

My Friend and Addie

"Brody?", I called as I knocked on the door. There was a gentle smell of lavender wafting through his door crack. Having lived with him for a year, I was glad to see that his obsession with scented candles still continued. "Come in!" he called. I opened the door to see him sitting at his desk, intently staring into the screen. His room had a warm yellow glow coming from the tall lamp that stood beside his bed. His table was kept tidy with his books neatly stacked on the rack and a few wooden models of vintage cars arranged on the top. He looked up and his eyes lit up as he saw me. "Arushi!!!! It's been so looong!" he exclaimed as he got up to give me a hug. I hugged him back expecting his usual overpowering weed-covering perfume, but he smelled surprisingly clean. He seemed genuinely glad to see me and said "It's so good to see you! Let me grab you a drink!". He sat me down on his bed and went out into his living room. I looked around to see traces of the Brody I used to know, but except for his airplane models and the candle, everything seemed different. My eyes wandered to the little medicine cabinet stuffed behind his bed, but couldn't see the familiar red bottles through the clear case. Staring at the cabinet, I thought back to how the red bottles had ruled his life...

I walked out of my room at 3 am to get a breather from the 6 hour cramming session I had taken up. It was finals week and the stress levels in the house were soaring through the roof. As I was getting coffee, I looked over at Brody's room. A blue hue was emanating from under his door indicating that he was awake and cramming too. The good roommate I was, I went over and knocked on his door to offer him some coffee. I jumped with shock after a few seconds when he yanked the door open and stood there with his eyes wide and staring at me. . Red pill containers had littered Brody's room along with discarded clothes and random books. The room was hazy with the mixed smell of the reeking weed smoke and lavender candle on his cluttered desk. "What?" he shot at me. "I was making coffee for myself. Did you want..?" I trailed off as I saw his expression crunching into a grimace. He said "No" and quickly shut the door on my face. I stood there trying to gather what I had just seen. His face had been a shadow with his eyes wide and bloodshot. I knew that he had lost his appetite considering the expired food in the fridge. Judging from his hyperactive state, I knew that he was in one of his Adderall sessions.

People get addicted to substances for various reasons. In college that reason can either be recreation, peer pressure or like in Brody's case, stress. Exams and assignments meant only one thing for him: Adderall. He used Adderall and weed as a support system to get the perfect grade. Throughout the sophomore year that I lived with him in the house, I had never seen him without his candles and crazed

look. It had been hard to get accustomed to his hyper phases due to the side effects of Adderall. When I could not take it anymore, I decided to confront him and talk him out of his habit. His earnest response to my concern had been “Only a week more, Mahashree. No more pills after finals, I promise.” Although he stopped after finals week, his promise did not hold up to much since the same story repeated every assignment, every midterm, every final..

“Here you go” he said, as he handed me a cup of tea snapping me back from my reverie. As I smiled up at him and took the cup, I noticed the healthy glow that he had developed since graduating. He showed no signs of being under the influence of any substance. I smiled a little wider and sipped on my tea, relieved that he had managed to escape the grasp of stimulants and turned his life around.