

Silence Is
By Samantha Hageman

[Trigger warning] This piece alludes to topics that could be sensitive for some audience members. If you feel the need to leave at any time, please feel free to do so. Enjoy the show.

[Lights]

It was my first time away from home. I was scared and excited at the same time. I didn't really know how to handle myself, what to do. They don't really teach you that kind of stuff before you get to college. You're warned "Watch out at parties," "Cover your drinks," "Don't go out alone,"...no one really tells you how to behave, and you're just looking to have a good time. My roommate, Theresa, wanted to go. She didn't want to go alone, and I wasn't about to let her. She wants to get to know as many people as quickly as possible, join everything...I'm not so outgoing. But, I figured if I stuck with her, I'd be alright. We got to the party. It was dark, there was music blasting, alcohol at the bar- I assume the usual college party setting. The guys were weirdly lined up against the wall with their drinks in their hand, only really moving away to grab a girl from the middle of the room to bring her back to the wall and start dancing- no- *grinding* with her. I wasn't comfortable with doing that, at least not without a few drinks in me. Theresa must have seen that I was nervous, so she handed me a cup. It tasted like gasoline, but I figured she must have known what she was doing. I trusted her, she said she had been to a college party before, so I just drank it. That was my first mistake. I shouldn't need to be drunk to have a good time and I shouldn't be hanging out with people who think I need to be drunk to be fun. Within ten minutes, I was feeling it and dancing. Then, from the back of me, some guy grabbed me by the hips and pulled me to the wall. I finished my drink and dropped the cup because that's what I was there to do, right? I saw everyone else doing it. We started moving like I've never moved before, at least, not in front of strangers. All of a sudden, he grabbed my hips again, spun me around, and kissed me. It was really rough, not playfully rough. It didn't feel right, and I was uncomfortable. I just wanted to dance, so I spun around and started dancing again, but it didn't take long for him to grab me and spin me around again. At that point, I started to get really anxious, evening though I felt like I was in a little bit of a haze from the drinks. I tried to move away, but he grabbed my arm. I told him I needed another drink and he ended up following me to the bar. He introduced himself to me. Max. He's on the water polo team, a junior, he said he lived upstairs. I told him I was a freshman. During

the small talk, I made my own drink, and as I did, I was looking for Theresa, but I couldn't find her. After taking a few gulps, me and Max go back to the wall. Going to get a drink to try to escape him wasn't a good idea because drinking more made me really out of it. I wasn't really sure that I wanted to, but I couldn't find Theresa, and I didn't know anyone else there. Plus, I didn't want to look like a prude. I just kept sipping on my drink, and I got drunker. I was so out of it, it felt like the room was spinning and I started to stumble. I was looking around, waiting for Theresa to come back. I think me and Max kissed again, and the next thing I knew, Max was leading me upstairs. I don't even remember how we got there and that scares the shit out of me. We got to a room and he shut the door behind him. He started kissing me again, and I froze. It was like I wasn't there for a minute and I had never been that drunk before in my life. When I collected myself, I shook my head, and tried pushing him away. When he didn't move away, I screamed, someone knocked on the door and opened it, and I darted out of the room and nearly killed myself trying to get down the stairs. I'm lucky. I'm lucky I screamed and someone heard. That guy didn't really care whether or not I was with it or actually wanted to have sex with him—he should have, but he didn't. I learned three things: Don't drink so much. Don't make stupid choices. Don't hang out with people who don't care about you. Put yourself first.

[Blackout.]