# No Turning Back: Suzanne Blatchford

Amy moved through the house briskly, bolting up the stairs toward her bedroom. Leo meowed in demand for his dinner, but she disconnected from her usual comforts of being home. It wasn't a usual day. In the walk-in wardrobe, she pulled down the small suitcase, barely used; Simon never did holidays.
"You don't go to the beach down the road—why would I pay to visit one somewhere else?" he'd say, proud of his logic. He managed plenty golf trips, though.
Amy scolded herself for getting distracted and shoved clothes into the musty-smelling bag, which barely held a few items. She rifled through her underwear—ugly and worn-out, like the lifeless, limp clothes she no longer recognised as hers. The days of matching sets had long passed. She ran to the bathroom, heart racing, frantically stuffing skincare, medication, and cosmetics into her toiletry bag. She needed to calm down. He wouldn't be home for hours.
Guilt hit. He'd be expecting dinner. Should she leave something in the fridge for him? What was she thinking? He'd have to fend for himself. She crammed the cosmetic bag in the suitcase, opened her bedside table, and reached to the back where her small yellow purse with a fox print was hidden, $1700, stashed over time—not much, but so he didn't notice it missing.
Could she really go through with this? Doubt flooded her. She could put everything back, and he'd never know. Leo meowed again, annoyed by her delay. She'd at least feed him. Would Simon even look after Leo? He always mocked him as a "stupid pet." Would he take it out on the cat? What kind of person leaves their beloved pet behind?
Not that Leo was loyal or affectionate, she reminded herself. But only desperate people leave behind their animals and their belongings—people who know it's more dangerous to stay than to leave.
Amy closed her suitcase and, with a detached motion, filled Leo's bowl, refusing to let herself feel. She took a steadying breath, stepped outside, and pulled the door shut.

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