

Chapter Nine



Freedom

I stood outside of the department of motor vehicles giddy with victory, lost in a chaotic rush of future dreams. The things I could do now, the places I could go, and the girls—

A car horn honked right in front of me, snapping me back to reality. It was Dad. He motioned for me to get into the car.

“I passed!” I reported through a wide smile.

“Congratulations. On your first try no less.”

It was my birthday, my sixteenth to be precise, and the best present I had ever received had been given to me by a plump, blue-haired woman moments earlier. It was, of course, my driver’s license. It was time to clean out my wallet. The moment had come to toss out all the scraps of paper with locker combinations and class schedules scribbled on them, chuck the school photos that had crap like “Love ya lots, Tonya” and “URA sweetheart, ☺ Michelle” written in a flowery female hand on the back, ditch the library card I had never once used, and finally throw out what remained of the brittle condom Davie Hunter and I had swiped from his big brother’s dresser.

Yes, it was about time! It was time to slide that stiff, glossy ticket to freedom into my previously pointless wallet.

The drive home lasted forever, but at long last, Dad swung into our driveway and pulled up alongside a deep-red 1967 Ford Mustang. It was a cool car. It was the type of car that never has been and never will be uncool. It was a dream car, and I was ecstatic Dad was considering buying it for me. It had been at our house for the past two days. The owner was a friend of Dad’s and allowed him to bring it home so he could thoroughly check it out. Today would be the first time I would drive it alone, that is, if I could talk Dad into it.

“I’m headed back to work for the day,” he said, without getting out of his car.

“Okay. Hey, you know Mike? Well his dad is an awesome mechanic, and he said he’d look over the Mustang. Would it be all right if I drove it over there, seeing how I got my license and all?” It was the truth; besides, I couldn’t come up with a better lie.

“Is his dad at home this time of day?”

“Yeah, he works nights.” (I had no idea.)

“Okay. But be careful.”

No sooner was he out of sight than I was behind the steering wheel of the badass machine. I was a bit nervous but too young and cocky to let it come to the surface. It wasn’t the best of weather, a cold, gloomy February afternoon. There were even a few patches of snow on the ground, but to me it felt like the height of a wonderful summer’s day, and I cranked both windows down and the music up.

I decided to take the longest possible route to Mike’s house. I tooted around the winding back roads for a while, gunning the powerful car here and there, until I came upon Fish Creek Hill. I knew the hill well and reduced my speed accordingly. I was traveling at perhaps thirty miles per hour. I reached the summit and suddenly viewed the smooth, shiny surface on the other side. The backside of the hill faced north, and the sun hadn’t thawed the icy road. It didn’t bother me. I just gently applied the brakes like I had been taught. But nothing happened. In fact, far from obeying me, the car continued to pick up speed at an alarming rate.

Oh man, okay, try slamming on the brakes.

I followed my adrenaline-charged advice, but the car still didn't respond. With both feet furiously working the brake pedal, I looked ahead and, to my horror, realized I was quickly approaching a three-way intersection, and the road I was barreling down didn't continue through on the other side. I knew what was on the other side.

End of Excerpt

Drifting in the Push is available as an ebook from Amazon.com and as a paperback from booksellers worldwide.