

## From Future to Past

Dear Past,

Hopefully you find this letter in time to not change your decisions but to guide you in the life that lies ahead. You will experience many things that will break you down to your lowest point but at the same time make you stronger. As a people pleaser who puts others before yourself, people will take advantage of every chance they get so watch who you trust. Easily influenced, you care way too much of what others think, so consider your decisions before you make them.

I know you lie awake some nights thinking about your mom and wishing she were here. Especially when you feel like you have no one else. Realize the reality is that she is gone and God had his reasons for taking her that you won't understand. You were only three when it happened and I know it doesn't seem fair, but as they say, life isn't fair. Steadily thinking about the man who hit her you wonder why he had to be drinking and driving that night. Why she had to run out of gas. Why she had to be walking on that side of the road.

While your mom's death left a void in your life, a woman named Julie will try to fill that void when you are twelve. At first she may seem sweet but she will soon turn sour as she tries to control everything and everyone. Your dad will fall for everything she stands for and will side with her on everything so you will waste your time trying to confront him about any problems. She has two kids of her own, Hunter and Haley. She will treat you and your brother, Cody, differently from her own children but don't let it get to you. Avoid confrontations with her kids because in the end no matter what, you will be the one who is wrong. Just stay by Cody's side. He is your big brother and he will be your protector. There will be times, however, where you must protect him. You will do whatever it takes to protect him because you feel like he is the

only one you have that's close to you, and I know your biggest fear is losing your brother. Your dad will marry Julie without consulting to you or your brother, and your life will soon become a modern day Cinderella story.

Once you get into high school you will begin to change and start to see things from a different perspective. You will have your protector taken away from you and you won't be able to save him. For the next couple of years your brother will be in and out of jail for hotwiring ATV's, drugs, and access to robbery. You will feel more alone than ever but don't worry, he will eventually come home and he will continue to shield you from any pain and help you make it through your last year at home.

Your freshman year of high school you will begin to experience many new things you didn't think you ever would. Falling in love with a senior, Kentreal, will result in a broken heart. This will be the beginning of your down fall to come. Don't try to avoid it. You're going to get your heart broken eventually and more than once, but you learn from each experience. However, you should think about how you choose to deal with the pain because some ways will only cause you more grief in the long run while it only gives you temporary relief. You will soon come to the realization that you are gullible so you need to use this to your advantage. If you have a gut feeling about someone or something, trust it. Most of the time your intuition is right and it will save you a lot of grief that you don't need. Your dad will become more and more strict on you as you get older so you will become more and more rebellious. You will start to sneak around and lie to him about everything you do. Telling him you're going to the movies when really you're going to a party or going to see a guy. Although you will be having the time of your life, staying out late, going to parties, getting away with anything and everything, you will eventually get caught.

At this point your step mom, Julie, will pick you up early from school one day and drop you off at a place called Living Hope which is a mental hospital for kids. You will be stunned because she won't give you the slightest clue she's taking you there. You'll spend a week in this place but it will seem like forever. You'll feel like one of those crazy people in the movies who need a straight jacket in a little white room. All of the windows are taped off so you can't see the slightest bit of daylight. At night it feels like winter and all you have is a paper thin sheet and a plastic pillow with light shining in from the hall. You will constantly be told what to do and how to do it. Other kids will stare at you wondering what you did to get in such a horrible place. Your dad comes to visit you once and you have to have your own room because he shows up drunk. You can't even stand to look at him let alone be around him as he reeked of whisky and cigarettes. Your visit ends short. To avoid all of this, when she comes to pick you up do not get in the car.

During your sophomore year your dad and Julie will get a divorce, but don't get too happy. While you think your life will get easier it only gets that much more hectic. You never seemed to notice your dad's drinking problem before but you will soon be unable to avoid the truth. You will have to deal with his drinking day in and day out. You will constantly fight with him for pointless reasons and he will always victimize the situation to make you pity him. You can't avoid this in any way so to make it as less stressful just try to avoid him as much as possible.

At the end of your sophomore year you will get a car and become even more rebellious. You should be careful what you do because you will find yourself in predicaments that you will only regret later on. Remember, high school is brutal and the second people suspect something about you, you will become labeled and it will stick with you. Your junior year you will slack

off on your school work and skip classes often. You don't need to let this happen because you will see quickly it will drop your GPA and you will have to work that much harder to get your grades back up.

Your senior year will already be stressful with preparing for college, friends, family, and Rashad. Rashad is a guy you fell in love with. You will go through a lot with him and he will even hurt you but he will also help you and teach you many things and in the end you will feel it's worth it. Just stay true to yourself and things will fall into place. One night after you've graduated you will sneak out to go see Rashad and on your way home you will get into a terrible car accident. Four people who decided to drink and drive will avoid a stop sign and you will collide. You won't remember the actual crash because it will knock you out. You get cuts all over your face and arms and you'll be standing in the road as blood is just steadily flowing from your face wondering how you even got out of the car. You can't stop thinking about how mad your dad is going to be and what he was going to do, how Rashad would react when he found out, and still trying to grasp the fact at what just actually happened. You look at your car and it's completely totaled. You see the other people from the other car and your mom's killer starts to flash through your head and how they are just like him. Finally the police and ambulance arrive and you'll stay in the ER until the next day. Don't try to avoid the accident because you learn from it in many ways. God did not plan for you to go this way so take it as a lesson and learn from it.

I wish I could tell you more but I don't want to affect your future any more than I already have. Just live for the moment and don't ever look back. Take chances because it's better to take risks than to wonder what if. Don't be afraid to make mistakes because you will learn from each one and they will mold you into who you will one day become.