

Grade 8 Winner

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Missing Pieces

My eyelids flutter open as the morning sun begins to cast shadows throughout my room. I lay motionless for several minutes taking in the beautiful strokes of colour that are painted across the sky. The scene so calming, my bed so warm I am eager to drift back asleep, but instead I begin to rise.

I pull off the covers slowly so my body doesn't react to the damp summer chill lingering in the air all at once. Although this keeps the goose bumps from covering my tanned body, I still start to shiver. The thin striped pajama shorts and tank top that hang off me do nothing to help my situation. Groggily standing I retrieve my house coat from the floor, putting it on and feeling a warm sensation seep through my skin. I walk silently over to my mirror with my brush in hand, but pause at the sight of myself. The mirror's reflection highlights the scars that run across both my cheeks, each about two inches long. My tangled auburn hair, cut unevenly. When I look myself up and down I flinch at the sight of my boney hands, covered in what seems to be stitches. *What happened?* I think. *What did I do to myself?*

While I stand there in front of my reflection, trying hard to figure out what happened to me the night before, my hands begin trembling. And the flash back starts. My brain seems to only remember pieces of what occurred that night, because all I catch is a glimpse of me at a party having a good time, with a beer in my hand. A guy with his arm around my waist. It's frustrating, nothing seems to make sense, the pieces just aren't fitting. I'm not a drinker so how could I have been drunk? I've never touched a beer bottle in my life! My mind is racing and I'm so confused I just want to cry. I want to cry and drown in my tears. The trembling in my hands takes over my body and I collapse on the floor. My mind doesn't slow down, and the last thing I hear before I black out is a knock on my door.

As my vision blackens, I begin to dream of horrible things. It seems like more of a nightmare than a dream. I see a knife in my hands, and I bring it closer to my cheeks. The tip digs into my smooth skin. The gashes seem to be crying, teardrops of blood. My body screams as I once again, bring the knife back to my already damaged face. Forming yet another wound. I drop the knife, and it stabs the floor just missing my toe when it lands. My legs begin taking me to the toilet, and I'm hunched over vomiting. At eye level stands a beer bottle. That's when I realize I'm no longer puking but in pain on the cold tiles. My fingers grasp the bottle and I take a swig. I'm angry now, because my

body refuses the alcohol and I am back at the toilet. Wiping my mouth I turn, pick up the bottle and smash it against the wall. My fragile skin breaks as the glass sinks deeper. But I like it. So I crunch handfuls of the pieces in my hands until I can't handle anymore. My nightmare begins to vanish as I hear a voice in my head. Although I can't make out the words over my screaming. *Screaming?* I think, as my mind jolts back to reality.

My body awakens and I sit upright sweating... and screaming. My mother is perched over me repeatedly saying my name, "Kelly? Kelly? Are you alright dear?"

"Yeah", my voice cracks. "What's going on?"

"Oh honey. You have been coming and going in these blackouts of yours for days. Thank goodness you're home now. You were in the hospital for a week," she says as I feel her warm embrace engulf me. When she lets go I see the pain in her eyes, that I have caused. She grabs my shoulders and looks me straight in the face. "You want to know what happened, don't you?"

"Yes." With my reply comes the nod of her head. But already I can tell this is going to be difficult for her. My mother. My beautiful, wonderful mother had to go through all this pain, because of my mysterious mistake. *Or was my nightmare pieces of my 'accident'?* I have no idea. So I just listen.

"Well," she begins "last Friday night you went out with some friends, to a party at Dylan Harks house." *Dylan Hark? Why would I go to that jerk face's house?* "I called you around 10ish to see how you were. Make sure you were sober." We both flinch at the word sober. Clearly I wasn't. "You sounded fine. You said you were dancing and having a good time. So I decided to leave you be. I went straight to bed, after that." My mind is eager for her to go on. "The next morning I got a call. It was the hospital, and they said you were in rough shape. You had been drugged." I feel a tear roll down my cheek as the unwanted truth comes out. *Someone must really hate me.*

"Did the doctor tell you what drug?" I can barely make out the words.

