



Touching the Stove

By
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throughout school, but I never socialized with him. The next year in high school I finally had to talk to him again. We shared a chemistry class and a group project came up one day. As fate would have it our teacher put us together. We ran out of class time so I asked him to finish the project at my house with me that night. He showed up an hour later than we planned but I just accepted this and "we" started working on the project. As I was working on the project he sat there and stared at me. He broke the silence and asked if we knew each other. Of course this definitely caught my attention. This boy and I had spent a lot of time together the year before. Our school is not very big so we saw each other in the hallway every day. This boy and I had kissed and he did not even have the ability to remember my face. At first I thought he was trying at a joke. Soon enough though, I realized that he really had no recollection of who I was. I reminded him of our friendship the year before and he seemed to slightly remember our friendship, as if it was a dream. I did not remind him of the kiss, but it really hit me at how bad the bottle had burned his brain. He could not even remember who his friends had been only a year ago. The alcohol was destroying his brain.

I never had really understood how alcohol could really affect an underage drinker. This experience changed my life. D.A.R.E. and posters can preach about how bad it is, but nothing really gets to you like an actual experience. The only thing I wish I could have changed is I wish I would have tried to get him to quit, instead of just leaving him to deal with his burns alone. ☹️

THERE are two different kinds of people in the world. The two react to in very opposite ways when warned about danger. For example, when told that a stove is hot and that if they touch it, it will burn them the first kind of person will listen and never touch the stove. Then there is the other type of person. This person will go and touch the hot stove just to make sure that it is truly going to burn them. Of course they get a huge blistering burn on their finger. But then they will touch it again and again, just to be double sure it burns. I have had the misfortune of knowing a boy who was the latter. He touched a drink that burned him in a different way than a hot stove. This burned him under the skin, in the mind and soul.

As a gal from Wyoming I am used to being around men and women who drink, chew, and smoke. In the high school I attend most of the boys chew, the girls smoke, and both enjoy hitting the bottle. They believe that it makes them look tough and like a true cowboy, or cowgirl. Only

the "coolest cowpokes" did it. This boy was not different. His weakness was to the bottle. He talked about drinking all the time and would come to school drunk as hog some days. When I first went to my High School I thought he was quite the cowboy. I was very attracted to his country attitude and ignored the way he burned himself.

I hit on this boy for a couple months and we spent a lot of time together before his habit started becoming apparent to me. I soon found all the ways that it was affecting him. Academically he suffered terribly. The only classes he had good grades in were his Shop/Welding classes and Study Hall. His eyes were always blood shot and slowly became more and more vacant as each day passed. He drank anything he could get his hands on and did not care for anything else.

Soon enough I had had my fill on the blood shot, stumbling teenage mess of boy. I didn't talk to him for about a year. I saw him in the school hall ways and in random classes

ALERT SCHOLARSHIP

Adelita Gerstner is a high school senior from Wyoming. *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.