

A street scene at dusk or dawn. The sky is a mix of light blue and pink. On the left, there are several tall palm trees and a row of multi-story buildings with balconies. A traffic light is visible on the left, showing a red light. In the center, a car is driving towards the viewer. On the right, another traffic light is visible, showing a red light and a blue sign with a white arrow pointing left. The overall atmosphere is calm and urban.

# Beach City Breakup

Juliana Harvard

*It Happened in Riverdale, Book 4*

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**It Happened in Riverdale, Volume 4**

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BEACH CITY BREAKUP

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Written by Juliana Harvard.

Also by Juliana Harvard

**It Happened in Riverdale**

It Happened in Riverdale

November Rain

That Morgan Boy

Beach City Breakup

*To the Beach City Youth Congress of April 1963*



## Prologue

AFTER ALLEN AND JULIE'S first breakup in the summer of 1961, they "wasted" an entire school year making each other miserable, as evidenced by the esoteric short stories Julie wrote during that time. They got back together in the summer of 1962 for a brief time. Then Allen went away to boarding school while Julie stayed at Highview Academy. Their "long-distance relationship" worked—sort of—until the spring of 1963.

The setting is a Christian youth gathering in Beach City in April 1963 where Allen and Julie break up for the second time. During this special weekend, Julie meets the "marvelous" Bill Johnson who becomes a good friend, but never quite a boyfriend, though she always wished he would be.



## What's the Good of My Caring?

*INSPIRED BY THE SONG, "Pris'ner of Love," this second-person essay is in obvious retrospection of the summer 1961 events portrayed in the previous book, That Morgan Boy (It Happened in Riverdale, Book 3).*

"Someone that I belong to  
Doesn't belong to me,  
Someone who can't be faithful  
Knows that I have to be.  
Wonder if I am wrong to  
Give him my loyalty..."

"Alone from night to night you'll find me,  
Too weak to break the chains that bind me,  
I need no shackles to remind me  
I'm just a pris'ner of love..."

"What's the good of my caring?..."

Well, what *is* the use of my caring? Not that I *don't* care. Because I *do*. I'm in love with him. That's pretty blunt, but this has to be straight to the point.

I remember our last date—it was in June—and the last time he held my hand, the last time we kissed goodnight. Not that it's important now. But a girl can never quite forget those things—those *little* things. The way he said your name, the look from across a crowded room that only you can understand.

If your guy moves to Timbuktu or some place else way far away, it might be easier to take. You'll come to your senses—sometimes—and realize you *had* to give him up. Sure, you'll be lonely, and some time after he's been gone awhile you'll wake up in the middle of the night and realize—it'll hit you suddenly—he's gone! But always, down deep inside, will be that secret hope that someday, somewhere, somehow you'll meet and it'll happen all over again.

But the guy's *not* gone—not even moved across town. One day you're a happy couple, living, loving, and sharing your dreams. Then comes that trip to the beach and poof!—everything ends. Not just like that, of course. It takes a while for him to realize that you were a little upset over the quarrel of two days ago and you lost your head and went on the moonlight walk that night with another fellow. But when it soaks in, whamoo!—out comes all the pent-up emotions and fancy words and poetry you never dreamed he had in him! A couple days later, you realize how foolish you were ever to do such a thing as you did at the beach. But *then* it's too late, 'cause your guy's on his way to Arizona with his folks. But you just keep your fingers crossed that he'll still "love" you when he gets back and that he won't run into his old girlfriend in Arizona.

He *said* he'd write. So you wait. And wait. And when nothing comes 'cept a little ol' card—and he didn't even sign it "With love"—you get suspicious. Of course, he calls you the minute he gets home and you see him the day after that (when he's all rested up from the trip) but he seems sort of cold. And the day after that, you find out why.

Oh, the philosophical language! But since you can be an honest thinker when you have to be, you realize it's all true. But why, oh, why, must you be so stubborn and end it with a fight? You don't *want* to quarrel with him, really. Well, when he finally admits he held hands with his old girlfriend in Arizona, it's like a dagger, although you expected it. Everything seems so unreal—like a nightmare you're struggling to wake up from. Your head knows, but your heart won't believe that *he's gone!*

Well, of course, all this happens just in time for the weekend campout in the mountains, and just in time for the Riverdale County Fair, and just in time for the hayride you didn't go on together. You're surprised because not too many people ask questions. Maybe they suspected all along. Or maybe they don't realize what has happened because, after all, you and he *did* agree to remain "friends" after you broke up. Now you wonder if that was such a wise decision after all. He doesn't act like you're *his* friend. Maybe others can't see through his teasing, but *you* can see his subtle insults aimed at you and you can *feel* the hurt, down deep inside, where it *really* hurts. Yet, despite this, you still love him. It's a yearning impulse, 'way down deep inside of you.

And here you sit, all alone, on a Saturday night. The summer moon is full, and a soft breeze is astir. You remember an old song, a song you learned from him....

"What good is the moonlight,  
The silvery moonlight that shines above?  
I walk with my shadow, I talk with my echo,  
But where is the one I love?"  
And a poem he sent in a letter once....  
"As I sit here without you, my darling,  
I think of the time when we met—  
Now I'd nestle in silence beside you,  
And all but your presence forget...."

Where *is* he now? Wake up!, you tell yourself, and stop being such a fool! He probably has forgotten *you* even exist. You *can't* go on carrying a torch for *him* the rest of your life.

You remember the Riverdale County Fair. Hope? So he took you on a couple of rides just for kicks. So you saw the puppet show together. So he held your hand and called you "Sweetheart" and said, "I love you." So *what?* It was all so mechanical. When the Fair was over, when the festivities were gone, so was his artificial affection. And you see how he was such a, a, well, you don't want to *say* he's a hypocrite, but you can't think of a milder word at the moment.

Oh, he was a pretty good guy. *Pretty* good? You thought he was the *ideal*, and that no one you *know* of could *ever* compare with him. And you still feel that way. But you *must* give him up; you can't hold on to him—even in your memory.

"Though I'll cry when he's gone,  
I won't die—I'll live on...."

You'll *live* on? You'll exist. Everywhere you go, everything you do, you're reminded of him, for you went everywhere, did everything—together. His hair, his voice, his blue, blue eyes belong to the boy you once knew and loved. But he's not the same—and you know he never can be. You see him as he talks and laughs with the pretty girls he once never knew existed. And you watch as he passes, scarcely glancing at *you*, let alone saying "Hi."

A heart cannot always respond in love to cold indifference and careless insults. Your love was once warm and, oh, so true. But you were hurt—terribly hurt. Time will heal the wounded heart—eventually. But, always, there will be a *tiny* scar. For a girl can never quite forget....





## Snow-Fire

*ANOTHER SHORT STORY attempts to express a mysterious universal truth, loosely based on actual events that seem to have taken place in the winter of 1961-62, but altered with a liberal amount of artistic license.*

The sky was gray, a monotonous dull gray, and gradually growing darker and darker. Ominous black clouds hovered close to the horizon and shut out the sun. The room was chilly yet filled with a stuffy stickiness that always precedes a storm. It was the kind of day that made one want to sleep yet feel very restless.

Allen sat alone in the twilight and gazed out the window. As the lights of the city flickered on, the world seemed to awaken. The clouds held back their burden no longer, and soon the cars splashed in the rain on the streets of Riverdale. It was a change from the gray day, and now Allen stretched every muscle and drew in a deep breath.

Julie, too, sat alone, her dark curls hanging loosely around her face. She glanced up, watching the clock's hands moving slowly upward. Then she looked out the window into the damp blackness.

"Grandpa," she called, "I've got your keys." Then, throwing on a scarf, she dashed out into the night.

Dr. Emory's house was warm and the fireplace cheery and a most welcome destination. Allen's friends were already gathered in the luxurious living room when he arrived. All seemed to be engaged in gay conversation as they waited for the party to begin.

As Allen's gaze wandered across the room, it fell on Julie. She sat, lovely and quiet, with a sort of forlorn look. But that held no meaning for Allen. He had known her long enough to almost read her mind. He knew she waited only for one thing—him. Yes, there *was* Victor. But he hadn't been around for quite a while. Allen believed that the dim vision of Victor had almost faded from Julie's mind.

At once her eyes met his across the crowded room, and in a moment he was by her side. Long ago, Allen and Julie were childhood sweethearts. There were the silly giggles and the little love notes and the "Can I carry your books?" that are part of every teenage romance. But like a beautiful and tender wild rose, young and first love has an end.

