

Raevin Bilyeu

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Revision

### Strength

She was never one to go out often. In fact, she attended her first party senior year of high school. But that party was a gateway to many, and once the summer hit, she felt invincible. With her best friend by her side, they could do anything. But their lives really weren't that glamorous. They lived in a small, dead-end town and attended the same party at the same house every weekend.

"Who do you think is gonna be there?" asked Jade.

Eleanor laughed, "same as always."

They went back to getting ready. This was usually how it went. They would put on makeup and a cute outfit. Go to the crowded, boring party and play stupid games. They would get drunk and find a ride home. And repeat it all again next weekend. One time Eleanor found herself alone at this house as people began to leave and her friend fell asleep. She is avoiding the wandering hands of a drunk father with another girl. They escape to bonfire outside and meet up with an old friend who offers to get them out of there. Somewhere along the way, the two girls separate, and Eleanor finds herself at the friend's apartment with some others.

The next morning, Eleanor sprints to the road as she sees the big black truck coming to pick her up. She hops in and thanks the driver for picking her up.

Once she's home she gets in the shower and washes away the stains of the previous night. Putting on some comfortable clothes as she packs for the out-of-state trip to school in the next couple of weeks. Jade stops by and they talk about how much fun they had the night before. Someone started drunkenly making grilled cheese for everyone while a dance battle happened in the living room. They had to make the memories now, Eleanor was leaving soon.

As days dwindled, Eleanor spent less and less time at home trying to soak-in every bit of summer she could. College was scary and she didn't want to leave just yet. Eventually her and her parents took off on the road trip across the country to Eleanor's new home. They moved her in, and orientation week began the very next day. Then came the first party and the first remembrance of that night she went to her friend's apartment. It was too packed in that house and Eleanor's anxiety increased as she felt other people press up against her. She couldn't breathe. She couldn't speak. She was frozen; just like the night in the apartment. She went outside and caught her breathe; calming down and slowly forgetting again.

As the parties increased, the anxiety increased. The picture finally became clear. She had been sexually assaulted and she now lives in this constant state of anxiety. She kept quiet about this incident for a long time. She felt like it was her fault. She chose to leave. She chose to trust him. She blamed herself for it. She continued to feel this way until October of 2017. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of October Alyssa Milano popularized the #MeToo to raise awareness for sexual assault.

Thousands of people began tweeting with that hashtag. Eleanor began to look at the expanse of people who were just like her. She didn't feel alone anymore, and she didn't feel like it was her fault. She watched as these strong humans began telling their stories and felt inspired. Within that month, Eleanor tweeted using the #MeToo and that was the first time she had ever publicly admitted to being a survivor of sexual assault.

This tweet, although small, was the first step towards empowerment and overcoming in Eleanor's journey. Not much came of that tweet and she was thankful that none of her peers questioned her about it but supported her instead by liking the tweet. After admitting to herself what happened that, she wanted to prevent as many people as she could from experiencing what she did. She marched at the Women's March in January and began volunteering at a local help center for survivors. She fell in love with Women's studies and wanted to become a professor.

Now, finishing up her last year of school, Eleanor still looks back on that tweet as a reminder that she is not alone. A reminder of strength and bravery. An inspiration to overcome adversity and use it to grow. She will never be thankful for what she experienced in that apartment, but she is thankful for the strength she had to fight through.