

## Life of a Forgotten Teen!

Evie is 17, pretty, and can look totally innocent. She is incredibly street smart and has had to learn various “independent living skills”. She had survived on her own for the last two years but it was really bad! No father was ever present in her life – her mother was only present through a drug haze – her younger siblings were scattered across three states in foster care. She escaped foster care by disappearing whenever a social worker or police officer showed up – she always knew what they were coming for!

She and her mom eventually lived in a small car that they travelled with to stay one step ahead of the law. She had been in a few shelters and had gotten enough schooling to allow her to read, and because she was very smart – it came easy to her and stuck with her. Reading was her escape. They arrived in San Diego about two years ago. Mom was prostituting to support her heroin habit. Our young teen learned the trade from her mom and was able to earn some money for herself (an “independent living skill”). One night her mom didn’t return and nobody knew what happened.

Evie was now on the street on her own! She knew where the homeless kids hung out so she went there. She learned more “independent living skills” like how to get paid to carry drugs for someone (remember she can look totally innocent), how to smuggle people in from Mexico, how to avoid the really bad pimps . . . She learned how to avoid entanglement with the law partly because of her sweet look (when she wanted to be so).

Then, by the grace of God, she heard about a place called Take Wing that might be willing to help her even though she wasn’t an adult – and it wasn’t CPS – it was voluntary! She warily checked it out and found no fences, no officials from “the system” and, other kids just like her. She is now living in a small apartment complex with her new-found cohorts. She is working on her GED and on her emotional issues. She is learning NEW “independent living skills” – like how to get job training for a legit job, how to use a bank, how to budget and pay bills, how to get along in what we might call the “normal” world.