

**The Choice is Yours:**  
**A Cautionary Choose-Your-Own-Path Presentation**  
for the 2016 “Words to be Heard” Scholarship Contest  
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## HOW TO NAVIGATE

You will begin the story in a particular scenario. From there events will unfold as you choose them, and the outcome will depend on you.

Each choice will be labeled with a circled number. Simply follow the directions from number to number to navigate your path. Try to make the right choice, and things may proceed well for you! If you make more wrong choices, though, the repercussions can be dire. Good luck!

1

You are an eighteen-year-old in your town with nothing to do on a Friday evening. You and your friend are considering spending a night out when you receive a text message inviting you to a house party from an acquaintance.

If you decline the invitation and choose to just spend time with your friend, go to 2.

If you choose to attend the party, go to 3.

2

You and your friend meet up at their house. When deciding what to do you have a few options – go hang out uptown, or stay in and do something like watch a movie.

If you decide to go out, go to 4. If you want to stay in, go to 5.

3

You and your friend walk a few blocks over to the party. From the outside it's clear there are a lot of people here; cars are parked up the street and music can be heard from inside.

If you walk in, go to 6.

If you decide this isn't for you,  
go to 2.

## 4

You and your friend decide to go into the center of town to get a bite to eat.

If you choose to walk along the main street, go to 9.

If you choose to have your friend drive, go to 8.

## 5

At your friend's house you decide to chill out with a movie and snacks, then get to just talking and lounging around. Later that night your friend receives a text about the party you were invited to – it's been busted for underage drinking. You both breathe a sigh of relief for not going, and hope no one was hurt. Over the next few days you learn there were several underage drinking arrests made, and at least one DUI charge. When you go to school you can see the effects of the arrests on those who were caught, and they've realized what harm they've done to themselves and their futures.

The end. To start from your previous choice, go to 2. To start over, return to 1.

## 6

You and your friend walk into the house. It's filled with people, many of whom you know and some you don't. Everyone is socializing; some people are playing drinking games in the kitchen, others are sitting in the living room, and people are constantly shuffling past you. A good acquaintance recognizes you. They beckon you over to one of the coolers and offer you a drink.

If you choose to take the drink,  
go to 10.

If you choose not to have a  
drink, go to 7.

## 7

You decline to have a drink, deciding that you want to stay sober tonight. However, your friend, also eighteen, is definitely down to have a beer. They don't drink very often but will gladly have a few.

If you encourage them and let  
them have a little fun, go to 11.

If you are starting to think this  
isn't a good idea and you don't  
think your friend should drink,  
go to 13.

## 8

You both get into your friend's car and buckle your seatbelts. Your friend plugs in his phone to play music, and you start heading toward the center of town. As your friend drives they continuously change the music, looking for a song, and their eyes aren't on the road.

If you offer to do this for them so they can concentrate, go to 26. If you're okay with it, go to 27.

## 9

You and your friend head up into town on the main street, deciding to get some fast food. After the meal you start walking back to your friend's house. At a crosswalk you both begin moving when the pedestrian sign is lit, but a car screeches around the corner past the red light. It swerves into the wrong lane, coming toward you, but overcorrects to the right and hits your friend. The driver is another student coming from the party, and is drunk. As you're shaking and calling 911 the driver is sobbing in regret; luckily your friend is still breathing but can't move out of shock and pain. After the police and paramedics arrive you call your parents for a ride to the hospital. Your friend has a few broken ribs and a fractured leg, but will recover in 5-6 months whereas the driver is given a DUI (their license has been suspended, they are fined, they have to attend safe driving school, and are given a misdemeanor conviction).

The end. To start from your previous choice, go to 4. To start over, return to 1.

If you choose to walk on the main streets, go to 9

If you choose to walk down the side streets, go to 16

# 10

You take the drink handed to you in a solo cup. As the party progresses and the night gets later you have a few more drinks, but not too many. Eventually you're invited to play beer pong or do some shots.

If you want to start having fun with drinking games, go to 14.

If you are tired of drinking and have enough of a buzz already, go to 12.

# 11

You watch as your friend starts drinking. After they've had a few and you've both been talking to acquaintances for a while, you get a little bored.

If you want to keep your friend's buzz going and encourage them to try some of the drinking games, go to 15.

If you feel like you should both be getting home, go to 20.

