

Accident

3rd Place

Ashley Kennedy

Big Creek High School, McDowell County

Grades 9 & 10

My eyes open, but it takes a few minutes before they can focus on my surroundings. This place doesn't look familiar; I don't believe I've been here before. I attempt to recall how I ended up here, but I can't remember; furthermore, I can't remember anything. "Where am I? How did I get here? Who am I?" I ask myself these questions with no response. Then I glance down and almost scream at the sight of my blood-covered hands. I begin to panic. What's going on here? What's happening to me? I attempt to clean my hands using my t-shirt, but it doesn't help much. Then I realize I have blood all over me. There's a lot of it, and it's beginning to dry. I guess that whatever happened, happened last night, and from the looks of things it seems to be about noon right now. After taking a few moments to try and clam down and think rationally I realize I'm in an alley. I can see the busy, noisy, city street filled with cars and people, but still none of it rings a bell. The alley is beginning to frighten me, so I dart onto the street. I don't know where I belong, where to go, or even where to start to try to figure this mess out. Wandering down the street, weaving back and forth through people, nothing seems to jog my memory. As I walk by a store window, I notice my reflection and realize that my head is bleeding, but it doesn't seem to be hurting. It's shocking to see the amount of blood on me and having no one on the street care, or even look at me in a suspicious manner, but then again in the middle of New York City that isn't unusual. As I'm studying my reflection, I see something behind me that catches my eye. It's a newspaper dispenser, and the front page headline is startling, it reads, "Crash Leaves Two Dead, One Hospitalized; Driver Still Missing." I rush over, struggling to take it all in. Urgently searching my pockets, I finally find enough quarters to purchase the paper. I begin to read the article. "Last night two vehicles collided following one driver's failure to stop at a traffic light. The truck slammed into the side of a car carrying a mother and her teenage son. The occupants of the truck included two females. The boy was rushed to the

hospital and is in critical condition. The mother and the female passenger of the truck died instantly. The female who was driving the truck was not at the scene when paramedics arrived. The witness who called 911 reportedly saw the driver flee the scene of the crash. Thus far, the police have not located the missing driver. The police believe that the driver was drinking because of the beer cans found in the floor of the truck. The police have a warrant for the arrest of the missing female; at this time her name is not being released...”

The utter shock that is washing over me causes me to almost drop the newspaper. “Is this the type of person I am, getting drunk, killing people, and just walking away?” Again I have no logical answer, at least not one that is comforting. It must be me, which is the only explanation I can come up with. It would explain everything. I think to myself, “I have to turn myself in; no matter what kind of person I was before, I can change now and the way to do that is to go to the police and tell them who I am.” I begin thinking of what I did to that poor boy, his mother, and to the woman in the truck with me. Thinking about them caused me to flip to the obituary section of the newspaper. Then I find what I am looking for. “Services for Miranda Miller, age 33, will be held tomorrow night at Thompson’s Funeral Home.” “Miranda Miller,” I say aloud. “She’s the mother that was driving the car, according to the article.” In my mind I have already decided to wait until after I stop by the funeral tomorrow before turning myself in. Although the newspaper gave me her name, it offered no help in figuring out my own. With every minute that passes I grow more frustrated with myself as I attempt to remember something, anything about my life. I continue to wander the streets desperately praying to come across something to trigger even the slightest memory. It continues to get later. My mind is heavy, thinking about the events and consequences tomorrow will bring.

It occurs to me that I’m planning to attend the funeral of this woman who I apparently killed, and I’m still covered in all this dried blood. Spotting a convenience store just down the street, it dawns on me that I could use their restroom to clean myself up and make myself presentable. I walk in and head straight toward the restroom. I close the wooden door behind me and progress toward the mirror. I splash cool water onto my face and try to wash the blood from my head. It seems to take forever, but finally most of the blood is washed down the drain. After getting as clean as I can, I unlock the door and

make my way toward the glass door that leads to the street. By the time I walk outside, it is completely dark. I find an alley to spend the night in. I wake up to find that I had slept through the night and most of the day; I need to get going. I quickly find the funeral home and walk in unnoticed before everyone arrives. When I get to the front of the room I brace myself and stare into the coffin. Something seems odd about her. She looks familiar for some reason. Then I realize that she is me.