lights.
Where am I?
Everything hurts.
I'm tired,
Really really tired.
I need to sleep.
My eyes start to close and feel the world stop.

Oakland Medical Hospital:

Where, where am I?

Doctor: "You're in the hospital, you were in a crash."

A crash?

I don't remember anything.

The last thing I remember was Kelly's party.

Kelly handed me a drink and said to let loose.

I don't see my parents.

I don't see Debbie either.

I asked the doctor what happened and he said it was a drunk driver who crashed into another car.

Was that me?

Oh no.

Was it me who crashed the car?

My parents find me and are crying profusely.

I feel the wetness on my face and realize I'm crying too.

They told me I was the drunk driver.

My future was all planned out.

Going to Stanford University.

I'm smart.

Smart enough I thought I would never do this.

My entire future was so bright and I risked it all for a night of fun.

I risked my entire life for this party.

I ruined my life and others all for a sip of alcohol.