

The night that changed our lives

Hi, my name is Alyssa and it's been six days since I lost my brother. He wasn't just my brother, he was my best friend, the person that you always could count on. He was always there for me. I miss him so much, it's impossible to put into words.

It all happened at the homecoming party everyone had been talking about. We went there with friends, just looking to have fun. I promised my parents I'd take care of him. I failed.

Everybody at the party was drunk - so drunk they didn't care what else they drank or took. I was hanging out with my group and he was hanging out with his. I wanted to give him space: after all, he was 18, and I didn't want to be the annoying older sister. I lost track of him for a while.

Then, just before the police arrived, I found him. My heart sank. My brother never did drugs, never. He knew it wasn't worth the risk. But that night, something changed. I don't know what he took, when he took it, or why. All I know is that it was too much.

I found him lying on the bathroom floor, unconscious, surrounded by his own vomit. How could no one have noticed? Heard him choking? I tried to wake him up, shaking him, screaming his name - but it was too late.

I don't want your sympathy. I want change. I couldn't save my brother, but maybe you can save someone else. The choices we make in moments like these ripple out, affecting everyone around us. So, if you're at a party and see someone going too far: speak up. If you know someone who's struggling: reach out. It could be the difference between life and death.

Drugs don't make you cool. They shatter lives. They steal futures. We need to talk about this, be aware of it, and act on it.

My brother is gone, but others don't have to be. Please, don't wait until it's too late. Be the person who steps in, who makes a difference.

You might just save a life.

Alyssa.