

A Box for Good Will

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As a friend, Martha had come to help yet one more time, and she watched as Gayle set the empty cardboard box on the floor, as she had done so many times before. The box was labeled for Goodwill, carefully penned in black permanent marker with large block letters nearly fifty years ago.

From deep in the closet of her room, Gayle began by pulling out an old blue suit. It had faded over the years, but Martha could see in Gayle's eyes that the memories still had not.

Softly, Gayle smoothed the sleeves that dangled flat and empty. Then she stroked the trousers hanging over the smooth wooden hanger. Gently, Gayle brushed the dust from the collar and lapel, and then Martha heard a quiet sigh. Just as she had feared, Gayle's resolve had melted away once more.

Gayle's face was pale as she turned and faced Martha, who silently patted a spot beside her on the bed. Gayle sat down, and again they talked and remembered.

Gayle spoke of long ago, how the sleeves had encircled her in warm, secure hugs. The trousers had covered lean muscular legs; legs that were slightly bowed; legs that loved to dance.

Then Gayle told Martha again about what she missed the most -- the heart that beat just below the lapel of the old blue suit; the heart that beat with love for her.

For over fifty years, the suit had stood sentinel, loyally guarding both Gayle and her memories. Now Martha watched as Gayle carefully replaced the suit and closed the closet door.

Then, through quiet tears, Gayle asked once more, "How could all of that ever fit in a box for Goodwill ..."

