

# Chapter I: A New Home

It has been four days since dad and I left San Francisco to move to another city. Funny I don't even know its name. It's somewhere on the East-coast in the good old USA. I am upset and feel lost now that we've been out here for what seems forever. Right now we're on the road in this smoldering, humid heat. This old clunker has a broken air conditioner and dad says we're not financially able to make those repairs right now, so I sweat. No wonder I feel like a grouch. Auntie told my father it would be quicker on plane, but he told her, "oh no, I can't do that! I have important valuables that I don't trust others to transport for me, besides there are some that the airlines won't allow me to use as carry on." Those special collectables of his are hand guns and rifles from his father who served in the Korean War. I mention that we really ought to stop for a while and he replied that it's not far to the city we're heading to, but he said that yesterday also. It kind-of makes me wonder what his idea is of not far. Last month he told me he was interested in a new job he was given in Rhode Island. I'd never paid much attention to the east coast so I really didn't know where Rhode Island is. I figured it had to be an island, but when I looked it up I found out I was wrong. I begged to stay, Auntie also told him that I could stay with her as long as I kept up my grades and held my steady job. I've been working at the soda shop for over a year and my boss said he'd keep me on. My real reasons of course are the same as hers. I'd been raised here in San Fran, and I loved it there. I know my way 8

around, and I have close friends that I love. Dad didn't want to hear it though; he told me that it was for the best if I were to stay with him. Since I didn't have a mother to raise me, now I don't need to lose a father also. For me... well, my Auntie has always been my mother figure and dad well he's just dad. There have been a few glitches in the story of what happened to my mom but apparently soon after I was born my mother left my father as she just disappeared one day. Since then he has never heard from her again. Auntie told me that he was devastated on that day and at first he cared for nothing, not even his own life, so she had to take care of me for the first three months the best way she could. She never married or had any of her own so it was a learning experience. All-in-all, I'd say she did quite well. We've been close as long as I can remember so I think of her as mom even though she always insisted that I call her auntie. After the third month Auntie got fed up with my father's gloomy mood and told him that he had me, and that he was my father, so he had to take care of me. Since then he has taken care of me like a real father. At least I suppose it's what a father should look like. Any way he supplies all my needs and even talks to me once in a while. Oh have I forgotten to say that today is my seventeenth birthday? What a birthday, a trip on the road, and no presents. How gloomy can you get?

"Dad I can't stand this any longer! Today is my birthday and we are still driving to only God knows where! Please can we at least stop at a Wal-Mart on the way so that we can get me a present? Please!" I dragged the last word out hoping to sway him as I begged from the passenger's side of our sedan.