Now a boy's awkward limbs were stretching into adulthood, and the figure of a tiny young woman sat in an overstuffed chair. Allen and Julie had both matured and were maturing. But was there a chance that even now a new and deeper love would flourish? Surely Julie could not, or would not, forget Victor so soon.

But, Allen reasoned, has she not responded favorably to my every move? Julie was not the kind of girl to toss a man's heart about like a ship at sea. Her affections were strong. Only with her soft lips had she not expressed, "I still love you, Allen."

The empty night faded soon into the morning, lifeless as the morning before—a blank gray day pulled from eternity. There was the usual work to be done, the normal routine to follow. Mechanically as the old clock's hands that whirled around its face, the day sped on with only a moment of gold and pink fire to separate the pale skies from the ebony night.

Suddenly Julie looked into Allen's face. Twenty-four hours ago he had also been by her side and then vanished into the night. She gazed now into his deep blue eyes.

She saw a smiling face, turned not to her, but to Sylvia. That's the way it had been for such a long time. Allen did not change so quickly. Sylvia was beautiful, there was no doubt. Yet, had not Allen shown every kindness to Julie, and had he not held her hand so delicately and with such meaning?

Allen saw now in her eyes an image of a girl, a vision which could not readily fade. Her lips were fire, and he resisted no longer. Julie felt she had been fashioned for Allen's arms. Perhaps, of course, it was a rich and lovely friendship and nothing more. Perhaps it was. Perhaps it wasn't.

For only a moment they lingered in the embrace. Then whispering, “Goodbye, Julie,” Allen disappeared into the gray night.

Morning came again, as mornings will do, dry and clear; and it was another workday. Fate had arranged for Allen and Julie to share the same means of transportation to and from their daily labors in another place, another time...

This morning, for the first time in a week, they could see the sun above the eastern horizon. The soft hexagonal flakes had fallen silently from the night skies, and now the city was a world of white. Happiness reigned in everyone’s heart, especially in Allen’s and Julie’s. Oh, the wonder, the romance, the ecstasy of it all!

In Highview, where Allen and Julie were headed, the light snow had melted in the California sunshine; but the grass was green, and the skies were blue. Yes, everything had returned to the normal way of life.

The day was passing quickly, and the noon whistle blew. It found Allen at the height of happiness, talking to the lovely little miss who had stolen his young heart. And Julie was gay, coquettishly smiling at the boy beside her. Allen’s and Julie’s eyes met once across the crowded hall—for Allen and Sylvia stood not far from Victor and Julie—and both seemed to say, “Thanks for playing my little game. Goodbye, it was great fun.”



## The Blue Letter

*JULIE WROTE THIS SHORT story during the time she was on vacation with Momma and Grandpa Philip, and Bob Miller was house sitting in their Riverdale house in the summer of 1962. It was a self-fulfilling prophecy.*

The night was cool and the breeze refreshing after the scorching summer day. The ebony sky was filled with stars, and an August moon hung low above the mountain. Even the elm trees seemed to whisper, and the nightbird's lone cry could be heard. To Bob, everything was perfect. Soft music—their song—was coming from the FM set, and Sandra was by his side.

For a long while, neither of them had spoken. Now her sweet voice sharpened Bob's senses. "Bob?" she said. "Are you happy?"

"Mí cheré!" He spoke almost in rebuke as he hugged her close. "What a question. Of course I'm happy."

"I'm glad. You deserve to be happy."

"But I don't deserve anyone as wonderful as you." He caressed her soft cheek lightly.

"Bob?" This time her voice carried a light tone of worry.

"Yes?" He caressed her other cheek.

"There's something that's been bothering me. It's—well—another person. And since it *is* a best friend—well, someone will be hurt, I know."

A bolt of fear shot through him, but his voice was steady. "Raymond."

"Raymond?" She chuckled. "You know better than that, silly. Raymond means nothing to me now."

"Then—then who?"

"I was just thinking of Julie."

"Oh." Now the stillness grew thick.

"When will she be home, Bob?"

"I—I don't know," he said nervously.

"Tomorrow? That's what she said in her letter." She paused. "Bob, I shouldn't—" But he stopped her protest as his lips touched hers. The kiss was long and gentle....

In the wee hours of the morning, Bob lay alone in his bed, awake. In the dim glow of the streetlight that shone through the window, he saw his wallet where he had left it open several hours before. There was Sandra, lovely Sandra. Close by, there was another picture, a familiar one—that of Julie. "Just thinking of Julie—thinking of Julie—Julie—Julie—" The words kept ringing through his mind. What *would* happen when she got home? What about Sandra? This *couldn't* go on forever. Only a few more hours, and Bob dreaded the unknown with every agonizing moment that passed.

But day broke too soon. The rooster up the street crowed, and the shrill sound of Bob's alarm clock pierced the quietness. Heavily, he dragged himself out of bed to shave and dress. Mechanically, he opened the refrigerator—Julie's refrigerator—to set out the milk. He arranged his usual plate, glass, and spoon, and dropped a slice of bread into the toaster. He opened the refrigerator again and finally reached for a cold dish of peaches. For a fleeting moment, he longed for one of Julie's home-cooked meals. It had been so long—almost three weeks. But then, didn't Sandra fix dinner each night and rub his sunburned shoulders with lotion—just like Julie used to do?

After brushing his teeth and rinsing his dishes, he sat down in the living room to read the newspaper. But the words seemed to just bounce back off his eyelids. Was he really in love with Sandra? She seemed to be everything a man like Bob

could want, fitting into his life like the long-lost piece of a jigsaw puzzle. But there was Julie—young, pretty, innocent. She, too, needed to be loved.

Bob tossed the paper aside and stalked out to get the mail—more from habit than anything. Light bill, grocery ads, and a square blue envelope addressed to Julie. He recognized the stationery, the postmark, and the return address as the same as five other letters that lay waiting on the kitchen table for Julie. He supposed now that he should have sent Julie's mail to her at her cousin's, but if it had been important— Suddenly Bob stopped. In a flash, he drew the connections. There had been that long-distance phone call last week from Escondido. It had just been Allen, an old school chum of hers, asking for Julie's address. Bob thought nothing about it then. Now he wondered why Allen would write to Julie.

The phone was ringing and Bob hurried on in. His heart pounded at the sound of the voice on the other end of the line.

"Hi, Bob! It's me—I'm back."

"Julie! Where are you?" His voice trembled with excitement.

"Downtown—wanted to do a little shopping before I came home. But I thought I'd call," she told him. "Don't worry; I'll be okay—I'm with a friend. See you after a while."

A friend—Sandra! Quickly he dialed her number. It was all happening too fast. "Sandra! Can you come over right away?"

"What's wrong, Bob?" She sensed his uneasiness.

"I—I'll explain later. Just—can you come?"

"Yes—yes, I'll be right over." And she was gone.

At once Bob realized what a foolish thing he had done. He could see it now—Julie coming home, unsuspecting, and finding another woman—her best friend—in her own house with Bob! Suddenly he knew what he was going to do.

"Sandra!" he grasped her shoulders as she came in the door. "We can't go on like this!"

"Bob! Will you please tell me what's going on?" She pushed him away gently.

"Julie's in town!"

"Oh?" Bob thought Sandra's reaction was a sort of giggle, but he wasn't sure. "So now what?"

"Sandra." His voice was softer and almost calm. "We must tell her—she'll be home in just a while. I have to confess, Sandra, I have to!"

Sandra was silent. She could see the guilt written in his eyes. "You're still in love with her, aren't you, Bob?"

Bob drew a long, deep breath. "No, Sandra. I'm not in love with Julie." He paused. "But I can't let her be hurt."

"She'd probably go back to Allen," Sandra continued. "And, unless he's changed a lot, he wouldn't treat her right."

"Somehow," Bob said, not seeming to hear Sandra at all, "somehow, things will work out." Then he added in almost a whisper, "They've *got* to."

Just then they heard Julie's voice outside. "Wait a minute," she was saying. "I've got to think of some way to tell Bob. He doesn't know you brought me home. He just doesn't know about—us."

"Better now than later, darling," was the masculine-voice reply. "Just tell him." Then there was the sound of a tender kiss.

In a moment the kitchen door opened. "Well, hi, Sandra! Been taking good care of my boy?" were Julie's first words as she patted Bob playfully on the back and laughed gaily. Bob and Sandra glanced at each other; they both knew what had happened. Then, with a wry smile Julie said, "Bob, you remember Allen, don't you? He uses blue stationery."





