

The sun came up, waking Sierra. Her eyes adjusted to the light and she rolled over from her left side, facing the window, to her right, to face Jacob. He wasn't there.

Sierra ran her hand over his side of the bed, feeling the softness of their down comforter. His side of the bed is cold; he had been up for a while.

She felt a sudden weight on the end of the bed; a wiggling four-legged body came up to lick Sierra's face. It was Edie, the only happy part of her daily life.

"Good morning!" She cooed to her dog. "Are you ready to go for a walk?" Edie's ears perked up and the tail wagged faster. Sierra got up and quickly changed for their morning stroll.

Her routine felt a little different today and Sierra couldn't quite put her finger on why.

Having been walking for about a half hour, she approached her front door and opened it to see Jacob emerging from the kitchen, a beer in his hand. Sierra wondered if that was his first one this morning.

"Hey! Good morning, what time were you up today?" she asked.

"I dunno. Early." He grunted on his way back to the computer room, not even looking at her.

Sierra had gotten used to this. He had become so cold and distant, and would never let her bring that topic up. His drinking had gotten worse, and her attempts to make him happy have failed. No matter how supportive and caring she was, he would get indignant with her.

Their normal conversation goes something like this:

"Hey Jake! How was your day?"

"It was the same as it always is. Stop asking!"

or

"Hey, honey. While you're up, can you grab me a glass of water?"

Grunt.

"Thank you."

"Whatever."

Whatever. I don't care. Blah, blah, blah. Those are the only words she hears, day in and day out.

Sierra fed Edie her breakfast and she went into the bathroom to wash her face and brush her teeth.

She was on autopilot, but not quite the usual beaten-down autopilot. Her hands were no longer her own, and she had no control over her actions. Instead of putting her face wash and tooth brush back in their place, she put them in a travel bag.

She dug out a duffle bag and her suitcases, forgotten in the back of the closet ever since she had used them to move here with Jacob. Into the duffle bag went the dog's toys and food and the travel bag with her toiletries. In the medium-sized suitcase she placed books, her electronics, and small knick knacks. The large one housed her neatly folded clothes.

Was it crazy Jacob had not at all noticed what was going on? No, not really... He was in the other room, streaming TV shows and drinking beer.

Edie followed Sierra from room to room with her ears up and her head tilted in curiosity. She knew something was happening.

Sierra strengthened her resolve and went to confront Jake. As she tried to gain his attention, she no longer saw the man she first met. Tears spilled over her eyelashes as stream down her cheeks.

“I am leaving you.” Her voice stronger than you would have guessed from looking at the heartache in her face.

No reaction; he doesn't even leave look away from the computer. She would have given anything for some emotion. Anger, joy, even lust. The last year had been much like this, she is just a ghost in the house, unseen, unheard, and unwanted. This decline into nothingness, which initially took her by surprise, had become the norm. Even so, she hadn't expected to be completely ignored now.

“My bags are packed” she said. Why was she still hoping for something to happen? Only a grunt from him.

One hand wrapped around a duffle bag and the other around a leather handle to a large suitcase, Sierra opened the door. She stood in the frame for a minute and looked back at the home they created.

It was warm outside, spring-time, a stark contrast to the atmosphere within. The wind blew her hair around her face and dried up her tears. She could remember the good times, the laughter and play, but she was ready to go.

Taking a deep breath and stepping out, she closed the door behind her. She laid the bags in her car, Edie took the passenger seat. Finally, Sierra got in and never looked back.