"Someone had slipped a powder into your drink. It's still unidentified. But obviously stro—"

"Yeah. I know mom. Look what it did to me!" I shout. "Look what it did to your little angel! Do you think I want to carry these scars with me for the rest of my life? Reminding me of my mistake? NO!"

I run upstairs to my room tears flying. I don't know what hit me right then, but I definitely didn't need my mother to start giving me a definition of what happened to my body, when all I have to do is look in the mirror. I am so scared to close my eyes that it hurts to blink. I never want to see the flashback of my accident ever again. As much as I want the thought of the event to go away, I can't help but wonder who drugged me.

I scramble to my bed. Although I have difficulty because I can barely see through my blurred eyes, and let out a little yelp when I step on an earring. Eventually coming to my senses I wipe my eyes, blow my nose, and make a list of who I may have attended the party with. In times like these, it really sucks if you don't remember anything. I start my list with the people I am closest to: Sabrina, Chloe, Sara, and Liz. Except I can't bring myself to believe that they would've done something like that to me. We've been close since kindergarten. Not even seeing them as a possibility I scratch out their names and start again. The one question that runs through my mind this entire time is, *Who really truly hates me? I need to call Sara.* Sara is like an elephant. She remembers everything.

Still sniffing I walk over to the phone, cautiously this time, and dial Sara's number. It rings four times before she picks up. "Hello? Who is this?" she asks.

"It's me. Kelly. Ya know the one who has been hospitalized for a week, and just got home?" I try to say this a bit jokingly, but it doesn't sound any better.

"Oh hey! I haven't heard from you in awhile." She pauses and then almost whispers, "How are you?" *Really!?* I think. *How am I supposed to answer this?* I ponder the question for a couple seconds and decide to answer with the truth.

"Confused. That's why I called. I want to know if you saw or remember who slipped the drug into my drink." This time there's a pause. A questioning pause. As if she's wondering if I should know or not. Finally I hear her clear her throat and she starts up again. "You were hanging out with Brody most of the night. And when you weren't I vaguely remember them offering me a whiff of something but I don't recall what it was. He must've been carrying some drugs on him. Or he hung with someone who had." *Brody. My crush since sixth grade. A possible contender in this secret game of mine.* I can't believe it. "Hey I have to go. My mom needs me in the kitchen... I think she's burning water again." I smile at the thought of her mom cooking. It's so rare. And when she does, the fire extinguisher has a special place on the counter next to her.

"Okay thanks Sara, bye." I push the end button on my phone, and hesitate to dial Brody's number. My fingers are acting before my mind does, and next thing I know the phone is up against my ear.

While I wait for someone to pick up I wonder why I've liked him so much, if he's untouchable, since Sabrina is dating him. "Hi Kelly." It's Brody's voice. I'm not surprised he knows it's me. I've called about ten times too many. We exchange hellos and then I cut to the chase, and ask him.

"It wasn't me. I would never hurt you like that," his voice stern.

"Then who?"

"Uh... my girlfriend," he lets out a sigh. Of what? Relief? "When I was hanging out with you around the bon fire, I managed to lock eyes with you, and then I slipped my arm around your waist... I guess she saw and wanted revenge." I really don't know what to say in response to this.

"Thanks for your help, Brody. I'll see you at school. Bye." I hang up the phone, lay on my bed and all I can think is Sabrina. Tired of confusion I close my eyes and wonder if the nightmarish flashbacks are over. But instead of darkness I get a vision of me in the hospital. I must be just waking up a bit, but the meds start pulling me back under. Before my eyes can close again, Sabrina appears above me and whispers "It was me." She stars into my eyes for a bit, and turns away just as I slip away again.

I open my eyes abruptly and smile. I have the culprit. There are no more missing pieces. My puzzle is officially complete.