## So Short Was the Summer

*ALLEN AND JULIE'S SUMMER* 1962 reconciliation was cut short by Allen's leaving Riverdale—and Highview—to attend boarding school his junior year at San Margo Academy, while Julie returned as a senior to Highview Academy.

The late afternoon sun was slowly making its way down toward the western hills as the Macintoshes' station wagon sped silently over the winding highway, its destination San Margo Academy in Escondido. The lively conversation they had started out with had dwindled, and now hardly anyone spoke except for restless, young third-grader Kenny Macintosh who was constantly popping up with something new. Thirteen-year-old Peter was a little quieter yet a little fidgety, half filled with the boredom of such a long drive and half filled with anticipation to see his big brother's new school.

Pastor Macintosh, who sat in the back seat with the two boys, spoke occasionally as he pondered deeply many, many thoughts and ideas about many, many things. Mrs. Macintosh had been talking to the girl in the front seat beside her. But now, after she had yawned several times, she nodded her head. She would doze until the car would go over a bump and wake her up.

Julie Scott, the girl in the front seat, sat reflecting on the boy who sat beside her at the wheel. And of just what the future held. Frequently, she stole a glance at him as she remembered some particular event in their lives. But handsome Allen Macintosh was still, his eyes glued to the road ahead and his face reflecting none of the emotion he might have felt.

*I wish it were this time next year, Peter thought, and I'd be on my way to San Margo, too, and have a big brother who's a Senior. I sure hope I can work there all summer like Allen did. Only I'll be there for four years instead of just two. But I know I won't get as homesick as Allen did. 'Course, maybe he had a little special reason. Anyway, I'd come home for the Riverdale County Fair in August and take my girlfriend, if I even have one then. Boy, I can't wait until next June when I'll graduate from eighth grade!*

"Ooh!" Mrs. Macintosh gave a little squeal of surprise, waking up as Allen turned a corner rather sharply.

"Good morning, Mom!" Allen teased, chuckling.

"Take it easy!" she said good-naturedly as she yawned again. Well, being the mother of three boys, she got tired now and then. Especially after seeing that Allen got everything all ready for school. Motherhood and marriage. It was a wonderful thing when two people were so very much in love as she and Pastor Macintosh.

She thought of two other young people, Julie's best friend Sandra Lee and Bob Miller, so very much in love and planning on marriage. *How had they met, anyway? Ah, yes, Bob had dated Julie when his best friend Raymond Pierce was going with Sandra. Then Julie had gone on her vacation, and that's when Bob and Sandra had fallen in love.*

Mrs. Macintosh had watched with interest what would take place. She knew Allen had been writing to Julie, but what now? *Would her son and this girl ever make up from the fight that they had carried on for ten long months?* Allen owed it mostly to Bob and Sandra who talked to Julie trying to convince her he was really sorry. It had taken nearly two months, but now everybody was happy.

"Kenny, can't you *ever* stop asking questions?" Allen directed this at his little brother.

"But, Allen, I just wanted to know—"

"Okay, okay. Yes, this winding old road will take us to San Margo and it's only a few miles now. And that *was* the Elkfair City limits we just passed in and out of. And, yes,"—he sighed—"tonight is the last time I'll see Julie for quite a while."

"Boy, Allen," Kenny said in all seriousness, "I'll bet you'll sure miss her!"

Allen's pretend gruffness melted into a tender smile as he looked for a moment at Julie. "I sure will, Kenny!" he breathed.

Julie felt a little strange as she walked into the boys' dormitory with the Macintoshes as they helped Allen in with his things. Nothing but boys swarming around every place! And *they* hadn't failed to notice that a girl was actually in their dorm. I mean, everybody knows about San Margo's rules. No females ever came into the boys' dorm besides mothers, sisters, and properly chaperoned sweethearts. But Julie soon got used to all the staring. She even went to see Allen's room before they all went over to supper in the school cafeteria.

Eating in silence, Julie observed a lot in between returning Allen's smiles from across the table. She couldn't help but notice the many pretty girls wandering here and there. *So this is San Margo—Allen's school*, she thought. *It's so different from Highview. I hope he's happy here.*

But she was distracted by a persistent giggle of a blonde nearby—*why does Allen have to go here, anyway? We can't be in love. He'll date others, I know, even though he said he didn't want to. And this'll never last. It can't—*

She had a hard time swallowing that last bite of potato. Dousing it down with milk, she made one last silent resolve: "But whatever happens, I'm going to accept it. Please, dear God, help me accept it." Then, "I wonder if he'll write."

When the meal was over, Julie and the Macintoshes went back to the dorm to make sure Allen had everything. Once in the room, Pastor Macintosh suggested, "Let's have a word of prayer before we leave." And so they did.

Allen walked out to the car with Julie. *Pretty girl*, he thought. *I love her so much. I hope she knows there'll never be anyone else to ever take her place—in my heart. I'm going to write to her at least once a week. Our romance will last—I know it will. God has been so good to us both. He'll keep us together.*

At the car, Allen kissed his dad and mom goodbye. "Your turn!" he teased, turning to Julie. She blushed. "I sure wish I could," he whispered.

The rest of the Macintosh family were in the station wagon ready to go, and Allen and Julie stood beside the door saying goodbye. Pastor Macintosh looked at them tenderly with a soft smile on his lips. *They are good kids*, he thought. *Not like the everyday run of teenagers. They are sensible and good Christians. They will make it all right in life. I am proud of them.*

The sun had set; the gold and crimson faded from the skies. Some stars were already coming out, but it was not yet dark. In the deepening twilight, a strange quietness prevailed. Julie's soft brown eyes met Allen's. And their thoughts penetrated across the dusky silence.

It had been two years ago when they first met and soon afterward fell in love. It was young and foolish first love. They had had a year together at Highview Academy before something spoiled their romance. Neither of them liked to think about it. They had known each other two years now, but they had filled half of that time with hatred for each other, each trying to hurt the other in the cruelest ways possible.

That was last year at Highview. Circumstances forced them to go to school together, to see each other every day, enduring the torture they caused but didn't really want. For ten months this had gone on until Bob Miller came along. At first Allen hadn't really cared. But once he was at San Margo, away from home and away from Julie, he realized how much he really cared. Why, he hadn't gone without seeing Julie for more than a week or two since they had known each other. And an entire summer was passing!

But God had sent a miracle. And right now it didn't matter to Allen and Julie *how* it had happened—just that it *did* happen. Once again they fell in love—this time a God-centered love—forgiving and forgetting the unpleasant past. Maybe their love *wouldn't* last; but if it didn't, they would know that God had something far better in mind for both of them. Maybe it *would* last, standing the test of distance and time. And if it did, they would know for sure that God meant for them to be together.

Two years from now, what would happen? Allen and Julie both would be in college. They had shared dreams of going to college with Bob and Sandra, and then maybe someday the four of them— But that was up to God. One year from now, would they still be in love? Only time could tell.

Now, Allen's deep blue eyes, also a little moist, looked for a long moment into Julie's. *My sweetheart*, he thought. *You'll always be my only sweetheart*. He touched her hand lightly, then took it in his own for a quick second. "I'll write you—I promise!" he said.

Julie got into the car and looked up at him through the open window. "Goodbye for now, Allen," she said.

"It won't be too long, sweetheart," he whispered. "Remember, I love you."

Julie smiled gently as the station wagon pulled away. Looking back, she saw Allen waving slowly. She waved back. For a long moment, he watched the car until it had disappeared into the darkness. Then he turned and walked thoughtfully back to the dorm.

