



Terrible Side Effects

By Kelsey Garhart

ACCORDING TO the Century Council, over 10 million young adults from the ages of 12 to 20 say they have had alcohol within the last thirty days. Ten million underage people who have drunk within thirty days; it makes me sick to my stomach! I don't think people know of the dangers they are putting themselves into. I never realized the danger I was in until I woke up in a hospital.

I woke up in a bright room, pain running throughout my whole body. I remember screaming and trying to jump up only to get pushed back down onto the bed, that's when I saw my mom. She looked so hurt, terrified and confused. Where was I? The last thing I remember was being at the monument, Register Cliff. How did I end up in this place with so many sad eyes watching me?

My memory fades in and out. The next thing I remember is waking up in my parents bed. It all feels so unfamiliar. I've been in this room every single day for twelve years, so why do I feel lost? My father told me to get ready because a few women needed to ask me questions about the night before.

When we arrived, I went into a back room with some women. They asked me to tell them everything I remember about the night before. "Do you remember what they did to you?" That question hurt so bad because I didn't remember. Something terrible happened to me and I did not know what it was, all I knew was that my body was aching. I start from the be-

ginning hoping to remember more along the way.

I was 14 when I finally agreed to hang out with a guy that had been interested in me for 3 years. I met him up at the town park, he had a friend with him, Hyde. Things were okay at first; all we did was talk. Ian and Hyde seemed like good people. They weren't good for long. Ian drove to the river and we all went down to the water, he asked Hyde to leave. I felt extreme discomfort. Ian wanted me to touch him, I said no and he got angry. He begged but I still said no. He stormed off angrily and wouldn't look at me.

At that moment, I knew I should go home and get away. Unfortunately I didn't. Hyde brought up buying alcohol, it turns out he was 22. I had never consumed alcohol so I thought it would be fun to try. A few minutes later, I'm chugging peppermint schnapps. I didn't know how strong the alcohol was and nobody told me to stop. It was getting late and the sky was getting dark so we drove to Register Cliff, a monument a few miles out of town. I was still drinking and not slowing down. This is when my mind starts to fade in and out, I could feel my words slurring and I was having trouble holding my body up. Ian shoved himself on me, I pushed him off and told him no. My memory can't find the bits and pieces in between but the next thing I can gather is trying to say my ABC's in an ambulance. The EMT's were trying to get me to keep talking so they wouldn't lose me.

So here we are, back to the beginning. I woke up in this bright room, excruciating pain throughout my body. What happened? I find out from family that I was raped. From the sounds of it, my friend called me and Ian or Hyde hit my phone, which answered the call. My friend heard me screaming. She searched to find me and she was unfortunate to see what she saw. I wasn't clothed, I had vomit all over myself, and two men were hurting me. She called the police right away. I was saved.

After I explained what I remembered, I was free to leave. I found my parents in the waiting room and we went home. A few hours later, I took my clothes off to see why my body hurt so badly. My back and arms were bruised. I had a black eye and a knot on my forehead. These two men were evil. They raped and hit me. All I could do now was move on. They were in jail and I was safe.

Not only did Ian and Hyde do several things wrong, but I did as well. I should not have been near people that much older than me, and I should have left as soon as alcohol was present. If I would not have drunk, I could have called someone or had better self-control to stop what happened. I can't thank my friend enough for finding me and getting me out of there before something worse happened, she did the best she could possibly do.

This experience caused a lot of pain for me but over time I healed. I am learning every single day but what happened that night was one of my biggest life lessons. Not only did it show me the terrible side effects of alcohol, but it also showed me to trust myself. From this day on, if I feel uncomfortable in any situation I leave or find a way to become comfortable.

Alcohol is dangerous. I hope that by sharing my story, not only minors but adults as well consider what they are doing before they end up in my situation. I am a living victim of the horrific incidents that can occur when alcohol is present. ☹️

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Kelsey Garhart is a senior at Guernsey-Sunrise High School in Guernsey, WY. 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.