She is running.

He stands on the beach shore, gradually growing smaller in the distance. *Still too close.* The night is pleasant and the pleasantness chokes her. She can’t hear the waves or smell the salt—she is only aware of her heart thumping. Her entire body thumps. She struggles to take a breath.

She throws a glance over her shoulder. He has one foot in front, as if he is about to follow. The stars glimmer above his head. *Come back.* Panic rising in her throat, the girl spurs ahead, faster faster *faster*.

The look on her face is one of pure terror. Her lips are drawn white and flat across her jaw as she heads up the polished stairs. She is in a house. A white house with rooms and halls sprawling endlessly in all directions.

He is chasing her now. The sound of her footsteps slapping down on the wooden flooring is amplified by the hard, empty space. The acoustics are deadly.

On the second landing, she turns wildly turn and stumbles into a room. A junk room, full of unused and mismatching furniture. She stops and tilts her head, straining to hear his pursuit. There is no sound aside from the tumult within. She feels dizzy.

Quickly, she fumbles for the door. Despite her shaking hands, she manages to close it without much sound. There is a lock that clicks reassuringly as she turns it. She pants and leans her back against a green armchair, willing her body to calm.

She imagines that she is a piece of furniture. Her fear slowly bubbles down, though her legs continue to shiver. Sunlight filters weakly through the large windows into the room. She wipes the sheen of sweat donning her forehead like a wreath of flowers. Dust particles swirl in front of her hot eyes.

A bolt of lightning strikes her spine and she twirls around violently. A broken room stares back. Her breath is the only sign of life. He is not here.

She is suddenly aware of a soft ticking, like a clock. She can feel his gaze.

She bolts for the door.