

## Getting Away

by Corinne Kalet

My head pounded as the sun beat down. Touching my forehead, I winced as my fingers brushed a bump the size of Manhattan. I didn't think I could walk much more.

Seems like it's the only thing left to do, I thought as I looked at my thumb sticking up at the end of my outstretched arm. This road was unfamiliar, the signs along the road were unfamiliar, but the smell of the asphalt baking under the summer sun I knew. I thought it was summer, the air was certainly hot enough for summer.

I couldn't keep walking; I didn't know where I was heading, I just knew I had to keep going. I had to get away from whatever was behind me. A bead of sweat traveled slowly down my spine.

My heart pounded with every car that drove by. Did I really want them to stop? I took a deep breath as a big black pick-up truck slowed to a stop in front of me.

"Where ya headed?" the driver asked from the open window. I had to stand on my toes to see his face. Where was I headed? I didn't know. Do I tell him that? How do I answer?

"That way," I said, yanking my thumb in the direction the truck was headed. The driver smiled a greasy smile and my heart beat sped up. The smile was familiar, I think.

"That way, huh?" His smile stretched wide. "Well, lucky for you I'm heading that way myself. Come on, I'll give you a ride."

Despite the heat, goosebumps broke out all over my body. Was I really going to do this? I nodded my head, as if to tell myself to just go ahead and do it. Maybe I could

get somewhere familiar. Maybe there was a familiar town up ahead and that was why I felt the need to go that way. Maybe something would spark one tiny memory.

I reached up for the door handle, cracked the door open and climbed in. The cab of the truck smelled like cigars and beer. That should have worried me but for some reason it didn't. It was an oddly soothing combination.

"So, what's your name?" the driver asked as he put the truck in gear and pulled back out onto the highway.

My head pounded in warning. Make up something quick! Don't tell this stranger you don't know who you are. "Sandy."

"Well hello, Sandy. I'm Bob. I'd shake hands, but gotta stay safe. Ten and two and all, you know." He chuckled and the sound threw shivers down my back. This was a bad idea. I knew then I needed to get back out of this truck. I pulled on the handle of the door, but it wouldn't budge. Bob noticed. "Going so soon?"

"Um, I'm a bit car sick. Would you mind pulling over for a moment?"

"Car sick already? But we barely got going!" With that, Bob slammed on the gas and I was thrown against the back of my seat. My head pounded even more after the impact. I put my head in my hands, bent over my lap. Think, think, how do I get out of this? I glanced up and that's when I saw it: a heart shaped picture frame hanging from the rearview mirror. It bounced and twirled with the speed of the truck but I could make out enough of the picture that my heart dropped to my stomach. It was Bob and me.

I looked at him, and that greasy smile brought back my memory. My stomach rolled.

"Hi, love. Did you think you were really getting away from me so easily?"

That's when I started to scream.