In the car, Pastor Macintosh had turned on the radio to an "easy listening" AM-FM station, and soft music flooded the air. Julie just realized how tired she really was, and she settled back and closed her eyes. But just before sleep came, her thoughts expressed the mixed emotions she felt:

*I left him standing there that night,  
The night we had to say goodbye.  
I think I saw a little tear  
Just in the corner of his eye.*

*He kissed his mom goodbye, and then  
He looked so tenderly at me.  
And with our eyes we kissed goodbye,  
'Cause that's the way it had to be.*

*Then for a second, very brief,  
He gave my hand a little squeeze  
As if to say, "I'll miss you, dear,  
But you will write me, won't you—please!"*

*I still can see him standing there...  
In my eyes, too, I felt the tears.  
I heard him whisper, "I love you,"  
And then, "Sweetheart, just two more years."*

*For neither time nor circumstance  
Nor distance, great though it may be,  
Is greater than the love we share—  
My love for him, his love for me.*

*And someday he'll be home again;  
Somehow the months will pass away,  
And somewhere I'll be by his side,  
I know—somewhere, somehow, someday.*





## Why Men Don't Write

*AN ESSAY EXPLORES THE reasons boyfriends who are away from home may not write to their faithful girlfriends who are waiting for them and their letters. Written when Julie is spending her senior year (1962-63) at the day school, Highview Academy, while Allen is away at San Margo Academy, a boarding school.*

It is a well-known fact that, in our day and age, the male specimens of the human race are not as chivalrous as they once were. What fellow would, for example, risk his very life for a trivial request from his ladylove, as did the knights of old? In fact, what percentage of fellows even stands nowadays when a lady enters the room?

Granted, there are a few polite men left in the world. And granted, too, that one can go to extremes. But even the most mannerly of men—the kind that help you on with your coat, open the door for you, hold the drinking fountain, and so forth, when he is with you—transport him to some far-off-distant place and see how often you get a letter. Let him pledge his undying love to you, listen to him promise that he'll try to write every day but *at least* twice a week, then kiss him goodbye and wait by your mailbox and count the days.

Don't be *too* skeptical at first. It will take a little while for him to find excuses. But he will find them. The most common excuse of all is "too busy," which may be quite true, especially if he is working. You may reason, *I am just as busy as he is and I can find time to write*. This may be true. But perhaps he just hasn't learned to budget his time like you have. Give him a chance. Maybe even make little suggestions on how to save time. And, if he really would like to write, he will appreciate you for it.

Next, or even equally common, is "Honey, I'm just not any letter-writer." It tempts you to sigh in disgust and say, "Well, I don't care how poor your grammar is or how sloppy your handwriting is—at least it's from you." Well, go ahead and say it. Just don't sigh in disgust—smile sweetly and speak softly, and he'll soon give up *that* excuse.

A weaker excuse is the old story of unexpectedly running out of stamps, or the government raised the price of stamps. Here you must consider his budget. And the number of friends that he could have borrowed a stamp from. Considering these factors, you can make your decision, which will probably not be too rash—unless he makes it a habit. Then it is your duty to find out what else he spends his money on unnecessarily besides stamps.

Needless to say, the content and length of his letters play an important role. Sometimes a ten-page letter once in two weeks can make up for all those days the mailman disappointed you—and it really isn't anything to complain about! But a one-page letter every two weeks or less frequent—better start reviewing the contents.

Most men carry their feelings on the surface in letters. But many more do not. It is important to consider the time, place, circumstances, and probable mood when he wrote the letter. If you know him well, this is an important factor to consider—and it helps—when deciding how much stock to put into what he says.

Some men might be unwittingly punishing themselves. He feels he thinks about you too much for his own good, and writing frequent letters doesn't help. So he will bury himself in some other interest to sort of balance things. Whether this is always good is a matter to be decided when the particular circumstance arises. Whatever it may be, you must handle it with empathy.

A sometimes not easily realized reason is the simple fact that writing and receiving letters just doesn't mean as much to a fellow as it does to a girl. Some say, "Letters are the staff of life to a girl in love." And to paraphrase the old familiar proverb, "Letters aren't everything—but they sure help!"

And, of course, there's always the foreboding reason that no girl likes to accept. Love cannot grow with a lack of association, be it only the togetherness of postal communication. This simple law along with the all-too-obvious symptom of

“letters fewer and farther between” is the basis of many a heartbreak, for neither man nor woman can be isolated for long in one little world.

There is one advantage in it happening like this; that is the fact that “the other woman” and your former loved one are not near enough for you to see them together every day and be tortured with the silent agony that only reminiscent jealousy knows. Instead, it is only your imagined image of her that haunts you far into the night.

Of course, there are exceptions to every rule; and one could expostulate perhaps for volumes on the varied circumstances and personalities involved in every case. The brevity of this simple essay has considered only the basic, obviously concluded reasons for the thinking behind the actions pertaining to the letter-writing habits of the male homo sapiens.



## Beach City Arrival

SOMETHING WAS WRONG, dreadfully wrong; Julie could feel it in the very air. *Why hadn't Allen written?* Too busy, of course, he would say. And it was true. With Allen working at the press every spare moment and being president of several organizations at San Margo Academy, it was hard for him to keep up correspondence with parents, a brother, and a sweetheart a hundred miles away. But he had found time before. *Those rumors of those other girls—were they true? And what if they were? Must that be the end of Allen and Julie's love? Was she still in love? Why did she feel this creeping, cold complacency?*



“DON'T YOU HOPE HE'S there!” an excited voice intruded.

“Huh?” Julie looked around. “Oh, I guess.”

“Well, come on,” urged her best friend Sandra, “let's get back to the building; it's almost time for supper.”

Julie was fully aware of her surroundings now. Earlier that afternoon, the young people and the minister's wife, Mrs. Macintosh, had arrived at Beach City for the Youth Congress of the southwestern states. Julie, Sandra, and Allen's brother Peter had walked along the beach for a while. Now they saw the huge Sports Arena and adjacent municipal auditorium where they held the meetings and served the meals. And the people! Surely there were hundreds of young people who had come for association and inspiration.

Sandra scanned the crowds for a glimpse of Bob, her husband-to-be in just three summers. Sandra could not understand why Julie was not as excited to see Allen. In fact, neither could Julie.

“Julie!” called her young sister-like friend Darlene, “take your meal ticket. Meet you guys after the meeting; I'll be with Sandy.” And, as she dashed away, Julie unconsciously watched Darlene's ponytail bob through the crowd. At that instant, she realized a presence—very near.

“Hi, there, Julie.” It was an old, soft, familiar voice at her ear.

“Allen!” she *almost* whispered ecstatically, not being able to not feel just a little delighted. But with a pre-determination to play the cool sophisticate—just until she was sure of him—she merely smiled with a brief, “Hello, how are you?”

During supper, everything seemed to be just perfect. Bob, who had come 600 miles from college that day, had found Sandra; and now they were inseparable. But deep inside Allen was tense, terribly tense. *Peter hadn't meant to tell him about Bill Johnson, the tall, dark, handsome stranger from Garden Grove; but somehow it had slipped. Would Julie tell him? If not, was he to bring it up? Just how did she feel, anyway?*

Everyone in Riverdale took it for granted that Allen and Julie would be together. They had always been together, it seemed. Now they sat inside the Sports Arena, in the crowd, and took in the bigness of it all. Choirs and vocal groups from at least ten schools and colleges had joined on this Easter weekend in one mass choir; and now their 700 voices blended in a rapturous melody. *This is as the old days*, Julie thought. *Everything will be all right now*. Her mind drifted in reminiscence.

It had been so long ago, it seemed, when they first met. She had been a shy, lonely girl and he, a young confused teenager needing the social, mental, and spiritual security that only she could give him. She remembered the November rain, encroaching upon their very first date, and the weeks after that as he had grown to like her more and more. There had been Christmas Eve, the star, the rustic stone fireplace, the beautiful white Bible, and the way he had first whispered, “I love you, Julie.” And there had been so many other *little* things that only young and foolish first love treasures—the valentine and chocolates, the orchid, so pale and delicate, the walks in the park, the Riverdale Valley sunsets, the summer—but there it had ended.

“I want to move,” Allen said.

“What?” asked Julie.

“That little fellow behind us keeps kicking my chair. Let's move up one row.”

Getting settled once more, Julie tried to remember how it had happened. There had been the quarrel, and she had gone out with the new guy Victor who came to town—for revenge—and the hurt in Allen's heart that sultry July day. *But hadn't it started before that, long before?* She only knew that what she had once thought was love in Allen's young and foolish heart soon had turned to bitterness and downright hate that made life for her so cruel. The hands that had once held hers so tenderly all those times now slapped her face without mercy for little or no reason at all. The kind voice that had once praised her virtues was now filled with scathing remarks intended for the worst kind of reputation. For ten long months she had endured it, always hoping, down deep inside, to someday win back Allen's love. Julie shivered now.

“It *is* a little chilly in here, I guess,” Allen said, gently placing Julie's sweater on her shoulders.

“Thank you.” Julie smiled warmly.

Allen looked at her for a long moment. *My Julie! So delicately pretty in her own little way*. He knew he could never forget her—with her patience, her endurance, and her loyalty. Nothing but a diabolical instinct could have made him so thoughtless and mean. He had hurt her—dreadfully—and he knew he must never hurt her again.