## 12

You realize you've done enough here and want to be getting home, especially before too many people start getting sick, falling asleep, etc.

If you want to catch a ride home, go to 21.

If you feel like walking, go to 18.

## 13

You do your best to discourage your friend from drinking. You guys probably shouldn't have come here and your friend will get a hangover at the very least. They persist, though, because they just want to relax and blow off some steam.

If you fold and decide it isn't a big deal for them to drink, go to 11.

If you hold your ground and talk some sense into them, go to 16.

14

You walk over to the drinking games, starting with beer pong. You feel more relaxed now, and are starting to have trouble staying focused. No one else notices, as many others are slurring their speech or moving more clumsily.

If you want to continue with drinking games, go to 17.

If you are starting to feel like you should leave, go to 12.

15

You walk over to the room where the drinking games are going on. Everyone has a cup in their hand, and shots are lined up on the counter. You and your friend get involved, and your friend especially is taking down a lot of drinks – beer and shots together. Not long after they've begun stumbling around, disoriented, and don't understand you easily. Finally they move into the other room and pass out on the couch. They're breathing very slowly now.

If you're concerned about them, go to 22.

If you just want to let them sleep it off, go to 19.

## 16

After a bit of an argument your friend agrees with you – it isn't worth the hangover. As you're getting ready to leave people are asking you to stay, and you realize how much you want to get out of here – people are getting sick, pulling stunts in the backyard that could get them hurt, and breaking things. You and your friend make your exit and walk back to your houses, and while your parents are upset with you for being home late, you breathe a sigh of relief that you're not drunk, too. Though going to the party wasn't a good idea, you made the right choice to leave without drinking; when you hear about the bust the next day you realize how close you'd been to jeopardizing your future.

The end. To start from your previous choice, go to 13. To start over, return to 1.

## 17

After beer pong you feel that shots would be fun. You're feeling very confident about the idea of rows of shots when someone gets the idea. The last thing you remember are the shots on the counter, the empty glass in your hand, and people cheering. Some time later you wake up on the floor of the kitchen, having been sick during the night, and you hear crying – the police are here. In a haze you're lifted to your feet. Someone asks you your name. They tell you something about being under arrest for consumption of alcohol while underage; this is happening to you, you realize. Your chances of getting into college are seriously hurt, your license is suspended, and you're fired from your part-time job. Your parents will have to help pay the ~\$250 fine, and are furious with you. Your reputation among friends and authorities in the community is seriously damaged. Because of this one "fun" evening, your entire future has been drastically altered.

The end. To start from your previous choice, go to 14. To start over, return to 1.

## 18

You tell your friend you're going to be going home, and they decide to stay. As you leave you get a few jeers for being the "loser" that's leaving so early, but you'd rather just get out of here.

When you arrive home you try to let yourself in quietly, but are caught by your parents. They can smell beer on your breath and ask if you've been drinking; lying doesn't get you anywhere and you're forced to admit where you were. Your parents, furious and concerned for the safety of the other kids at the party, call 911 to report it. You feel immensely guilty as your friend is a part of the bust, and your relationship with them is destroyed; word gets out that it was "your fault" the party was broken up. There were two people that had to be hospitalized for alcohol poisoning, though, and if your parents hadn't called they may not have gotten medical help. As for you, your parents are disappointed. Your privileges are greatly reduced, you're grounded, but most of all you've learned the effect a few bad choices can have.

The end. To start from your previous choice, go to 12. To start over, return to 1.

## 19

You turn your friend on their side so they don't choke if they vomit, and let them sleep to sober up. A few hours later, the party is interrupted by the police. Underage drinking arrests are taking place and most people are awake now, but your friend is unresponsive and won't stir. Paramedics are called, your friend is taken to the hospital, but meanwhile you are let off with a warning as you didn't actually drink. It turns out your friend had alcohol poisoning and as they slept their BAC continued to rise to a dangerous level. At the hospital they were treated via intubation and an IV. Luckily there were no long-term consequences, but if the police hadn't busted the party your friend easily could have suffered permanent brain damage or death. Your friend doesn't blame you for not getting help, but you have trouble forgiving yourself – you could have lost them because of one mistake.

The end. To start from your previous choice, go to 15. To start over, return to 1.

