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Ceremony

Last day ever… The words play on your lips. A phrase followed by uncertain expressions that ask what do we do now? Other times tears spill, sad to be leaving the security of school, a place where everything has its place. A joyous smile shows at the thought of finally being able to leave this boring, repetitive life. Yet there was still one thing that you each have in common. You’re proud of yourselves and each other.

You’ve spent twelve long years learning things that left you frustrated. Years of arguing with teachers over the answer of a question that, in your opinion, is just plain stupid. You’re graduating today.

In a ceremony in front of teachers, younger students and parents you receive your certificates. A ceremony that, for the past four years, you’ve sat through and watched as people hugged and cried and thought I’ll never be like that. Then, as you stand to leave, you stop struggling to hold back your tears. It’s no use. As you look around the crowd you see the faces of people that you have spent the past twelve years with. You’ve seen them go from goofy little kids who were convinced that boys were icky and girls had cooties, to uncertain adolescents who would rather spend time on the internet than doing schoolwork. Finally, over the last couple of years, you’ve watched as completely different people emerged from the fog of uncertainty. After all you’ve gone through with each other you begin to realize that you’re all in this together, despite your differences. Flashes of stories blast through your mind; funny anecdotes about stupid things that you’ve done together; tales about pulling together as one when things seem too tough…
The day passes in a blur of smiles and tears. You say your goodbyes to your teachers. Your hug your mum as she cries about her baby growing up too fast. You laugh at you dad as he tries not to show emotion and acts as if this is any other day. Then you realize, it’s time to leave. Everyone is babbling animatedly as they walk eagerly to the school gate. Suddenly, you stop.

You’ve reached the gate and the realization has finally and truly hit you and the blow is like a sledge hammer. This is it. There are no words to describe it. One more step. One little, tiny step, and you leap from life as a high school student who has nothing to worry about other than homework, to adulthood. One more step and your life officially starts. All other things have been leading to this moment and now that it’s here, you hesitate. You’re scared of stepping into the unknown but then a thought enters your mind. It starts out as a minuscule seed but grows steadily, branches reaching to every corner of your psyche. The fear deep in your stomach ceases to exist, like a candle going out.

This is a whole new adventure.