

A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a person's face, focusing on their eye and dark hair. The lighting is dramatic, with deep shadows and bright highlights on the eye and hair.

Jay's Journal

Anonymous

Edited by Dr. Beatrice Sparks,
who also discovered *Go Ask Alice*

SEE INSIDE FOR AN EXCERPT FROM *GO ASK ALICE*

*Dedicated to every kid who might need to do some
soul-searching in his or her own life, to ask himself or herself:
Can I handle things if I continue to pursue my present course?*

INTRODUCTION

At 7 A.M. January 3, 1978, a very distressed mother phoned. She said she had read an article about how I had prepared *Go Ask Alice* from an existing diary, and *Voices*, not then released, from personal interviews; how I hoped both books would help educate young people as to the problems and pressures and weaknesses of their peers, and make it easier for them to consider alternatives and make wise decisions in their own lives.

The lady said her son, Jay, had kept a journal—a seminary book—and many papers and letters, which she felt could also be of benefit to both kids and parents looking for answers and ways out.

Jay, 16 ½ years old, had been into witchcraft, how deeply neither his mother nor his father had ever suspected, until after Jay put his father's pistol against his right temple and pulled the trigger.

As Jay's mother and I plowed through the many containers of favorite footballs, basketballs, tennis rackets, trophies, diplomas, awards, letters, notes, books, etc., that she had not been able to part with, she remained calm and helpful. Only when she unfolded Jay's worn, stained "grub jacket" at the bottom of the last box did she cry; telling me how she had put the leather patches on the elbows after his motorbike had gone out of control and spilled down the slope and into a tree, how she had replaced the front pocket with an emblem he had

July 2

For two weeks now my Sunday school teacher and my scout master and everybody else have been on my ass to keep a journal. It's the biggie now! The new "everybody's got to do it" thing! Mom bought me this one and left it on my bed when the hassle first began. I know she expected me to be "appreciative" about something I didn't even want and more especially don't want to do! But like usual, *what I want* is not important, it's what I'm *supposed to do* that counts! The old man is always moaning about how he works his tail off for us, and how . . . Oh Judas, this isn't what you're supposed to put in a journal. You're supposed to put only good things that your kids and grandkids and all of posterity can read. Man, I don't want any kids if they're going to turn out, burn out, anything like me: sad, rebellious, angry, searching . . . searching . . . searching, and for what? I'm going on fifteen years old and no answers yet have ever really satisfied me. I want more . . . and more . . . and more! But more what? What in the hell do I *really* want out of life? That's one of the things this dumb-ass journal is supposed to help me find out, but at this rate it's just going to get me into more rocking trouble than I'm already in, if that's possible. If the kids read it they'll go tattling to Mom and Dad, and if *they* read it all hell will break loose and I'll get grounded for completely through the millennium. Crap, what kind of a monster have I started here?

I don't want anybody to know what a rotten bastard screwup I am, and always have been, probably from the beginning of time and before. I'm trying to keep it from myself even! . . . yet here I am putting it all down in incriminating black and white . . . Judas, boredom is a drag, drag, drag. Writing might be good therapy for me in a way, though. Indeed, a means of getting hostile things out of my system. It seems like I'm eternally out of sync . . . kind of like I always want to scream "black" when somebody says "white," or whatever is, to quote the old man, "argumentative, inappropriate, and revolutionary."

He wanted in
I wanted out
He had a smile
I had a pout
I need someone to understand
God, how I need a helping hand.

Man, if people are going to keep a journal they should do it when they're little, when all the good things happen, before life starts kicking you in the ass and in the head and every other place. When I was little before I even knew how to write was the only time things happened that were worth writing about. No, I remember going to Disneyland with the family when I was bigger,

and going on fishing trips and on the deer hunts with my mom's brothers and sisters and my dad's relatives. We would all meet up at Big Pines and have a campground where the kids ran like wild Indians through the brush and streams and groves while the dads and big boys went up into the very tops of the mountains. Judas, it was exciting when they brought their deer down across their backs or on the tote-goat. The girls would gag and shudder while they cut the heads off and skinned the things and we guys would rub salt into the pelts with rocks and have the greatest times ever.

But then somehow I got into seventh grade and started smoking shit and stuff and I don't know, I guess it really was in seventh grade when I started getting off the track. Man, it all seems so strange now, when I was in first and second and third grade I was so square and religious and everything. I'd looked forward to being a deacon for as long as I can remember—I really wanted to pass the Sacrament! And I'd been saving my money to go on a mission since I first knew what money was.

