

Her hands and legs shook as her fingers struggled to press the unlock button on her car key remote. There was a small lump that formed in her throat, slightly constricting her already shaky breaths. The cold, hard door handle felt as if it weighed a hundred pounds as she attempted to open the driver's side door. Her eyes glanced over her shoulder at the dark black, full trash bags. The stretched plastic almost burst a hole in the sides of the bag where the contents nearly overflowed and exploded outward, longing to be back with its original owner. She stored three years of memories in trash bags, which was an homage to her feelings about the relationship. Hastily, they were the only fitting containers she could find to stuff his belongings. Shirts, sweatshirts, and other items were teeming the black bags all sitting nicely on the beach house's front porch. At the very front lay a shoebox filled with smaller things she wished to possess longer. Concert tickets, movie stubs, photo booth strips, love letters, apology notes, and all jewelry items were all neatly organized inside. With a forceful good-bye, she turned away.

A piece of her heart shattered, and she almost ran back to the porch to pick up the bags to take back home with her. Yet, she remained strong and walked away. Her hand opened the car door. If she didn't immediately fling herself back into the car, she knew she would have rescued the bags and driven back home. The steering wheel and ignition sat there waiting for her attention, patiently waiting. Her chest trembled as she struggled to take in deep breaths through her constricted airways. Wrapped tightly around the steering wheel were whitened knuckles feeling around the smooth leather. In an attempt to relax, slender fingers turned on the radio and played soothing music from the car's loudspeakers. After a short countdown, she would turn the key and start the vehicle. 5...4...3...2...1...nothing. Once more, and the car finally started. She let out a breath as the car ran in place. Giving the windows a slight roll down for some fresh air, she felt her heart rate start to slow to a more even pace rather than the pounding she had in her chest. A small hand reached for the gear shift while her right foot reached for the break. After giving a little gas from the accelerator, the car picked up speed. At the stop sign at the end of the street, she looked at herself in the rearview mirror. Streams of hot tears rolled down her cheeks, dripping from her chin onto her flushed and heaving chest. Her pale hands wiped the tears away from her eyes and smoothed loose strands of hair away from her face back into her ponytail. She blinked at her reflection, studying her flushed cheeks. For just a moment, she did not want to feel. In through her nose, out from her mouth came deep breaths as her heaving chest ceased to a slow stop. Her eyes were closed as she tried to force all the anguish and grief down. The salty air seeped in from the open windows helped put her into a tranquil state. When her eyes opened, she would stop the tears and continue down the road. Her foot went back onto the accelerator, and she sped up the car. The fear and anxiety melted away, and in its place was unexpected liberation. Pressing harder on the pedal—amping the vehicle

above the average speed limit—pride flooded inward as she conquered her fear of leaving an abruptly ended chapter of life, transforming into an exciting and new attitude.