

# The escape artist creative writing

[Transportation](#), [Road](#)



**“ Nannie has escaped again.”**

Those words, coming through the cell phone, smashed into him like an icy wave.

“ How can they keep letting this happen? Don’t they have security? When? Where? Do they have any idea where she went?”

“ Nope.” His sister sounded resigned. “ I’ll check the usual places down south, and you check the ones up north, okay?”

“ I don’t have time for this, Taylor, you hear me? I don’t have time to go chasing her all over creation--”

**“ She is your grandmother, Brandon--”**

--just because she can’t stay put in her nursing home, all right? I don’t have time to chase her like a wayward child! She knows she isn’t supposed to wander off, it’s not like she has Alzheimer’s or something--”

“ She’s bored, Brandon, and you would be too if you lived in a place like that. Just go look, all right?”

He found her, of all places, at Six Flags, waiting in line for a rollercoaster that was certainly not designed for the elderly with heart problems, back problems, and osteoporosis. He watched her from a distance for a moment or two, taking her in: his father’s mother, withered with age but still upright and reedy. She wore a baseball cap printed with the American flag, and her shirt was embroidered with cats. She carried a walking stick carved from a beautiful, heavy piece of wood; the handle was worn from years of running knobby hands in the same path over the rough edges of the wood.

### **He slipped into line beside her.**

“ Nannie, what are you doing here?”

She looked up at him, unsurprised to see him, but clearly unhappy.

“ You know you need to stay in the home, Nannie. It’s a good home, that’s why we put you there”

She continued to look his way, quiet and unassuming. He took heart from her failure to argue and plunged on with his soliloquy.

“ You know you shouldn’t be out here. How did you get here, anyway? The last time you drove a car the last time it didn’t go well, Nannie”

### **She jutted her chin out in an act of defiance.**

“ Don’t you lecture me like a child, Brandon Shane. I am perfectly capable of driving a car, just as capable as you are.”

### **He stared at her, agape.**

“ Nannie, do you remember the last time you drove a car? Do you remember the court case? You have to remember going to court.”

“ I remember perfectly fine, Brandon Shane.” Her voice took on the lilt of an octogenarian caught in a discussion she did not want to be having. “ That man shouldn’t have been in the middle of the road.”

“ No, he shouldn’t have been,” he agreed with her, the familiar tension building in his temples-- not a migraine, not now, he didn’t have time to deal with it-- “ but you also should have been paying attention to the road, Nannie.”

“ I was paying attention to the road. Don’t you think to lecture me, young man. I’ve been driving for longer than you’ve been alive and I’ve never had

any problems.”

He shook his head and took her firmly by the arm, leading her back to his car. The drive back to the retirement home was sullen and quiet; she wanted nothing to do with him and all his attempts at conversation fell heavy and dense to the floor. He walked her slowly up to the door of her room in the retirement home.

“ Nannie, you know what the judge said. You have to stay here, or they will put you in jail, especially if they catch you driving.”

### **“ I remember what the judge said.”**

“ If you need to go somewhere, call me or Taylor. We’ll come get you. We don’t mind. Please don’t drive anywhere.”

She hadn’t been right, he realized, since their grandfather had died; their Papap had been the grounding force for their grandmother, someone who kept her feet on the ground and her head in reality. Without him, without his influence, she quickly devolved into the cantankerous escape artist that gave him and his sister so many problems. And then there was the incident with the hit and run-- he preferred not to think about it.

He left her in her room and slipped out to talk to the nurses. They needed to keep a better eye on her, he thought, and make sure that she wasn’t slipping out at all hours of the day and night.

Inside her room, the older woman checked carefully to make sure that the door was shut tightly. She shuffled over to her nightstand and pulled out a small bag. She then moved slowly and quietly to the window, which was slightly ajar. For a moment or two, she fiddled with something near the latch, and then sat back, enjoying the view of the gardens from her first-story

apartment.

She pulled a set of car keys out of the tiny bag, and listened for the sounds of her grandson departing.