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FROM VEGAS  
THE DEATH OF A PROSTITUTE  
TO VICTORY

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# THE GREAT ESCAPE

## A Life of Freedom...or Bondage?

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### COLLEGE YEARS

I will never forget the day I went to college. I purposely chose a business school that had a new semester starting two weeks after I graduated from high school. It was just far enough from home that I would have to stay in the dorm. I was finally free from my parents.

The day I moved in, the college was still between semesters. There was virtually no one else in the dorm except one other girl. My parents dropped me off and left. I remember watching them drive away and thinking, FREEDOM!!!

I had never gotten drunk or smoked a cigarette until that afternoon. The one girl who was there came up to my room and introduced herself. She had a twelve pack of beer in one hand and cigarettes in the other. What a night that was! I had never been so sick in all my life, but I was partying! It didn't take me long to realize the party scene wasn't all it was cracked up to be. But everyone else was doing it, so I did too—just because I could.

I was so hungry for acceptance that I was willing to compromise just about anything to fit in and be “cool.” I got drunk every weekend and quickly became a chain-smoker. I tried to hide it from my parents, but I know they knew. To keep from having to face them, I purposely got a job near the college so I wouldn't have to go home on weekends.

In a short time, I had my first boyfriend. I was only eighteen when we met, and I willingly gave up my virginity for him. I knew it was wrong, but because of the pornography I had been exposed to, my understanding of sex was extremely twisted. In my mind, I assumed I would have to marry him because we had gone “all the way.” I had been taught not to have sex until marriage; therefore, the first person you have sex with you have to marry. It was the right thing to do.

Soon after, I started taking birth control pills. I didn't want to end up like one of the girls my mom used to talk about—a daughter who got pregnant and wasn't married, causing her family extreme embarrassment. I knew better than to ever go down that road. Ironically, even though I fiercely resented my parents, I still wanted to please them.

In the midst of my newfound college life, tragedy struck. On December 12, 1984, just a few months into my college career, one of the women I loved and admired most suddenly died. It was my grandma. She was the glue that held our family together on my mother's side. Once she was gone, things got really ugly. An awful spirit of greed took hold of many family members. I watched as they argued and fought about petty things. I witnessed lying, cheating and stealing of material possessions. It was sad and pitiful.

After Grandma's death, I began to party even more. Miraculously, I managed to graduate from college. With drinking and smoking still entrenched in my life, I chose to move to a town about ten miles from where I grew up. I secured a job working as a secretary at a local company. I was now engaged to my boyfriend, whom my parents didn't like, but that didn't matter to me. I was still convinced that I had to marry him. In my heart, I knew there had to be more to life than just partying every weekend. I had money, my own place, and my own car, but I was still not satisfied.

But then something unexpected happened; I met another man. He was a farmer who came from a wonderful Christian family. There was definitely something different about him—something special that attracted me to him. After breaking up with my boyfriend, he and I dated for five years, and everyone thought we were the perfect couple. I loved him more than anyone I had ever known—at least the way I understood love. Life with him would have probably been great, had I decided to stay.

But there was something inside of me that wasn't right—a driving feeling that I was being cheated out of experiencing everything life had to offer. There just had to be more excitement than what I had known living in a small farm town in Northwest Iowa. But what was it?