I was so sincere then, and I tried so hard to conform. At least a part of me did. What happened to that sweet little kid? Whatever—ever happened to that nice little boy that I will never know again? I feel sad, like someone has died, maybe a part of me has . . . the good part.

January 7

Hi, you dumb bastard old journal:

I haven't written in you for six months, haven't even thought about you in fact, until tonight when I'm so bored I'm about to fall out of my tree. Judas, when I remembered I had hid you up in the attic, under the insulation by the crawl hole in my bedroom, it was like rediscovering an old friend. How's that for being lonely? Being grounded is really the shits. I've been imprisoned for a week and I've read and studied and drawn till I'm about to go stir-crazy, all because I punched Kendall out for getting in my room and messing up my stuff. I just threw him out in the hall after I'd already told him a hundred million times to bug off. How in hell was I supposed to know he'd land the wrong way and break his arm?

The saddest thing is that everybody acts like I broke it on purpose. They should all know me well enough to know I wouldn't . . . I couldn't . . . do anything like that. They forget it was me that jumped in after him when he fell into the Snake River in Yellowstone Park; and me that packed him down the mountain when he ran through the patch of poison ivy and got it in his eyes and stuff; and me that always fixes his bicycle when the chain comes off or it has a flat or . . . Oh God, he's such a neat little guy and I feel *soooooooooo* bad inside. I wish like everything it was my arm that was busted! I'd even sit right

here and break both my arms if I thought that would help any. I really would!

I'm sorry . . . *sorry* . . . SORRY AS HELL! Man, I'm sorry! I don't know why I can't tell any of them that though. It's like I speak Chinese and they all speak Russian or some screwup thing. They don't understand! They don't think I "care," I "hurt," or I "have feelings." It just seems like I'm always wrong, always "selfish," always "self-centered," and everything else that's negative and destructive. Oh dear God, I don't want to be all these things. Please somebody help me not to be them. I want to be loved and treated special and stuff like the little kids are. Will it ever be that way again? *Can* it ever again be for me like it was when I was little?

January 14

I had an IQ test in school today and it's 149+. Man, that makes me so proud! A genius! Me a genius! Well, almost. I found out by accident when I heard the teacher talking to the guy who gives the tests. I was walking down the hall being loud, trying to get a little attention for my old mismatched self, hitting guys and pushing girls, saying weird, gross things, just being old goofy loony me, maybe even more obnoxious than usual because Brad and Dell were both out with the flu. In a way I'm

That shines in Debbie's corn silk hair
And in her eyes of sky blue mists
And lips that must be kissed.

I'm going to be late for school but who cares if I ever go again? Brad and Dell both told me "for my own good" that Deb "has been around." Shit, crap, hell, don't they think I know that? In seventh and eighth grade everybody knew she was going with Mark Vrooder and his sleazy bunch, but she's changed.

She's changed! I know she's changed!
God made the beauties of the earth
Still there was dearth
Till he made Debbie Dale.

February 15

For once things are neat at home! I'm fifteen! Dad gave me a job in his pharmacy as a birthday present and I get to take the tote-goat to work.

Debbie went with her parents to Phoenix so Brad and Dell and me all got stoned to celebrate. We went up the canyon on our bikes with our bedrolls and our goodies and man! man! man, what a trip! I had two packs of beer. Brad had, I don't

know how many roaches, and Dell had some pills he'd ripped out of his mom's bottle.

I can see how Debbie used to use. If I didn't know better I'd never come down myself. I was just lying there spaced out in all that beauty of mountains and streams and trees, watching a big old hawk and really thinking I could do anything he could do, if I wanted to, and better! Man, it was neat.

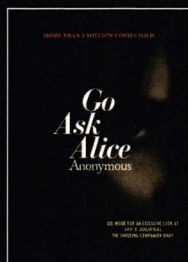
I would like to stay stoned all the time, it scares me it's so good! I would like to stay stoned every minute of every day for the rest of my life! Honestly I would . . . at least a part of me would. The other part of me is excited about working in Dad's store. I've always looked forward to that; sometimes I still think I'll be a pharmacist and we'll have a chain of stores. That's sort of what Dad and Grandpa want. I guess it's what I want too. Dad and Grandpa both make lots of money in their stores and so does Uncle Burton. We'll see . . .

DECEMBER 18
THINGS ARE GOING FROM WORSE
TO IMPOSSIBLE. I'M FIGHTING A
LOSING BATTLE...

Jay thought he could handle anything. The first time he took drugs was for fun. But what started as an escape quickly spiraled into a haze of addiction. That was just the beginning of the dangerous path that ultimately led Jay to take his own life.

This is the journal he left behind.

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