He thought of Bob, Julie's “big brother.” He was so good to her. Allen knew she might not have ever come back to him if it hadn't been for Bob that week of the Riverdale County Fair last August. But she *had* come back and forgiven him like an angel. How could he ever give reign to his doubts that she really loved him—even now?

Julie returned Allen's wink with a sweet smile as she breathed deeply. For such a long time last fall, she had been so unsure of herself if she really was in love. With Allen being a hundred miles away at school, surely it wouldn't—it couldn't—last forever. But the letters, filled with love, had come often until Julie knew she must believe what was true. Allen *had* changed from the heartless glob of inhumanity to a gentle saint. Bob *had* been not a little influential, but she could only thank God for the miracle wrought in Allen. And hadn't she been praying for months for this to happen? God *had* answered and given this love for Allen and Julie to share.

But soon after Christmas, things had changed—slowly, almost imperceptibly; somehow, things just weren't quite the same. Was it because the letters were fewer and farther between? Julie got more letters than Allen's parents did. Was it the forgotten valentine? But Allen never *had* been too sentimental. Was it because of the girls Allen had dated at San Margo? Julie had urged him for a long time to date around, so he would be sure. And he had always replied, "Honey, if a man is offered bread when he has cake, what would he choose?" But now she had wondered: Maybe he has found some frosting! And what about her own recent restlessness and more-than-friendly friendliness to fellows who didn't really appeal to her, especially Peter's friend Kurt? *But wasn't it only cautiousness? Or was it a fear of the unknown?*

"Wasn't that last quotation from Longfellow?"

Julie started. "What? Longfellow?"

"Julie," Allen said, "you aren't listening."

"I'm tired."

"Thinking of 'marvelous'?"

*Marvelous!* Julie felt her mouth start to fly open, but her pride held it shut. *How had Allen found out that "marvelous" was Julie's pet name for Bill Johnson?*

"Marvelous?" she repeated.

The feigned innocence in Julie's eyes amused Allen. "Peter told me all about it," he said in quiet seriousness. "Haven't you found him here yet?"

"No," Julie blurted. "No, I haven't seen Bill Johnson."

Suddenly Allen felt fear—he didn't know why. His Julie seemed like a cold, fragile China doll he could no longer reach. Once he got out of the building that night, he conveniently slipped away from her, retreating into his own little world, to think or unthink, to stall for time until he-didn't-know-what-or-when.



## Preparation Day

MORNING DAWNED, AND soon the crowds thronged into the Youth Congress building again. Without even a simple “goodnight” or “good morning” from Allen, Julie felt completely confused. Was it just that Allen was tired and not feeling too well last night?

But at breakfast, even though they talked, an invisible but thick cloud hung between Allen and Julie. And soon thereafter, he disappeared again with a nonchalant, “And I’ll see *you* subsequently!”



A STRANGE, UNWELCOME sense of freedom came over Julie. *Bill Johnson has to be here, someplace.* Those girls from Garden Grove had said that the Garden Grove fellows were staying at the Lafayette Hotel. Perhaps after morning devotion...

“Which discussion group are you going to?” Peter asked when they had finished praying.

“How about the one on ‘Sound and Communication’?” Julie suggested.

“Say, that sounds pretty good! Where is it?”

Julie looked at her program. “Supper Room, Lafayette Hotel.”

The discussion group was excellent, but there was no sign of Bill. “Call for him at the desk, please, Peter?” But Bill was not there. Dejectedly, Julie walked back to the Sports Arena with Peter.

“Youth on Parade!” Floats, drill teams, tumbling! All the best of it from the schools and colleges! For two and a half hours Julie forgot herself and enjoyed it all. Darlene and Sandy were there. And Peter and Bob and Sandra. It was only during supper that Julie gave in to that lonely, sick feeling as she ate with Bob and Sandra.

“What *is* wrong with him?” Sandra asked Julie. “This isn’t right; we four should be together, like at Christmas. Doesn’t he realize what he’s doing?”

“I don’t know,” Julie said helplessly.

Bob shook his head. “That Allen! He’s been cold to *us*, too—all day. I can’t figure him out.”

“Confidentially, Julie, don’t you still love him?” Sandra, who spoke so tenderly, was so much in love.

Julie stared straight ahead at nothing. “I don’t know, Sandra. I just don’t know.”

At the evening meeting, when the long row of ministers marched onto the platform, Allen stood among them, tall and straight. Julie’s heart swelled with pride as he stepped up to the microphone to offer prayer for a thousand youths. She hoped no one saw her gently dab her eyes with a Kleenex. For a fleeting instant, how she wanted to fall into Allen’s loving arms and cry on his broad, soft shoulder and confess everything! Maybe tonight, back at the Carsons’, friends of Mrs. Macintosh where the Riverdale youth were staying. Maybe she just needed to say a few sweet words, give him a soft smile with all the genuineness of meaning it used to hold, and seal it with one brief kiss—just maybe it would melt him.

She confided these feelings in her understanding “big brother.” “Oh, Bob, what should I do?”

Bob frowned a little at the idea of a “brief kiss.” That wasn’t like Bob. Maybe he didn’t really understand.

“If he’s only discouraged because he thinks I’m stuck on Bill,” she tried to explain, “then all it’ll take is a little lovin’ to pep him up. But if he really doesn’t love me—” Her voice choked.

“I know,” Bob tried to encourage, patting her hand lightly. “Julie, I love you *very much*, and I don’t want my ‘little sis’ to be hurt—by Allen or anyone!” He looked at Sandra and then back at Julie. “You’re a part of us, Julie.” And Sandra, too, smiled.

“Compromise,” was Bob’s last word. Julie knew what he meant.

But it didn’t seem to be that simple. Back at the Carsons’, everything was so cozy and informal, and soft music spun on the stereo. But the wall between Allen and Julie was thicker and higher. They talked, but Julie soon found herself to be the one keeping the conversation going. This wasn’t right; something *had* to give—and soon.

Again Julie went to bed, so frustrated and uncertain. In the darkness, she reached for the letter she had written just a few days before. She didn’t really intend to give it to Allen, but now she wondered if she shouldn’t. In her mind she reviewed some of its contents:

*Dear Allen,*

*I’ve been thinking—a lot—lately, about, well, just things. Things the way they are now, the way they used to be, and the way they perhaps will be or could be.*

*Frankly, it didn’t happen at all like I expected it to. In the first place, I never expected the miracle of falling in love to happen to me, at least, not so soon. And, I’ll have to admit, there were doubts in my mind from the very beginning..*

*Love can survive distance and time, but only as there is mutual association, be it only the togetherness of postal communication. Need I say more? But no one is to blame. Excessive letter writing, which was not prompted by the warmth of an inner flame, would have been only a farce. Perhaps it was as Fate—or Providence—designed that it should be...*

*I don’t know how you feel, what you think about when you find a moment of quiet rest from your studies, your socializing, your job, because I have no way of knowing. But it really isn’t important for me to know, now.*

*I know we were once very much in love. When our love began to die, who can say?... It's clear that our minds are on many different interests and that our hearts are not ready to settle down. No one is hurt, and that is how it should be, for Nature has merely taken her course.*

*You and I will always be friends, yes, more than friends—Christian cousins, sharing the kinship of our inheritance. But the flame of love—the kind of love that draws a man and a woman into one sacred being—is nearly extinct. And, in its burning, it left no more ugly scars of passion, of hatred, of neurotic reminiscence.*

*Whether, in the years to come, a divine spark will, for the third time, rekindle and glow with a new celestial brilliance is beyond our finite comprehension. God only knows why our love for each other is not the same. We can only in faith trust the Omniscience and praise His wisdom. "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away; blessed me the name of the Lord."*

*Goodbye, dear Allen—goodbye.*

For a long moment Julie debated inside. Surely it was only fair that he know how she felt. Still, she had no way of knowing just how he would react. Just as the clock was striking twelve, Julie, at the point of sheer mental exhaustion, fell into a troubled sleep. And the letter fell from her hand and dropped out of her wearied mind.





## Searching to Find

AGAIN MORNING DAWNED, the morning of the Lord's Day when over 2,000 people would worship under the same roof. There was a hopeful expectancy about the atmosphere; many who could not attend the Youth Congress for the entire weekend would be there today. And Julie, with Darlene, shared the blessings of the special worship; it was a highlight of experience.

