The Party Never Ends

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Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"Alison McCay darted through the door, shut it quickly and locked it, pushing her weight against it to make sure it was shut tight. She threw her keys and the black sunglasses Dr. Kane had given her on the dark grey carpet and checked the lock once more before she flopped down into the fire red bean bag chair which lay beside the window of her dorm room. Her tears were hot, and she could taste the salt on her lips as she let the streams flow down. She was too tired to wipe them away. Her head was heavy, too heavy to hold up, and it dropped back against the bean bag. She wanted to sleep, but the fear of Ed coming back overcame her each time she let her eyelids close for more than a minute. The moon was bright and golden and the light shone through onto her pale face. Black mascara formed big half circles over the puffiness around her eyes. She kept trying to think of ways to tell Shane and her parents what happened. She was terrified they'd blame her, that they'd tell her she was stupid and naive. She didn't want them to know, but she knew keeping it inside would be too hard to handle. She knew she wouldn't be able to say the words, she couldn't even think them."

Cover Page Footnote
Alison McCay darted through the door, shut it quickly and locked it, pushing her weight against it to make sure it was shut tight. She threw her keys and the black sunglasses Dr. Kane had given her on the dark grey carpet and checked the lock once more before she flopped down into the fire red bean bag chair which lay beside the window of her dorm room. Her tears were hot, and she could taste the salt on her lips as she let the streams flow down. She was too tired to wipe them away. Her head was heavy.

No one was smiling at her anymore. One was looking back at her anymore.

But the thought that she was stupid and naive didn't put out. They had made her gather hair and keep it inside would be a mess of sperm, used to tell her parents what happened. She didn't want to say. She knew she wouldn't be able to say the words, she couldn't even think them.

"At least I was smart enough to go to the hospital," she thought. But the thought of what they'd done to her made her nauseous. The way they had poked and searched, gathering hair and sperm, asking her who he was, what he looked like, how it happened... examining her inside and out. They had made her feel like some wild animal that they were bringing in to research. The bright lights that blinded her vision, the sterile smell of the gown they made her wear, the way they touched her and started at her... she jumped up and raced to the bathroom holding her hand over her mouth so she wouldn't get sick on the carpet. She lay her head against the cold porcelain and waited. As she threw up she tried to keep her tangled blonde hair from getting in the way. The floor beneath her felt cold and dry and she curled up in a tight ball, hugging her knees to her chest. Her body was sore all over, the bruises on her wrists and legs were dark purple. The color reminded her of the grape Kool-Aid her mom used to bring her when she was a little girl. Whenever she was sick with the flu or a cold she never asked for anything, only the Kool-Aid.

"It makes my tummy happy," she used to say. She wanted to smile at the memory, but the cut on her top lip wouldn't let her; it only reminded her of what she'd been trying to forget.

She stood up and turned on the shower. Peeling her clothes off she realized Ed had ripped the short-sleeved, emerald green blouse she had borrowed from Jen before she went home for the weekend. A few buttons were missing and the stitching around the left sleeve was torn, leaving a huge hole. She tried to figure out if she could fix it without telling Jen before she came home, but when she looked in the mirror she saw the blood on her collar and knew she'd have to throw it out.

"I wouldn't be able to look at it again anyway," she said aloud. The blood must have come from her lip. Her eyes moved from the green collar to the darkness of the dried blood on her lip. It wouldn't stop bleeding on the bus that she caught down the street from Keith's, and when she finally got off at the hospital her soft white Kleenex was drenched with red. Dr. Kane had put some stuff on it, some ointment like Vaseline. Above her right eye another bruise, this one a little less purple than the ones on her wrists and legs. But it was puffy and swollen, and it hurt like hell. Her hair was a mess, much of it in knots, kind of like her stomach. Her eyes began to fill again and she turned away, disgusted with herself. She knew she wouldn't be able to hide the cuts and bruises from Jen.

