

UNAFRAID

I repeat words of comfort to myself as I stare at my crumpled list. I look up at the festival gates, ready. *No matter what, keep going.* An October breeze blows as I put my hands through the arms of my sweater. My long hair tickles my nose as the wind pushes it in front of my face. The festival gates wait for me.

Walk.

Now.

The Festival of Fear haunted house howls my name. Growls and groans play through the speakers. I fear no werewolves, vampires, serial killers, or demented little girls holding creepy dollies. No, I am not afraid of those. But I *am* a woman who is terrified. I recheck my list, dreading each entry.

An attendant checks my wristband and beckons me to enter into the darkness. I hesitate, but my legs seem to move on their own. A hockey-masked man wielding