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Why I'm Afraid to Get my License

Growing up is the poisonous apple of my childhood fairytale. When 10 hours of sleep turns into 5, and you're no longer living the fantasy you dreamt of in your younger years. When I was younger, I was used to my parents always doing things for me, from driving me home everyday afterschool, to filling the pantry with my favorite snacks. I lived in the illusion that I didn't have to be afraid of growing up because my parents would be right behind me, but that's not true. Now that I've approached my teenage years, I've gained more freedom, but am drowned with just as many responsibilities. It's a paradox almost because as much as I'm ready to gain independence on my own, that independence is what scares me the most.

As a sophomore in high school, all my friends are starting to drive. Their endless talk of excitement clogs my brain. The thought of driving is exhilarating. To be able to go wherever you want, whenever you choose. The freedom to roll down every window, and let the wind move your hair as it pleases, while you lose yourself in your favorite song. You're the only person to exist at that time and it's like a dream as your brain roams free and your heart explores new avenues. But yet, I still feel a surge of fear when I hear the question of when I'll start driving. There's a transparent rope that drags me back, and its grip is so tight it feels like I might never escape it.

Learning to drive, in a way, opens a door to something other than freedom. It opens a door to possibility. It's the first true step, to me, in growing up, and when we take that first step

on our own, anything is possible. People see driving as a sign of maturity. They treat it as a celebration of moving forward, but sometimes, moving forward is scary; there comes a grey cloud over your head, condensed with every possible fear you have for your future. When I first realized I was scared to get my license, it wasn't because I was afraid to handle the wheel, or because I was afraid I might crash it when I'm younger. I realized that I was afraid to move forward. Driving is like a clock, and when you want to slow down, sometimes the hour hand seems to have moved within a few seconds, and you never have enough time to make a plan before it's right in front of you.

As a person who's always been organized, getting a license seems contradictory at times. The plastic card I get once I've passed the test, with my name, age, and height, can fit into the palm of my hand, and yet sometimes, it seems as heavy as a boulder, and I'm paralyzed with fear, unable to pick it up. That's the way I feel with many things. I can face a conflict, no matter what it may be, with ease as long as I come in with a set way of reaching my goal, but when there is no plan, I'm at more of a loss than I've ever been, and as I've gotten older, I've realized that growing up characterizes this in a lot of ways.

Sometimes, there never really is a plan. Sometimes, you have to face your fears on your own, but I've learned that growing up also means outgrowing things. Outgrowing the fear of walking into school on your first day as an elementary schooler, or that monster under your bed that's existence seemed so real at a time. Even the fear of the unknown. I've learned that getting older doesn't necessarily mean clinging onto your younger years, but adapting to the changes around you, and the first test of that, is getting your driver's license.