Turning back toward the mirror Alison began to shake. Her mind flashed scenes from her childhood. She remembered being on the beach at Cape Cod with her parents. Her father had handed her two beer bottles, pointed out the big blue garbage barrel down the shore a little ways and sent her on her way. She had felt so mature, walking on the beach with no one by her side. She smiled and giggled as she passed all the other fathers and mothers and kids as they watched her. They smiled back at her, admiring the way she waddled across the thick sand, her head held high. She kept her eyes focused on the blueness of the barrel, and as she approached it she felt more and more proud of her accomplishment. She stretched to reach the opening of the barrel, and, one after the other, she dropped the bottles in, jumping slightly when each hit the bottom, making thundering booms. She giggled again and spun around to head back to Mommy and Daddy. It was then that the panic hit her. There were people everywhere, so many people. She saw big umbrellas with rainbow colors, sand castles being washed away by the incoming tide, little kids running back and forth, kicking sand at one another or snapping each other's bathing suits. Moms with bulky, floppy hats and dads with brown thong sandals sat back in their chairs sipping lemonade and reading magazines. No one was looking back at her anymore. No one was smiling at
her. No one cared that she was lost. She stood, not moving, as her eyes scanned the beach, searching and searching. Her heart thundered like the bottles, pounding harder and harder as each second passed. Her nose tingled as she fought back the tears, and she reached up to rub it. She was lost. She had failed. The journey could not be considered successful unless she completed it. And she couldn’t complete it if she couldn’t find her way back. She was hurt, and she couldn’t understand why no one was helping her. Where were Mommy and Daddy? Why weren’t they coming for her? She was alone in a place full of people.

She slammed her fists into the mirror, breaking it. Sharp, tiny pieces of glass jutted out of her knuckles, and the blood poured out. But she didn’t care. Her whole life was falling apart, and there was no one to help hold the pieces, no one to hold her. The steam from the shower began fogging the broken mirror. She grabbed two clean towels. Blood was dripping on the floor, splattering all over the rug. Jen’s rug. She quickly wrapped a thin hand towel around her left hand first, then her right. She looked like a boxer getting ready for the big fight. And she had the face to match; a boxer’s face when the fight is all over and his eyes are nearly shut from the swelling. She had the cuts and bruises to prove she had put up a good fight. But her opponent was too much for her tiny 105-pound body. She had lost. And he, after rejoicing in his victory, had asked her if she liked it.

With the towels still wound around each hand, she pulled her black mini skirt off, and kicked it into the far corner of the bathroom. Ed had torn her black stockings to pieces while trying to pull her skirt above her hips. Her squirming only made him more excited, and he tore the nylon material, ripping the stockings to shreds.

The last article to remove before getting in the shower was her underwear. She tried not to look at them as she flung them into the garbage and covered them up with tissues, stuffing everything way down so she couldn’t see it from where she was standing. She opened the shower door and stepped in.

The water was hot, almost scorching, but she got used to it, and she liked it. “The hotter the better,” she thought, knowing that her body would be cleaner, hoping that her soul would be, too. Lathering the soap in her hands, Alison began to scrub. Scrubbing harder only made her feel more dirty, and so began her frantic washing. In her mind she saw Ed’s sweaty face, smelled his breath. She knew he had been drinking, had seen him with a bottle of Captain Morgan’s in one hand, a Coke in the other, to wash down the booze. She had wanted to find Brenda to make sure she was alright, to see if her fight with Keith was over. She searched the upstairs of the house, looking in each bedroom. When she didn’t find her there, she headed for the barn out back, remembering that Keith often brought Brenda back there when his parents were home, and he wanted privacy with her. The barn was cool, much cooler than the hot autumn air outside. She was glad she’d asked Jen for her blouse. It was thin and light. There were no lights in or around the barn, but as her eyes adjusted to the darkness, she could make out stacks of hay, the rusty Chevy pickup, and a figure propped on the hood.


“All?” It was a deep voice, a guy’s voice. “It’s just me—Ed. Brenda’s not in here. I saw her get in Keith’s car. I think they went for a drive.”

She could hear the slurred words, knew he was drunk. She turned to go, but he had asked her to stay. Alison knew Ed, not too well, but well enough she thought. After all, how well do we know anyone?