After the service, physical nourishment was in order. Then there was a concert, richly eloquent in its beauty, given by the youth choirs and orchestras. Julie was content to be with Darlene and her girlfriend Sandy. She had even almost forgotten to look for Bill any more. But down deep inside, cast away temporarily, Julie felt that growing emptiness. She should be with Allen, sharing all this—the prayer, the worship, the music—together.



“JULIE! THERE THEY ARE!” Darlene was poking her again. Who *this* time? Julie looked.

“Mrs. Macintosh and Allen!” Julie strained across the huge auditorium. But she lost sight of them; and when she looked a moment later, they had disappeared.

“I want to find him,” Julie said in a strange tone. “We’ve got some talking to do.” She rose quickly and left, leaving the other girls a little bewildered.

“Where are you going?” Darlene called. But Julie did not hear.

Once in the corridor, Julie caught herself. What *am* I doing, running around like a little nut out here? But she didn’t stop. She raced down the stairs, through the lobby, and up the escalator until she finally saw him smugly trying to avoid her, she thought.

“Why, hello, Allen,” she greeted wryly. “You’ve, ah, been doing a beautiful job of avoiding me all day.”

“Why, I haven’t been avoiding you,” he said, giving her that what-are-you-talking-about look.

“Well, you certainly haven’t been *with* me,” she retorted.

“Look, Julie, I haven’t been with anyone much—Bob and Sandra, or Peter, or even my mom.”

“That’s what I know,” she said, her provocation rising. “What have you been running from, Allen? Just *what*?”

He looked away for an instant as he said, “I’m looking for my roommate. You haven’t seen him anywhere, have you?”

Julie half-sighed in disgust, her eyes unconsciously scanning the crowds of people who were still arriving. Then she realized. “*Your* roommate? You don’t have a roommate! What’s his name?”

“Lee,” he replied quickly. “Moved in just recently.”

Julie was silent. Allen *Lee* Macintosh, she thought. “Anyway,” she said, “why is it so important that you find *him*? Why is he so much more important than *us* being together?”

Allen shrugged, giving some weak excuse as he stepped aside to speak to a couple of his friends from his school. But when he had finished, she still stood there, looking silently at him.

“Well,” he said a little uncomfortably, “I’ve got to find my roommate Lee.”

Julie, raising her eyebrows, asked, “Do you mind if I help you look for him?”

“Oh, no, no!” he replied hurriedly.

“That’s good. For a minute I was beginning to think you were ashamed to be seen with me.”

So Allen started off, around the corner and down the stairs, with Julie following close. At intervals he would stop to speak to friends he saw, and the rest of the time he kept up a meaningless patter with Julie.

“Allen, in your own mind, are we through?” Julie was frank.

“Why, no,” was the facetious answer. “What makes you think that?”

“Well, it’s the *normal* custom for a boy to be *with* his girlfriend at places like this, or if he goes someplace without her to at least tell her *where* he’s going and *when* he’ll meet her—besides ‘subsequently’!”

Allen laughed. It was a wild, rough laugh reminiscent of the old days, the cruel ten months. Julie quivered inside. *What is wrong between us, Allen?* She had asked him that as they waited in line for breakfast that morning, but all she had received was an evasive, “What about ‘Marvelous’? Why didn’t *you* tell me about him?”

And she had come back with, “And why didn’t *you* tell me about Bonnie?”

“You didn’t ask me.”

There it had ended. But surely Allen wasn’t *jealous*. Now she asked again, “What’s wrong, Allen?”

This time he answered her directly. “Julie, you must realize by now that I *am* different—in *every* respect.” His voice faded as they stood in front of the big window porch that overlooked the sea and the late afternoon sun, side by side yet in two entirely different worlds.

Suddenly Allen turned and started away, hurrying. But Julie still followed. *Why won’t she leave me alone? I don’t want to hurt her—I can’t hurt her—just now.*

Allen and Julie made their way down from the balcony, crossed the lobby, and started down the stairs that led to the banquet room. At the foot of the stairway was a cool, dimly lit niche. There was a square pond where three small palm trees grew. Several white stone benches surrounded it. Everything seemed like a well-written drama.

Allen started philosophizing, and Julie was not a mere listener.

“Life is so ironic,” Allen mumbled.

“I know,” Julie replied. “I used to feel that way—a few years ago.”

“But it *is*, Julie.”

“Is it—all the time?”

“All the time, life holds some irony for someone, somewhere.”

“And you feel life has given you more than your share.”

“No. Whatever life gives me *is* my share.”

This kind of rhetoric from Allen wasn't new. But Julie knew him well enough to sense that a struggle was going on inside, deep beneath his placid surface. She knew it was up to her to help him in this horrible dilemma. A surge of sympathy swept through her for the boy she had grown to love.

"I *am* different, Julie," he repeated. "Different from most conventional people, you know that."

She knew that well. "But do you feel that's a handicap?"

"No, not at all!" was his expected reply. "It's just life. And, as yet, life just hasn't shown me the answers, which direction to go, and just how to react to life's situations." Allen leaned against the white pillar that supported the staircase. "I want to find the answer, Julie. More than anything else, *I have to find the answer!*"



## Litany

JULIE WAS SILENT FOR a long moment. She stared long and hard at Allen. This was *so* different from her religious-minded Allen—never had he expressed anything like this! She watched as he sat down on the cool bench beside her and buried his face in his hands. Finally she asked in a subdued tone, “Do you think you have to find the answers by yourself?”

“Yes.” He did not stir.

“Don’t you think *anyone* can help you find answers?”

He looked at her. “You think you are the one to help me find answers?” It was more of a statement than a question, and Julie thought she detected sarcasm in it.

How she wanted to take his hand and say, “We—Bob and Sandra and I—love you, Allen. We want you to be a part of us. I *do* love you, and I’ll do anything I can to make you happy.” But she only looked through the icy stillness and almost whispered, “Have you forgotten about God?”

“I *know* God will lead,” he said, “but just how?”

*How?* Julie was a little baffled. She knew Allen knew. Methodically, she repeated almost the same words he had taught her. “Surrender to God. Be willing to be absolutely honest with yourself. God will do the rest. Just—well, just wait.”

“That’s what I’m doing, Julie. Just waiting. Waiting for Fate to teach me how to react, what to do, where to go. Fate hasn’t brought me into the right circumstances, and I’m...just waiting.” He rose to his feet and started away slowly.

“Fate?” she queried, also rising.

He shrugged. “Providence—Fate—call it what you wish. But I’ll find the answer—by myself. No one else can find it for me, Julie. You may *have* the answer, but *I* have to discover it for myself. Don’t you understand that, Julie?”

A strange smile played on her face. “But can’t I help you *discover* it?” She was almost desperate.

“Try if you wish,” he answered, only because Julie demanded an answer.

Halfway up the stairs he paused dramatically. “Life is cruel, Julie,” he said. Julie knew what the stinging words meant. Life *was* cruel—if you weren’t surrendered to God. But they both knew—so many times they had talked about this—that *nothing* can hurt you when your complete faith is in God. Only your own selfish reactions hurt you. Maybe Allen is afraid to know how to react. Yet she knew Allen. Did he think *she* wasn’t surrendered to God?

Suddenly he started off again, across the lobby and out the door, more rapidly than before. Julie still followed.

“Allen Macintosh! Don’t tell me you aren’t trying to avoid me. If you want me to leave you alone, *please* tell me so.”

His pace slackened only slightly. “All right,” he said. “All right, I’ll tell you if I want you to go away.”

Now Julie bombarded him with questions, the tactless pointed questions that her emotions had piled up for so long. Mechanically he retorted back answers, but inside he was running—hard. The saline breeze was chill, but his feverish mixed-up mind did not sense it. *Julie just wasn’t the same girl she used to be! Love—hmp!* He pushed the thought out of his mind. He wasn’t ready to face *himself*, much less Julie, who once was his inspiration of life itself. But he must never let it show. He could not let Julie see how afraid he really was. Why *hadn’t* he told her about his dating Bonnie—and Mindi—sooner, much sooner, than this? He knew Julie was apt to be hurt, anyway. Julie loved deeply. Yet if it must happen this way—this very day—it must be the best way.



