

TOAST

Makayla Sileo

Most days Grace did not mind that her dad didn't exist. She didn't even seem to mind how her mom was pretending to be one from two states away. But today the heater broke. The house was as irritable as usual, clothed in wallpaper from the '70s, rooms swollen with knick-knacks from her grandmother's uneventful life. When her grandmother passed seven months ago, she left a void, a void that was quickly stuffed with unpaid electricity bills from a log mansion deep in a Missourian forest.

isolation felt inexorable yet somewhat desired. She attended seven schools within three years and didn't gain many friends or memories along the way. After a few years of living life on a roulette wheel, Grace stopped crossing her fingers that her chances would improve. Grace you know this bad events are independent. Just because you get bad every day before doesn't increase your statistical chances of getting good any day after. Grace and her mom were compelled to become friends because they were all each other had. They often bickered in the car because each new city and apartment and job was one more reason to keep distant and that somehow that felt safer. Grace found separation to be the only asset of change.

The less time in one place the less to attach to the less to lose the less to hurt. She sought safety and though her mom worked three jobs at any given moment to provide some sense of this, it never seemed to manifest. As Grace mulled over this thought, she flicked on the bathroom light. She loved her mom. I love my mom. But her mom wasn't there.

Grace's mom found a partially stable job in Oklahoma back in January. So when Grace's grandmother passed in March with lots of land and no other children to tend to it, Grace was promoted to the lonliest of positions. At 16, she was solely entrusted with a million dollar log cabin to live in while her mom remained in Oklahoma. It was an impulsive and desperate decision, but Grace didn't spite her mom for making it. She assumed physical distance wouldn't have that great of an impact; a drop of water into the ocean wasn't as detectable as adding a drop of water into

When morning awoke, Grace could see her breath. Frost licked the floorboards and her eyebrows and it was then that she wondered if her mom had told her what number to call when things broke. Grace buried herself in layers of clothing and went about her morning, assuring she wouldn't miss the bus. She flicked on the bathroom light by habit. Nothing happened. She showered in the familiar but worse cold water, shivered