She spent the next half hour listening to him in the dark. She liked that he was talking to her, spilling his guts about the breakup with Debbie. She liked the smell of the hay, the dirty, musty smell of the damp ground. But after awhile, she wanted to see if Brenda had come back to the party. Ed begged her to stay, but when she told him she’d be right back, he grabbed her by the arm.

She shrunk to the floor of the shower, braced herself against the wall, curled her knees up under her chin and rested her head. The water poured down all around her, and she pictured herself standing naked on a big flat rock in the forest, underneath a sparkling waterfall. She had dreamed of waiting. And Shane had respected that. He questioned why, though, telling her that if they loved each other, it was okay to make love. But he never forced her. And she loved him even more for that. A few times they had come close, but she was scared. She had told Jen just last week that she was beginning to think she might say okay, even if they weren’t married. Jen was busy making weekend plans, though, and never really listened. Alison had decided to wait a little longer.

Now she wished she had gone home for the weekend with Shane. But she knew the party would be a big one, and all her friends would be there. Shane understood but decided to go home without her. God, she wished she’d gone with him. He was never going to believe her story. Ed was cute, everyone at college seemed to like him, although Alison thought he was a little too macho for her. That’s why she liked that he’d confided in her, showed her his soft side. Shane would be hurt. He’d be angry that she did it with someone else. What if he didn’t believe Ed raped her? Why would he? Ed could get Debbie back in a minute—everyone knew that.

The steam cleared her sinuses that had been blocked from crying so hard. But her mind was still a jumble of thoughts, memories, dreams and fears. Her fingers were wrinkled, like raisins, and she ran her thumb over the ridges. She wanted to sleep there, under the warm water. She wanted it to do more than clean her sinuses, more than cleanse her body; she wanted it to wash away the pain and fear.

She heard the door slam shut and knew someone was in her room. Her eyes widened, and her heart pumped so loud she could hear it.

“How the hell did he get in?” she thought. Leaving the water running, she grabbed a towel and got out. Frantically, she unwrapped the towels on her hands, barely feeling...
the stinging from the cuts. She snatched her robe from its hanger on the door, threw it on, pulled the strings tight. Whipping open the door to the medicine cabinet, she found nothing to help her defend herself, only a can of shaving cream, a toothbrush, some toothpaste and dental floss, and a bottle of aspirin. He was going to do it to her again. She had no way of stopping him. She listened at the door for a voice, but heard none. Her eyes caught sight of something shiny in the junk basket on the back of the toilet. Dumping everything out, she grabbed a pair of hair-cutting scissors. It wasn’t much, “But I’ll jab his goddamned eyes out,” she thought. There was no lock on the bathroom door, so if he wanted her, he could get her. She fought the tears, stiffened her lips and clenched the scissors with both bleeding hands. Biting her bottom lip made the top one bleed again, but she didn’t have time to notice. She could bleed to death for all she cared as long as she stuck the scissors into the son-of-a-bitch’s eyes.

Standing behind the door, she felt the cold tiles of the wall behind her. She knew this was it. She’d kill herself before she’d let him rape her again.

She watched the door knob turn and the door began to open slowly. She felt her body go stiff, but she was ready. “Kill the mother, kill the mother,” she kept thinking.

“Al?” It was Jen. She poked her head in the door and saw Alison’s face, the blood, the bruises, the swollen bump above her eye, and the blood dripping from the fists wrapped around the pair of scissors she held high above her head. Alison didn’t move.

“Oh my God, Al. What happened?” Jen screamed. “It’s just me. Put the scissors down!”

Alison felt paralyzed from head to toe, except for her eyes, which kept blinking, trying to move the tears out of her way so she could see her target. But there were too many tears and not enough blinks to clear her vision. She closed her eyes and dropped her arms.

She remembered the beach, remembered how she prayed for someone to find her. She remembered the joy that washed over her when her squinting eyes finally focused in on her father’s smiling face, his hands waving high in the air. She remembered the tears falling harder, the relief of someone finding her, and she ran faster with each tear that fell until she reached him, his arms sweeping her up, holding her tight, keeping her safe.

“Please don’t let me go, Jen,” Alison whispered, pulling Jen’s arms around her, making them squeeze all the safety in the world into one big hug.