

attention!!

I missed my afternoon classes the other day. But it wasn't my fault. Really. I was a victim of the Nap Attack.

The insidious Nap Attack (otherwise known as the Bag Monster) plays on the college student's chronic lack of sleep. It watches and waits, always eager to drag you from important tasks, homework and deadlines into several hours of blissful unconsciousness.

It inhabits familiar, inanimate objects — like my bed the other day. As I got out of my morning classes and started walking across campus, I could hear my bed calling me: "Amy . . . Amy . . . you're getting verrrrry sleeeeeeeepy. Your eyelids are getting heavy . . . heavy . . ."

My bed is a smooth talker.

As soon as I walked into my dorm room, the spell took effect. When a Nap Attack hits you, resistance is useless.

"I'll just lie down for a minute," I rationalized drowsily. But soon, "I'll-just-lie-down-for-a-minute" turned into "Mmmmmmm, a nap *would* be really nice," which slowly gave way to "Well, I do have a whole hour before my two-o'clock."

Then, of course, it had me. Hook, line and sinker. The Nap Attack moved in for the kill.

"Come on," it intoned hypnotically, "Set the alarm, *yeah*, set the alarm for ten 'til. You'll wake up in *plenty* of time for class, *yeah* — *yeah*, that's it — that's the ticket."

At this point, I was so far gone anything sounded logical. So I set the alarm for a nice, refreshing 45-minute nap. After what seemed like exactly three seconds, the alarm slammed me abruptly back into the land of the living.

But I think snooze buttons were invented with the college student in mind.

Snooze. That was an hour!?!
Snooze. Justfiveminutes . . .
snooze. I don't remember, does he take roll? Snooze. It's too late now anyway — I'll get the notes later.
Zzzzzzzzzzzzz.

And the game is over. Nap Attack: 1. Amy: 0.

It gets me during class, too, especially eight-o'clocks. I'll be sitting there taking notes like a good little scholar, with complete control over my own will and my state of consciousness. And then, little by little, sleepiness will begin to take root. It hangs little weights on my eyelids and blurs my vision. My mind wanders,

my head nods and my notes trail off into inky, ball-point nothingness. Resistance is useless.

And I'm not alone in this affliction; sleepiness is the curse of the college student. You can pick them out in a crowd by the dark circles under their eyes. Between attending classes, studying, holding down a job and attempting to have a social life, getting an adequate amount of sleep becomes almost impossible. That's why college students are so susceptible to spontaneous slumber.