ALLEN LOOKED AROUND. His steps had taken him to the old lobby of the municipal building. He tried the doors. They were locked. He would not retrace his steps. God was bringing him to something—and that soon. *Would Julie understand?*

Tears? Julie? She would *never* cry! She had decided *that* after the last time they broke up. She would *not* be hurt again. She would not! The telephone booths and squares of tan tile swirled into a blur. She heard Allen say something about calling his school as he dropped a dime into the green box. Impudently, she stood in the doorway until he had finished with a routine of “Line’s busy,” and retrieving his dime.

He placed his hand lightly on her waist and, with a squeeze, said sincerely, “You’re a good girl, Julie.”

There were three phone booths, and they stopped at each one, Allen repeating the same litany. The intoxication of frustration was intense. But Allen saw it now, the way it had to be. God knew it was best.

They sat down on a couple of old chairs in a corner. Their conversation was calm now, almost nonchalant.

Lately, Julie had been trying to imagine how it would be the day she and Allen broke up. She pictured a dramatic scene—a seaside sunset, surf gently lapping the golden sand; a warm, quiet fireside in a college dorm lobby; or even the fountain and palms and white iron staircase where they had just been. She saw herself, big brown eyes shining with unspilled tears, yet she herself remaining cool and quiet and looking deep into Allen’s blue, half-pleading eyes almost afraid to meet her own. She would hear him say in a decided yet soft voice, looking down, “Well, Julie, I guess it’s all over now. We just can’t make a go of it—ever. We’ll just have to forget each other.” And she, looking past him, would silently sigh and say in a very steady serene voice, “It was so sudden, Allen, but it must end—forever. So, goodbye, Allen.” And their eyes would meet for a strange quick second as he would gently touch her hand. Then she would watch him until he had disappeared. And then she, too, would fade into oblivion, for the next few hours being sensually unaware of her environment. Perhaps far into the night she would wake up as if from anesthesia and feel the pain, sharp and deep. She would

cry, but it would soon be over and that would be all. And in the days and weeks to come, she would live in a weird mist, gradually, ever-so-slowly sifting back into the world of reality.

But it didn't happen like that at all.



## The Real Breakup

JULIE FINALLY PUT INTO words the question that had first prompted her to leave the concert. “Allen, do you still love me?”

“Yes,” he replied slowly and deliberately. “But it’s a different kind of love, Julie.”

*Not the kind of love one marries for*, she could hear Bob saying.

Allen went on. “Not the sickening sentimental kind of love that we used to believe would just last forever and ever.”

Julie was crying now, her face buried deep in Darlene’s sweater she had borrowed.

It was not the first time he had seen her cry, but a new sense of responsibility grasped Allen. He put his arm around the sobbing girl, but neither of them spoke.

Julie was fumbling in her purse for a tissue, but to no avail. “I’ll go see if I can find you something,” Allen offered. “If you want?”

She nodded, “Okay. Please—” she choked, “come back.”

“You bet I will!” And he disappeared.

How slowly the minutes seemed to pass! Yet, despite Julie’s fears that maybe it was just a clever trick to get away, Allen returned with a few cocktail napkins that were most welcome.

Julie had wandered into a phone booth to stop crying. She didn’t want to cry, now of all times! Allen would think for sure she was just a big drip. She wasn’t hurt; why couldn’t she stop crying and act like the poised Julie she wanted to be? But the acting was all over. Julie knew this was it—what she had been expecting for so long. But she was so unprepared. Why had God let it happen on this day of all days, and in this inappropriate place?

“Don’t you understand, Julie, that it’s best, that it’s God’s will?” Allen, taking Julie into his arms much like Bob would have done, brushed the falling tears from her cheeks and kissed her forehead lightly. “Don’t you understand, Julie?” he whispered. “Don’t you understand?”

Julie’s sobs came in spurts. At first, she only shook her head and buried her face. She could not speak.

Allen’s voice was not unkind. “A teenager has many loves,” he said. “It’s normal, Julie.”

She asked pensively, “Do you think we were *ever* really in love?”

“Yes, I do,” was Allen’s quiet reply. “And we wanted to believe it would never end. But we’re so very young—only sixteen.” Now Allen lifted her chin and forced her eyes to meet his. “Smile,” he said lightly.

She relaxed and giggled slightly. Allen understood. “Don’t make me go back just yet,” she ventured. “Can’t we...talk just a little?”

“Of course.” Allen, too, knew that things would never be completely settled unless they talked it out.

Her head fell onto his shoulder as she responded to his affection for the first time that entire weekend. There were so many things she wanted to say. But Allen was speaking now.

He kissed her tear-stained cheek lightly. “You’ll always be my little sweetheart,” he said.

Julie knew they would never forget each other, this experience of love. The lingering memory was theirs to keep always. But life could not stand still. They *were* so very young and volatile.

“You see that it’s God’s will, that it’s best,” Allen repeated, “don’t you, Julie?”

Of course Julie understood. She had understood all along, but was afraid to face it so soon. Now she drew a deep breath and looked deep into Allen’s searching eyes. With a soft smile she whispered, “Yes, Allen, I know it is.”

Allen smiled. “You know something, Julie? I think I’ve found life’s answer.” She looked at him as he nodded slowly, his pensive blue eyes staring far past her. “Patience,” he said deliberately. “Yes, that’s it—patience.” Allen felt so much

better now. He didn't have to run away from anything—or anyone—anymore. Nothing had to be superficial now. They understood each other, and both had returned to the world of reality. It had grown so stuffy and almost lonely to be in his private little world. Julie was a loyal friend; he knew she always would be. Even now, as she spoke, he sensed her tone had changed.

"I'm curious," she said. "Just how long have you felt this way?"

Allen smiled. "Oh, since about the first of February, I guess. A couple months." *Since I first went out with Mindi*, he thought.

She nodded. "That's what I thought."

"How did you know?" A peculiar smile played on his face.

"Oh, a girl can sense it. The conveniently forgotten valentine in the rush of helping plan for the February 14 banquet you took Mindi to!"

Allen smiled sheepishly. "That banquet," he said. "I guess it was Larry who started me thinking. I wasn't going to ask anyone at first. No, sir, not with my faithful Julie back home. But you know, Julie, I started to see how much we were really missing. And a lot has happened inside—and still is happening." He paused. "I like you very much, Julie, but I like others...like I like you." *Like Mindi*, he thought, but his voice faded.

Julie studied his thoughtful face. "Is there...someone else?" Her question was apprehensive, but not in the least neurotic.

He shook his head, looking away from her.

"Bonnie? You dated her, too."

"Once." He looked back at Julie, shaking his head. "She didn't care for me. That 'brief four-day encounter'—she was just using me to get back at her boyfriend."

"Oh." There was a pause. What could Julie say? Then, "Have you got your class sweaters yet?"

"The rest of the class has, but I couldn't afford the twenty-one bucks."

"Oh." Again there was a pause. Julie had stopped crying now.

"You're going to like being free," Allen said. "It's, well, it's—"

"I know," Julie said almost impishly. *In my mind, Allen, I broke up with you quite a while ago. I have been free. I've known how it feels for quite a while. I don't feel guilty anymore about Kurt or Bill or anyone.*

Allen spoke again. "There's 'marvelous'—"

Julie laughed. "Oh, honestly, Allen! I only saw him that one night when Kurt and Peter and Sandra and I went to Garden Grove. I hardly even know him—" But she stopped. Why was she making excuses now?

"But he's moving to Riverdale this summer, Peter told me."

"Um-hum." She smiled sweetly. "Maybe you can meet him when you're home from San Margo Academy."

"Let's go back now," he said, putting his hand on her shoulder. "It's getting late."

"But it's a whole half hour until supper," she protested. "Let's just stay here and talk a little more."

"Okay," he agreed. "Whenever you say you're ready to go back, we'll go. What do you want to talk about?"

But Julie could think of nothing more. Involuntarily, she burst into tears again. *Oh, no, Julie!*, Allen thought. *Don't spoil it now!*

"Julie." He spoke her name.

She tried to giggle. "I'm sorry, Allen! I don't want to cry. Believe me, I don't!"

He patted her lovingly. "It's all for the best," he repeated. "Romans 8:28, Julie. Where's your faith?"

That sounded like Bob. *All things work together for good...*, he would have said. Julie looked up at Allen with much seriousness as her tears all but disappeared. "Oh, Allen, I have faith. Believe me, I do!"

"That's my girl!" he whispered, squeezing her.



Her last sob subsided quickly. "Allen," she said somewhat mischievously, "I'm ready to go back now. But first, may I do a very wicked thing?"

A smile crept over his face. "What is it?"

"Allen," she said, "may I kiss you just once more?"

