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One Graveyard

by Kellie Powell

Sonya: Okay, the thing you have to understand, right up front, is, I'm not really a drug person. I never even smoked cigarettes. I wouldn't even know where to get hard drugs. When I was in the fifth grade, we had DARE - you know, Drug Abuse... something... Education, or whatever - and I swallowed that stuff completely. At the end, everyone had to write an essay, like, about how drugs are bad, it was a contest - and mine won. I got to read it out loud for everyone at our little DARE program graduation assembly. And I wore my "DARE: To Keep Kids Off Drugs" T-shirt clear until I was a senior in high school. I was, like, on the look-out all the time for drug pushers who would try to sell me cocaine and bad kids who would tell me that I wasn't cool unless I sniffed glue. Those are the kinds of things they warn you about, but those kinds of things never really happen - at least, they have never happened to me. If they had, I would have been ready.

But then, my senior year of high school, it was Thanksgiving break, and I was hanging out with these guys who had gone to my high school and graduated a couple of years before I did, Shane and Toby, and Toby's roommate, Max, in their dorm room. And, you have to understand, I was totally in love with Shane. He had gone away to school in Portland, and I hadn't seen him in three months. So, I go over to Toby and Max's room, where he and all these other people are hanging out, drinking, catching up - and at first there's like, ten people there, but eventually things start winding down, and it's just the three guys and me. And they decide to smoke some weed. They didn't peer pressure me or anything! They just asked me if I wanted some, and I - said yes. I was so clueless, they were laughing at me while I was trying to light it and breathe the right way... Lots of people don't get high the first time they smoke, but I did, like, woah. And then Max offered to give me a backrub... and we ended up making out on the floor after Toby and Shane went to sleep... (She shrugs as if to say, "Hey, what can you do?")

So, that's how I discovered that I really like weed. It's like, a completely brilliant invention. When I'm high, everything is relaxed, everything is so funny - I am never relaxed in real life. And I feel smart, and... insightful, and so creative... It's like this great little vacation from myself.

Anyway, Jodie said that mushrooms were pretty much the same kind of experience, except with some hallucinations. "Some" hallucinations. Yeesh. Understatement, much? I think we were all tripping way harder than we thought we would. Erica - obviously she was the most scared. It was... more disturbing than I thought it would be. I thought maybe it would be



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scary, but like, in a fun way? Because, I mean, I figured, if you know that you're tripping, then you can't really get freaked out, because you know that whatever you're seeing isn't real. But it doesn't quite work that way. Because, yeah, you know that what you're seeing isn't real, so it should be just like watching a movie without a screen. But sometimes, it doesn't matter how much you know it isn't real, you still feel that it is. You believe that it is, even though you know better. Because tripping, somehow, makes completely impossible things seem somehow totally possible. Even likely. And that's really amazing and mindexpanding and wonderful - except when it's not.

Look, believe me, I really wish I could help her. I wish I knew what happened. She was right there, and then she was just - gone. Disappeared like a magic trick. I really don't know what happened, or where she is.

(Pause.) What? Jodie didn't do anything. She was with me, chasing imaginary cats. Erica was our friend, we had no reason to hurt her.

(Pause. She calms.) Yeah, I know. Just doing your job.

(Pause. Hesitantly.) Yeah, I guess. I mean, yes, she had some problems. She took medication, she went to therapy. And yeah, I mean, I feel guilty as hell that we gave her drugs, we should have realized that her brain was different than other people's. But she thought she could experience - how do you say no to that? If someone wants to do something crazy because they think it might help them, how do you say no?

I don't really know how bad it was. Maybe it was really bad for her. Maybe... maybe she did something to hurt herself. Maybe she couldn't deal with what she was seeing - maybe it sent her over the edge. But, maybe not. Maybe she's not - ...(She finds that she can't say "dead.") Maybe she just... ran away. Maybe she's out there somewhere. And maybe she's... better. And I'd rather believe that, you know? I'd rather believe that she's... hiding. That maybe, when she's ready, she'll come back.



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