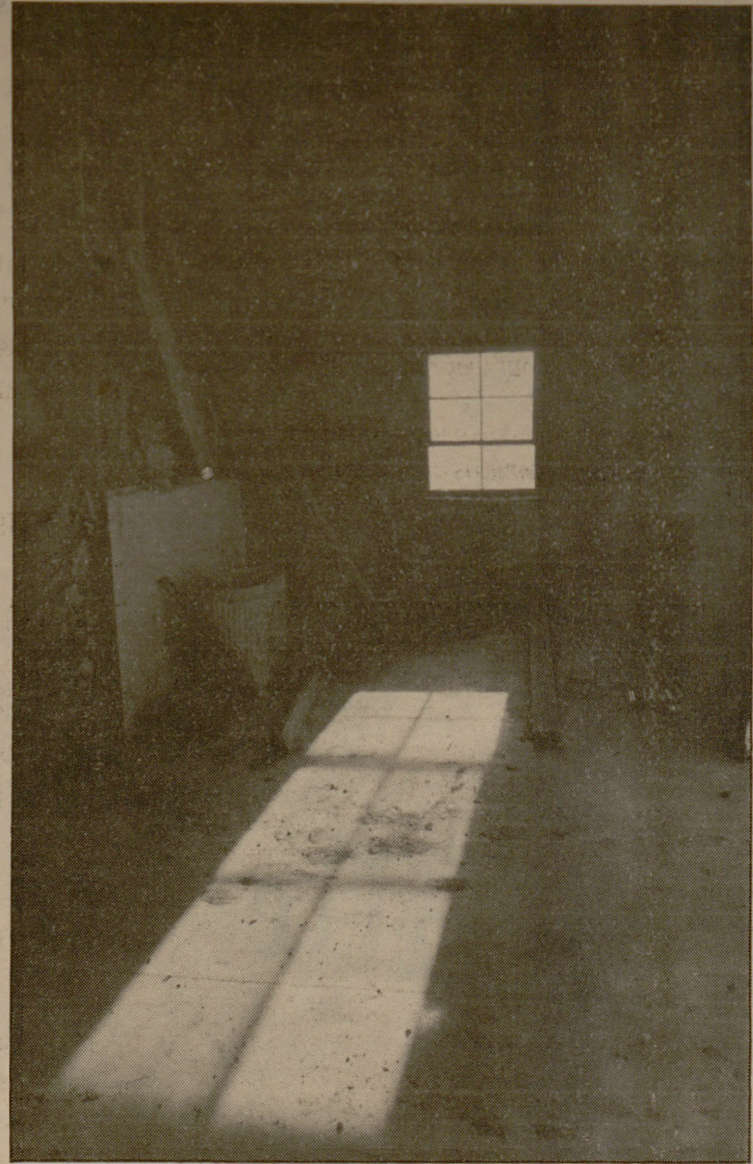
It's kind of amusing if you think about it. Nap Attacks are a challenge in creativity. People crash out everywhere: in class (popular among members of the Corps of Cadets), in the library, on the shuttle bus, in the student center and on park benches. People fall asleep face-down on books and wake up with creases down their noses. I once saw a girl asleep on a couch in the Evans library with a note pinned to her shirt: "Please wake me up for my 8 a.m. final!" I hope someone woke her up.

What's not amusing, however, is falling asleep behind the wheel of a car. When you're trying to make it home on a tank of gas and an hour of sleep, it's all too easy to drift off and wake up face to face with an 18-wheeler. That's when people start looking for ways to fend off the Nap Attack.

Stimulants sometimes work. Coffee, tea and Coke are always popular; some prefer NoDoz or Vivarin. A new cola, Jolt, advertises "all the sugar and twice the caffeine" of the leading soft drink, with an eye, I'm sure, on the college market. If the Food and Drug Administration banned caffeine, higher education would be a lost cause.

I used to pull all-nighters for American literature tests with a guy who sat next to me in class. We'd hole ourselves up in a claustrophobic, closet-like study lounge and dissect Faulkner, Dickinson, Hemingway and life in general. It was easy to stay awake because I wasn't despairing, sitting there all by myself with my illegible notes and several unread novels. I was having a wonderful time sitting there rapping with my friend, ignoring my illegible notes and several unread novels. We didn't get a whole lot of studying done, but we stayed awake, drank a lot of coffee and ate a lot of pizza.

Everyone has a different way to fight sleepiness. Some ways work better than others.



This week's attention!! photo was taken by Jay Stevens, a junior journalism major.

But the human body, however resilient, has limits. And the Nap Attack is patient. Sooner or later, you have to give in.

Resistance is useless.

Amy Couvillon is a junior journalism major and staff writer for The Battalion.

Editor's Note: This attention!! page will be used each week as a forum for you, our readers. We encourage you to submit any original work that would be suitable for publication in At Ease.

Pictures should be black-and-white shots that are unique either in content, angle or technique. Columns, essays or poems should be no longer than 500 words, and should relate to an unusual experience, a new perspective on a common experience, or just about anything else you want to share with our readers. Please don't send us your gripes, complaints, or sermons on heavy-duty issues — send those to the Battalion's Opinion Page.

Don't forget to put your name and phone number on anything you send us. Then just drop it off at the Battalion, Room 216 of the Reed McDonald Building. Be sure to specify that it is for At Ease.