He hugged her, laughing. "Sure!" It was the warmest he had spoken all weekend. "But make it short and sweet."

They kissed just like they used to. Then they started back to supper together. But now it was so different. The wind had ceased, and the glow of the setting sun penetrated the clear, cold air. Whatever the future held for Allen and Julie, they left all in God's hands. It was the perfect ending to a perfect love.

But not quite.





## After the Tears

“WOULD YOU LIKE TO SIT with us, Bob and Sandra and me, during the last meeting?” Julie asked Allen as they were eating supper.

Allen nodded. “Let’s meet just inside the main door of the Sports Arena at, say, a quarter to seven,” he suggested. Then they went their separate ways.

Finding Bob and Sandra, Julie smiled sweetly. Sandra, holding on to Bob’s arm, looked around. “Julie!” she cried. “Where’s Allen?” There was a definite tone of disappointment in Sandra’s voice, and tears welled in the corners of her eyes.

“No, Sandra!” Julie protested. “No ‘triste’ now. It’s all over.” Julie could not allow her best friend to feel the sadness.

Bob looked at his “little sis” with a tender understanding. “Just how did it happen, Julie?”

Julie smiled. She knew Bob and Sandra were concerned. Even Allen had told her, “Go ahead and tell Bob and Sandra everything that happened if you want to. They’ll understand. They love you, too.”

“Let’s go sit down some place,” Bob continued, “and you can tell us the whole story.” And so they did until a quarter of seven.

“So, you see,” Julie concluded, “I feel if I can be with him for one evening and not break down it’ll be so much easier.”

The three of them were waiting for Allen by the main door when Sandra excused herself. “Be right back,” she said. “I’m thirsty.”

A minute later Allen appeared. Then he, Julie, and Bob were waiting for Sandra when suddenly she burst through the doorway with a tall, dark, handsome stranger. Not seeing Allen at first, she exclaimed, “Julie, Julie! I was just walking around out there and look who I found!”

Julie looked and instinctively stretched out her arms. “Bill!” she cried excitedly.

“Hi, there!” Bill said, accepting her embrace. His voice was soft but just as excited.

“Bill,” she said, trying desperately to calm down, “there’s someone I’d like you to meet.” She turned to see Allen talking to a friend from San Margo and pretending to be unaware of what had just taken place. “Excuse me, Allen,” she said sweetly, “I’d like you to meet Bill Johnson. Bill, Allen Macintosh.”

As they shook hands and exchanged greetings, a strange feeling of pride swelled in Julie. Presently Allen said, “Well, I guess I’d better go now.”

“Oh, you don’t have to go now,” Julie said. “We’ll all sit together.”

*Julie, please stop being facetious—or naïve,* Allen’s eyes said, and he shook his head. “I’ll see you later.” And he watched Julie walk away with Bill.



THE MEETING WAS EXCEPTIONALLY good. Julie and Bill, with Sandra and Bob, enjoyed it. Although they had only seen each other once before in their lives—and Bill had even forgotten her name—they felt like old friends as they sat and talked and teased each other.

“Don’t you *really* remember my name?” she asked.

“No,” he laughed. “Please tell me.”

“I don’t think I will,” she teased. “Just make up a name you think fits me.”

He thought a minute. “How about ‘Kitten’?” So Kitten Julie was, ever after that.

After the meeting that night, Sandra and Bob introduced Bill to Mrs. Macintosh and Darlene and the rest of the little Riverdale group when they met at their appointed post.

“Let’s go for a walk,” Sandra suggested eagerly. “It’s such a pretty night—the stars and the sea...” Her voice faded as she looked toward Mrs. Macintosh for approval. The rest of the kids—except for Allen—joined Sandra’s plea.

And so it was that a little group of couples and a few adult chaperones and some younger kids—minus Allen who waited in the car—strolled around the famous Rainbow Pier. Julie’s hand was safely tucked into Bill’s.

For a lovely hour they were together before they said the goodbyes. Bob left first, kissing his sweetheart and “sister,” but knowing he and Sandra would be together in just five months at Pacific Christian College.

Bill found his mother, Lena, and introduced her to Mrs. Macintosh. Then he said goodbye to Julie, not knowing just when he would see her again. He only knew he would write.



## Goodbye, Dear Allen—Goodbye

ALLEN WAS SILENT IN the car that night as they rode back to Carsons. When his mother stopped at a drugstore for cough drops, Julie who sat beside Allen felt his warm hand over hers. Looking at her in the dim light of the streetlight, he breathed, “You’re pretty.”

She made no reply.

At ten o’clock the next morning they started back to Riverdale. They had brunch with the Carsons at a pancake house, Peter and Sandra and Julie and Allen seated together. They were four good friends and behaved as friends should. But a strange new formality existed between Allen and Julie. Not that it should have been any other way, but Julie wondered if there would be an aftermath as there had been before. Allen, too, had a hint of doubt that their feelings for each other were nothing but beautiful faded memories.

Allen drove part of the way home. But because of his fatigue, Mrs. Macintosh took over. Allen climbed into the back seat beside Julie.



“HI, THERE,” HE BEGAN, and immediately took her hand. Julie tensed. *What was going to happen? Did Allen mean it—was he sorry for what had happened yesterday? Or was he only trying to prove to himself and to everyone else in the car that Julie was “easy to get”?* Julie slipped her hand out of his.

“Please hold hands with me.”

“Why should I?” Both Allen and Julie were very facetious now.

“Because you want to.”

“You’re sitting beside me. That’s enough.”

“Whole hog or none.”

Julie sighed inwardly as her apprehension grew. *This sounded and acted like the old Allen. Was there to be another horrible ten months—or more?* Every minute of the way home Julie was conscious of his every move. If he was sincere, she didn't want to hurt him. But she would *not* allow Allen to play her for a fool.

Allen helped her with carrying her things to her door. But his stiff expression as he muttered, "Goodbye, Stuck-up," left Julie with a very uncomfortable feeling. "Take him away from me if You wish, dear God," she prayed silently, "but please—*please* don't let him return to the old unchristian Allen."

Julie was not too surprised when she answered the phone that night to find Allen on the other end.

"Hi, how are you?" he greeted as usual.

"Fine. And you?"

"Okay." There was a brief pause. "Julie, I—I just called to say, well, I'm sorry...for the way I acted tonight. I don't mean to hurt you, honest, Julie. I—I guess I just acted without thinking."

"Don't we all?" she replied softly.

"Oh, I know," he said. "But I acted so selfishly. *I am* sorry, Julie. Please forgive me."

Julie hardly knew what to say. Many, many times in the past she had heard the same apologetic plea and listened to promises that Allen had broken. But somehow she believed Allen meant it this time. He was not emotional, but his voice was filled with warmth.

"Okay," she finally whispered. Then, "Are you coming to the youth prayer meeting tonight?"

"No, I've got *so* much homework. See you...sometime. 'Bye.'"

"'Bye.'" And her heart echoed, "Goodbye, dear Allen—goodbye."

But this, like all true-life stories, is not the end. When or where—or if—it will end, God only knows. Allen has been home to Riverdale since that last Youth Congress. He and Peter enjoyed the company of Sandra and Kurt and Julie, as always.

Meanwhile, Julie received letters from Bill and has seen much more of him. Allen continued to date Mindi back at San Margo Academy. But since that magic April day, Allen and Julie's relationship remains the same. Theirs is a God-centered love—a new, more mature kind of Christian understanding that gives meaning to yesterday, hope for today, and faith in tomorrow.



## Looking Ahead

THE NEXT MINI-NOVELLA, *Escape From Fate*, begins in the summer of 1963 after Julie's graduation from Highview Academy. Julie and Sandra's plans to be roommates at Pacific Christian College are shattered, and Julie discovers what she has already suspected—that Bill Johnson is more attracted to her best friend Sandra. Julie goes to La Paloma College while Sandra goes to Pacific Christian College to be with Bob. Sandra and Julie must each make some important decisions in their separate worlds.

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## About the Author

Juliana Harvard's writing spans more than five decades, from her adolescence until well past midlife. It is reflective of her most emotional moments, sometimes of ecstasy and wonder, sometimes of sadness and pain, and other times of sweet melancholy and contentment beyond words.

DISCLAIMER: "These are works of fiction. Any similarities to persons and places are frequent, intentional, and occasionally brazen, but generally fragmentary, inconsistent, and disguised with fanciful invention."

–Stephen Minot, *Three Genres*