If you choose to walk on the  
main streets, go to 9

If you choose to walk down the  
side streets, go to 8

20

You and your friend decide to leave. As they've had a few drinks you gladly walk them home. Everything seems okay until your friend is caught coming in. Their parents see you outside after they realize their child's been drinking, and you can't leave until after they've told you what they think, They blame you for not being responsible around their child, thinking you should have kept them from drinking. As a result you're not allowed to hang out with your friend alone anymore. You both realize that the party definitely wasn't worth it, even if the effects weren't dangerous.

The end. To start from your previous choice, go to 11. To start over, return to 1.

21

Another student is about to leave, too. He gulps down his last drink and rummages in his pockets for his keys. "Want a ride?" he asks.

If you say yes, go to 24.

If you decide you'd rather take your time walking, go to 18.

## 22

Your friend's "sleep" seems to be too deep, and you remember something from health class about the difference between someone sleeping and being made unconscious from too much drinking. They did drink a *lot* in a short period of time and they need help. Do you want to call their parents and assume responsibility for this, or do you want to call 911 and get the party busted in the process?

If you choose to call your friend's parents, go to 23.

If you choose to call 911, go to 25.

## 23

You make the call to your friend's parents, admitting where you are and why you're calling. They're upset and worried their child is in this situation, and momentarily angry at you for not discouraging this behavior, but are also grateful for your call. They drive over right away, come inside to get their child, and many of the teenagers run out in the process. You accompany them to the ER. Because you were responsible and acted quickly, your friend just has to be hooked up to an IV and monitored; they'll be fine once they've been re-hydrated. Their parents notify your parents of where you are, and report the party to the police. Though many people have left, the host and other attendees are busted for underage drinking.

The end. To start from your previous choice, go to 22. To start over, return to 1.

If you choose to walk on the main streets, go to 9.

If you choose to walk down the side streets, go to 8.

## 24

You get into the other student's car and buckle your seatbelt. He gets in, turns on the ignition, and backs out of the driveway. You tell him where your house is, and he starts going down a main road. He's driving fast, though, and you ask him to slow down, but he replies "I'm good, don't worry. This isn't fast." At an intersection he runs a red light and the car smashes into another coming from the right, broadsiding the vehicle. Your driver is thrown partly out of the car to rest on the hood while the driver of the other car appears to have broken something. As you wore your seatbelt when the airbag deployed, you only feel pain in your nose and face from its impact. You call 911, and the drivers are hospitalized. The person who drove you suffers permanent brain damage due to his reckless drunk driving and lack of a seatbelt. You're horrified at the grave results from one person's driving with just a few drinks.

The end. To start from your previous choice, go to 21. To start over, return to 1.

## 25

You move into a room where you're alone to call 911. As you give them the address and emergency, you feel anxious at causing a bust but know it's necessary for your friend's safety. Someone overhears you and gets furious before alerting everyone else of your 911 call; people begin waking up their friends and leaving in groups. You wait with your unresponsive friend and the few who haven't left, including the very angry host. An ambulance arrives soon after and your friend is taken to the hospital for mild alcohol poisoning, while the host and the stragglers are cited for underage drinking. Though a lot of people avoid you at school for a while afterward, you know you did the right thing for your friend. You have both learned a lesson.

The end. To start from your previous choice, go to 22. To start over, return to 1.

If you choose to walk on the main streets, go to 9

If you choose to walk down the side streets, go to 8

26

You take your friend's phone and change the music for them. Finally they can settle on a song, and soon after you've arrived at the fast food joint.

After you eat you return to your friend's house, and hear rumors of an underage drinking bust at the party you were invited to. Hopefully no one was hurt.

The end. To start from your previous choice, go to 8. To start over, return to 1.

27

Your friend continues driving and looking for just the right song to play. As you're crossing over blocks up in town, you hear a car horn and instantly feel a harsh impact. It turns out your friend ran a stop sign and has collided with a car making a turn in the intersection; your friend's front bumper is crumpled and the other car's passenger door is smashed in. The passenger is injured and your friend is cited for causing an accident with distracted driving.

The end. To start from your previous choice, go to 8. To start over, return to 1.

There are no re-starts or redos in real life. Though underage drinking, drunk driving, and texting while driving can seem inconsequential, these actions can have irrevocable repercussions. No matter the “fun” you’re having, it is never worth the risk, and being aware of your choices is often the best way to make the right ones.