

SENDER: FUTURE C

Dear Past C_____,

I'm kind of ashamed to tell you that I forgot about your letter. A_____ found it God knows where and gave it back to me, along with all the stuff my little sibling borrowed over the years, even our childhood things, the old toys we'd refused to throw away.

Things have been so restless in the house. I have no idea what's going through A_____ 's head. Or my head for that matter. One day I want to drink and laugh, the next I just want to break things. The worst part is that whenever I feel the world crashing down on me, not a single person is there to help. The only one who gives me the time of day is D_____, the one who stopped me right before I jumped on that rotting boat in the river, then brought me home and insisted we talk. As if I wasn't drunk off my ass... Having a shrink for a friend isn't always as useful as D_____ hopes, but I appreciate the effort.

On the other hand, I'm afraid A_____ thinks I'm no longer fit to take care of our father. Last night the old man was telling us one of his fishing stories, the ones that usually leave us rolling on the floor laughing. All of a sudden A_____ stormed off to the kitchen to make dinner, then left the house as soon as the meat was over. This is no time to be mad at me. But who am I to blame? It's my fault if Dad's in a wheelchair and Mom is dead. But we can't just fight like little kids now: Dad needs some peace and we all ought to make sacrifices. After the merger in my company they offered me a nice job in the big city. But what kind of ungrateful shit would leave Dad like that? My paycheck is more than enough for this town. I even get change for a drink and a smoke. The only other thing I need is the weekly match with my team. B_____ is still my teammate, though E_____ has been saying we should cut it off. No, of course we're not together. Competing with B_____ was always a lost cause. Last week E_____ phoned me out of the blue. We talked about everything, even about that time we made love. Things hadn't been going well with B_____ then. But it's different now. They're talking marriage. I never had the guts to tell B_____ what happened... Why did E_____ bring it up now? See, dear past C_____, I really wish you could avoid making some of my mistakes. Your letter wasn't pointless. It reminded me of that bittersweet summer, the best of our lives. I wasn't always like this. Squeeze everything you can out of that summer and savour it to the last drop. Then gear up for the battles to come. Now it's me who wants to be you.

C_____