

I missed Christmas and my birthday when I fell asleep for six months

It should have been the best time of her life, starting college, making new friends and hanging out with her gorgeous new boyfriend.

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Bethany-Rose Goodier (Pic: Neil Jones)

It should have been the best time of her life, starting college, making new friends and hanging out with her gorgeous new boyfriend.

But this time last year, when Bethany-Rose Goodier went to bed and fell asleep, she didn't wake up the next day. Or the day after that.

She missed her 17th birthday, Christmas, New Year's Eve, two holidays and so many classes she had to drop out of sixth form.

But her family and new boyfriend Adam Rowe, 16, stayed with her throughout her ordeal.

She had been seeing Adam for just three months when her head hit the pillow in November 2010.



Bethany-Rose Goodier with her boyfriend Adam Rowe (Pic: Neil Jones)

But he had to wait six months before she woke up, having stood by her loyally.

"No matter how upset I got or how scared I was, I stayed with her, hoping

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she would eventually wake up and be back to her normal self," recalls Adam. "I'd fallen in love with her so I couldn't just walk away."

Beth, from Stockport, Greater Manchester, has the rare condition Kleine-Levin Syndrome, or KLS.

Nicknamed "Sleeping Beauty Syndrome", there are only 1,000 known cases worldwide.

She and Adam have now been together for 15 months - but Beth has been asleep for nine of them.

The couple had met in August 2009 at a youth camp weekend and Adam started visiting Beth from his home in Nottingham.

She was a happy, normal teenager, studying A levels courses in psychology, sociology, performing arts and photography.

But after seven weeks of college, getting out of bed became more of a struggle each day.

"I was at Adam's house for the weekend but all I wanted to do was sleep," she says.

"He thought I was bored and going off him because I couldn't stay awake."

Mum Janine Goodier, 43, assumed Beth was just being a typical teenager. "The last thing I remember was lying on the sofa and mum shouting at me for sleeping too much," says Beth.

That night, on November 4 last year, Beth fell asleep - and didn't wake up for 24 hours. Her mum and brother Jake, 19, were terrified.

But excessive sleeping wasn't her only bizarre symptom. Waking for just two hours a day, she developed a ravenous appetite, demanding pizza, crisps and endless junk food.

On the occasions when Janine did manage to drag her daughter out of bed to eat and go to the bathroom, Beth was like a zombie.

Worried that Adam would assume their romance was over if he didn't hear from Beth, Janine called him to explain what was happening.

"At first it felt like there was stranger in the house," Janine says.

"She acted like a child and her voice changed to that of a five-year-old girl." And Adam was horrified to see his girlfriend like that.

"When she was out of bed all I could do was sit with her. Her babyish voice was strange, she wasn't the same," he says.

The first week it happened, Janine rushed Beth to A&E and she was transferred to Salford Royal hospital for tests.

Luckily, Beth's neuropsychiatrist already had one KLS patient and recognised the symptoms.

The doctor explained that she would sleep for up to 22 hours a day and would be in a trance-like state for the remaining hours. She would also have trouble processing information or understanding what was going on around her.

There was no way of knowing when she would wake from the episode but when she finally did, she would only remember snippets. Worse still, there was no cure.

While her new college friends were busy studying and socialising, Beth was sound asleep at home.

And even awake, in her trance-like state, she didn't want to speak or be spoken to. The light hurt her eyes so the family had to close the curtains and sit in the dark. In the coming months, Beth slept through her 17th birthday and Christmas. She explains: "My family managed to get me out



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of bed at 11pm so we could eat a very late Christmas dinner as a family, but I don't remember a thing."

And for Adam, watching his girlfriend disorientated and childlike was heartbreaking.

"I was starting to wonder whether she would ever be herself again and whether we could be the same couple that we used to be," he says. "But I stayed because I loved her."

When she was not in bed asleep, all Beth could do was eat and stare at children's TV programmes.

"I only remember what people told me, but apparently I was complaining that I was in a dream and didn't know what was real and what was not," she recalls.

Adam and her family also had to be careful what they said because she took everything literally. "Once mum tucked me in to bed and said I looked like a sausage," she says. "Apparently, I got really upset because I thought I was a sausage. The same thing happened if she called me angel."

During the episode Beth needed 24-hour care because her behaviour was so erratic.

"Once I found her fast asleep in an empty bath," Janine says.

By April, Adam was worried the girl he'd fallen for would never come back.

"It occurred to me Beth had been in an episode for over half of our relationship," he says. "And when she wasn't asleep, she was like a different person.

"I couldn't see the same Beth who I'd fallen in love with. I had to keep reminding myself it was still her."

When Beth finally woke from her KLS episode on May 12 this year, she was her bubbly old self. But as far as she knew it was still November 2010.

"Everyone else's lives had moved forward but mine had stayed still, like I was in a time warp," she says. "I didn't remember anything of the past six months."

Adam was relieved to have his girlfriend back. "I was so happy," he says. "I was glad I'd stuck around."

But after just 10 days awake, Beth fell back into a slumber for another three weeks.

"If I don't reply to a Facebook message or text, I worry that my friends think I'm being rude, but I'm actually just asleep," she says. She has even lost friends because some just don't understand what she's going through.

After missing months of her A levels, Beth eventually had to drop out of college.

"I'd worked so hard to get the grades to study A levels so it was really upsetting," she says.

And just when everyone thought she was over the worst, Beth fell asleep again, this time from June 30 until August 7.

"When she's suffering, it's hard not talking to her, I miss her so much," Adam says. In this condition, Beth will often shout and swear if people try to talk to her. "She's normally sweet and polite," Janine says.

"It can be upsetting to see my girl act like that. It's a relief she doesn't remember what she's like."

Adam has now come to accept that KLS may always be a part of their relationship.

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“At first I was always looking for signs of Beth getting ill, but now I can cope with it happening because I know she’ll be the same girl when she finally wakes up,” he says.

“In a way it’s brought us closer, it’s taught us to make the most of the time we do have together.”

Now Beth has started her first year of college again and is hoping she won’t sleep through it this time.

“Adam has been incredible. I’m grateful to have him,” she says.

Her last episode in September lasted only a week, but Adam and her family have absolutely no idea when it will happen again.

For Beth could sleep for weeks, months - or even years.

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