



Memories of a Hellish Past

By Jazmine Boat

of silence. As the months passed living with my mom, I began to form the thoughts about how she choose drugs and a man over her kids. I began to feel neglected, abandoned, and ashamed. This part of my life impacted me the most because I was failing in school, doing things a 13 year old shouldn't be doing, and going places I shouldn't be. I remember the pain of the alcohol burning my throat as I tried to forget the feeling of being worthless. Drinking with my friends until I couldn't even walk, let alone speak. The friends I had were the only ones who understood me and what I was going through, but they were not good influences. All of that chaos lasted about a year.

We moved back in with my grandparents. My mom and her husband were in jail. I couldn't even bare to look at her in the eye. One morning I was getting everyone up for school when one of my worst nightmare became a reality. My brother's face was pale, the smell of vomit filled his room as I screamed for my grandparents. He had taken multiple pills from my grandparent's bottles. The ambulance raced to my house. I sat there in the front yard as they took my brother away to the hospital. Countless hours passed as I sat in those god awful chairs waiting for the doctor to give us an update. The thoughts ran through my mind about how he was only there because he just wanted to be with our mother. But he couldn't be with her, all because of drugs. All I could think of is how badly those chain of events in our life affected him, how they had affected me. Finally I got to go home, but my brother didn't, he went to a mental illness institute. As it turned out, he went to many. After years of battling my brother being in and out of our house, the state finally took custody of him.

Life has been pretty uneventful since my brother moved out. My feelings about what has impacted my life through drugs remain the same. I still sit alone with clouds of sadness fogging my mind sometimes. I wish things didn't have to go this way, but they did. I will not talk to my mom and I have blocked thoughts of her from my mind. All I know is nothing good comes from drugs, and I will continue to grow from my past experiences. But I'll always remember the hell I used to live in and there will never be a day were it doesn't hurt to think about it. 🙏

Throughout my years in school, I am told that drugs are bad for me. Teachers, doctors, officers, and many respectable adults have educated me about drugs and how they affect my body and mind. All of this is true, and I have learned a lot from some great role models, but I have learned the most from experiencing pain and grief first hand because of drugs.

It all started when my father passed away. The look of confusion and frustration was always on my mother's face as it began to sink. She was paranoid, she never had time to talk to us, she locked herself in her room. Her heartache filled the lonesome apartment, but not for long. Before I knew it, we moved into a trailer park with another man.

I sat in the yard full of cars. A window showing the inside of a room with people unfamiliar to me who smoked something my nose couldn't quite identify. Something wasn't right about kids being in the yard alone while all the adults were inside. I was too young to understand why it was like this, but soon to learn. In the 5th grade, teachers taught in school what drugs are and how to identify them. I felt so educated about what I had just learned, so I wanted to tell my mom. Excitement filled my body when I got home I was about to burst with new knowledge. My mom and I were in the kitchen together as aromas filled the air. Sun shined through the curtains when we were talking. I finished what I was saying about drugs, but what came out of my mom's mouth next surprised me.

"Honey you shouldn't always believe what people tell you. Drugs aren't bad, they are medications to help your body."

She walked past me and simply brushed off the subject. Something about that statement didn't settle right. If all drugs helped people, then why would teachers warn me about them? My grandparents walked through the door with a box of food and our clean clothes. I was always happy when they came. I told them about what school was teaching me, because unlike my mother,

they listened. They told me about how drugs are bad and I should stay away from them. My grandparents are respectable people. That is why I was surprised when I heard them and my mom screaming and fighting in the other room.

I sat on the other side of the door eavesdropping as I continuously heard my mom yell "You can't do that! They are my children and the way we live in this house is just fine."

My grandma fired back with rage in her voice. "It's not fine. Those kids should not be surrounded by drugs, cursing, and dirt!"

Those words hit me hard and that is when it occurred to me. We had no clean clothes, no food, a filthy house, and my mom was only defending drugs because she was taking them. My heart ached because I was lied to. So I ran to my room and cried myself to sleep that night. The next morning I woke in my room of squalor to screaming. The window showed gloomy sky when walking through the hallway, stepping over the trash and dirty clothes as I headed towards the racket. A woman on the far side of the room was speaking to my mom and grandparents. Later, she gathered me and my siblings to talk. In a soft tone voice she said "Don't be alarmed, you're just going to stay with your grandparents a little while."

I didn't understand why my sister and brother held the faces of sadness, my grandparents are the best. As it turned out, "a while" meant moving in. Two years passed visiting my mom, watching her get "better", and then we were moving back in with her. I was so thrilled. I couldn't wait to finally be one big happy family.

The first couple months were great, but things changed faster than I could comprehend. I never saw my mom much anymore as she hid behind a door, holding back a party in her bedroom. What she was doing behind that door was no mystery to me anymore. My sister took care of my brother and me when she could, but my brother and sister were never home. I was always sitting alone in my bedroom, surrounded by the sound

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Jazmine Boat is a high school senior from Minnesota. *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.