



Winter 2012

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## And then she was gone...

by Patricia Monahan



Holidays always bring families together and ours is no exception. This holiday season was the first my daughter, Casey, was not home for Thanksgiving, or her birthday.

Having had enough of Cape Cod winters, Casey moved to Myrtle Beach, South Carolina in January to attend college. It's only a little over 900 miles away. Just a tad further than Cape Cod Community College!

It was hard to let her go. Harder than the first day she got on the school bus, harder than the first day she drove by herself. She has always been independent and I never want to clip her wings, but it has been hard to watch her leave the nest.

Memories of pacing the floor in anticipation of her birth, the week before Christmas, circled my brain as I paced the floors anxiously awaiting her return home 20 years later. She drove the 900+ miles with her friend, Carol, who was heading home to the Boston area for Christmas.

Her loyal, four-legged companion, Cassidy, was also along for the ride. They reached the Cape on Thursday, four days after her birthday, and three days before Christmas.

I was so excited to have them home. Casey and Cassidy are quite the pair and they do everything together. I guess knowing Cassidy moved south with her helped me believe all would be okay and that Casey would never be alone.

Casey had a nice long sleep her first night here. Then she made the rounds and went to dinner with her friends. She dragged me to the gym. She goofed with her brothers. We talked and caught up, and I even spent a night snuggled up on the couch with the dog.

She celebrated Christmas Eve with us, and Christmas with her dad and his girlfriend. She got to catch up with her Nana and her Godmother and Uncle the day after. It was the Merriest of Christmases. Just to be able to see her. Hear her. Hug her. She was really here! And she looked great, healthy and happy.

Her original plan was to stay through New Year's. I was looking forward to another whole weekend to share. But the cold weather started to creep in, and Myrtle Beach and her new life were calling.

Just one week after she arrived home, Casey and I went to dinner... and then she was gone.

I cried, and then I let go.



I will continue to hold on to her love, and I will continue to keep letting go. She is living her life her way, and I am very proud of the woman she is becoming.

As the cold wind blows outside my window, I realize Casey does have a point about heading toward warmer climates. I have decided to take the drive to Myrtle Beach in March to spend my birthday with her... and then I will be gone.

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