

## When Two Worlds Collide

By: Madison Tibbals

**Levi**

Tonight is going to be awesome. I'm finally invited to one of Jonah West's parties. Every year he invites the whole grade to his house on Christmas eve, and throws a party people talk about weeks after it ends. After having a class with Jonah, I received the text my whole life has been leading up to.

*“yo”*

I had to play it cool.

*“whats up”*

*“ur invited. 9pm tonight at my house”*

Still had to play it cool.

*“thanks man see u then”*

As 8:30 rolls around I put my jacket on and started to head out. Knowing what kind of party this would be, I grabbed a bottle of tequila from my parents' cabinet. Tonight is going to be awesome.

**Maya**

I can't stand the holidays. I've always hated the cheesy Christmas songs that you can't escape no matter what radio station you play. The endless bickering that comes along with decorating the tree. Mostly I cannot stand the parties. I always either get stuck entertaining the younger cousins, or sitting at the adult table while they play drinking games and make jokes they think will fly over my head. I attempt tuning them out and watch as the snow creates a big white blanket in the backyard. I sigh, I don't like snow either.

After failing to ignore the parents' overly competitive game of “Uno” and Mariah Carrey’s “All I Want For Christmas Is You.” playing for the fourth time, I tap mom on the shoulder.

“ I think I’m gonna head out.”

‘Why?’

She squints and lifts her sleeve to check her watch.

“It’s 9:30, you’ve been here only 2 hours.”

She slurs her words and I can tell by the way her breath smells that she's had too much to drink.

“Sorry, I’m just really tired and want to get home.”

She looks disappointedly at me and responds.

“Fine but please bring Macy with you, she’s asleep. Her car seat is in the back of my car, you’ll have to grab it.”

I’m annoyed with the compromise but agree to do so. I slipped on my coat and picked up my baby sister's carrier to avoid having to hug anyone goodbye. As I open the front door and walk out of the house I hear my mom shout,

“Drive safe, Sweetie!”

I know the drive home isn’t too far, but the snow under my tires forces me to drive slowly. I turn up the radio and to my ultimate surprise it’s another Christmas song. I really can’t stand the holidays.

## **Levi**

I pull up Jonah’s driveway at 8:57 and spot other people walking inside. I step out of my car making sure not to slip on the ice. When I walk inside music plays and I notice people already drinking in the kitchen. I put the bottle of tequila that I brought on the

counter. As I look around looking for someone to make conversation with I only notice unfamiliar faces. Maybe a drink will help me feel more comfortable. Before I know it I'm 4 drinks down and it's 9:20.

"Jonah!"

I stammered to the living room where he sat. A group of people I don't recognize surround him.

"Who's that?"

A girl exclaimed in a seemingly annoyed tone.

I look at Jonah, the room spins and his face is a little blurry. He sputters,

"No clue, probably some nobody from school who snuck in here."

Another girl replies,

"What a loser."

My eyes are filling with tears and a lump in my throat tightens. I can't catch my breath. I try quickly stumbling to the front door. The humiliating laughter punches me, blow after blow I finally reach the door. As I approach my car suddenly I'm floating. The whole world is rising, and my feet leave the ground! Or maybe I am going down. I'm sprawled across the ice and my head throbs. I lift myself from the cold ground and manage to start my car. I disregard the blurriness in my eyes, my pounding head, and the way I feel from the four drinks I've had. I just want to go home.

## **Maya**

It's getting harder to navigate my way home as snow falls in big flurries. Maybe it's pretty. Peaceful. The trees are packed with thick white branches and the moon illuminates the ice on the ground. I turn the radio up again. "Winter Wonderland" plays as snow swallows the world around me.

**Levi**

It's snowing like crazy and it's pitch black. I just want to be at home in my bed. The car isn't that hard to control. I don't drive slowly.

**Maya**

I'm two minutes from home when I hear Macy fussing in the backseat. I reach behind me and grab her binkie. I take my eyes off the road for one second and successfully give her a pacifier. When my eyes meet the road I'm headed straight into a speeding car that's crossed into my lane. It's too late.

**Levi**

I wake up in a room that isn't mine. My head still pounds and my brain is still foggy. I jostle all around. Maybe this isn't a room at all. A paramedic sits at my side. She leans in and says,

“Do you know what happened tonight?”

I'm so confused.

“No?”

I replied.

“You've been in a car accident. You collided head on with another vehicle.”

I seem to be in good condition.

“Okay?”

The paramedic states;

“You hit another car head on. You drank, and killed a seventeen year old and her baby sister. Do you understand?”

I don't understand. This wasn't supposed to happen. I just want to be at home in my bed. Where do I go from here?

**Drinking and driving isn't worth a lifetime of guilt. You risk your life, and others. Arrive Alive, and don't be the reason someone else doesn't.**