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### For Good

In life, people accumulate things that they simply cannot get rid of. These things can be unshakeable memories, people they can't forget, or items that they just don't have the will to toss in the trashcan. They can carry the memory of making a dollhouse with their grandpa who recently passed away or the iPod that stays in her pocket all day just so she can listen to one song. The things a person carries with him can weigh him down or lift him up. A person doesn't decide what to carry with him; he can't make it go away. It's just there.

Memories are supposed to fade; they have to in order to make room for the new ones. However, some memories remain vivid forever. In the past four years, I have had four family members die. When somebody dies, I feel guilt: guilt that I never got to say goodbye, or that I didn't when I got the chance. I feel guilty because I'm glad that it ended for them, that they could stop fighting, because three of the four had diseases. Then I realize that it only ended because they lost their battles. Most of all, I feel the guilt of having the feeling that I never got to know them well enough. When we talk about my grandpa, I realize that I had made incorrect observations about him. I thought that he was shy, that he was really serious. I can't help but wonder whether if I would know him like my mother does he were still alive. She knows that he could make a whole room laugh with two or three words. He didn't say much because he didn't need to. When my aunt

died and I listened to my mom's eulogy about her, I realized that I knew almost nothing about her, but I still called her my favorite aunt. I remember very little about my Great-Grandma Nonie; the only memory I have is from a picture of her holding a spoon on her nose when the rest of the family was balancing spoons on their noses. She always hated to be left out. I love my family, and, even though I only know a few facts about those in my life who have passed on, I will continue carry with me the love that I have always felt for them.

People come in and out of your life. They come in for a reason, to teach you some moral, and then they leave. At least, they're supposed to. Not all people follow this pattern, though. My friend, Katie Coppage, is one of these people. I have known her since preschool, and we've been friends ever since. She taught me how to stand up for myself, and make myself be heard. I came to preschool shy and unsure, and came out of sixth grade confident and loud. She changed me without even talking to me. In fourth grade, we had a huge fight and didn't talk until the middle of sixth grade. We became friends again, but I had changed. I knew that she couldn't push me around like she used to, and I made that clear. We are friends to this day, and I believe that Katie is in my life to stay. As Glinda says in "For Good" from Wicked, she has left a handprint on my heart, and I will always carry the lessons I've learned from her with me.

In life, eventually objects become obsolete and must either be repaired or thrown away. However, as a race, humans are pack rats and keep things that have memories even if they no longer use them. I have a green and white swing set out in my backyard. It's bent in places from a certain young girl standing where she shouldn't. All that was once white and gleaming is now tan and dull. The two-person swing broke in a thunderstorm

three years ago and now hangs in two pieces. My legs grew too long for the four-person swing many years ago, the regular swings have been wrapped around the top bar many times to make it easier to mow under them, and the slide is grimy and gross. My swing set has been through a lot with me, and I just can't get rid of it. The backyard would look empty without it, because it's been there so long. The memories that I associate with it are already fading, and it feels like the only thing that keeps them there, even vaguely, is that swing set. It doesn't take much to make an object something so important that you carry it with you for ever, but sometimes the things that stick around are ones you'd never expect, like a childhood swing set.

Everybody has things they can't, or don't want, to get rid of, things they carry with them. They can't choose what they carry. It can be abstract or tangible, a memory or an object. The load makes us sad or happy. No matter what the object is, and no matter what form it comes in, it's always with us. For good.